



# TAL

**TAZRIA-  
METZORA**  
**5775**

## THE COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

### Powerful Words!

#### Rabbi Jonathan Tawil



Have you ever been in a group having a conversation, when you notice that the person that is speaking the most might be speaking a lot but deep down there seems to be no meaning emanating from him? Some people like to speak at great length, when they could easily shorten their sentences. They speak more because it gives them a sense of authority and ability to convince others, rather than because they wish to portray a real view.

Our Sages consider silence to be a sign of greatness. King Solomon wrote, "The voice of a fool is in many words" (Kohelet 5:2). And Mark Twain once remarked; "Better to remain silent and appear dumb than to open your mouth and remove all doubt."

The more someone says and the louder he says it, the less likely his words are worth listening to (which is of course why he has to say them so loud).

Speech is a gift -- not to be wasted or overused. In Pirkei Avot our Sages teach us "say little and do much" (1:15). We are ultimately judged, both by G-d and by man, not by our big talk and brash promises but by our deeds and accomplishments.

Speech is a uniquely human trait, a Divine gift specially entrusted to mankind. When Hashem created

man (2:7) the Torah states: "And the L-rd G-d formed man, dirt from the earth; He blew into his nostrils a living soul, and the man became a living being." Onkelos, a sage of the period of the Mishna, in his Aramaic translation of the Scriptures, translates "a living being" as "a speaking being."

Clearly, our ability to speak is one of the most basic aspects of our humanity, distinguishing us from the rest of the animal kingdom.

CHOOSE YOUR  
WORDS  
WISELY

In this weeks Parasha we are taught about the Metsora -- person that has received Tsaraat (loosely translated as spiritual leprosy). The Gemara relates that one of the key causes to receiving Tsaraat was speaking Lashon Hara -- literally "evil language." Interestingly, the Torah calls "evil language" anything negative, even if it's true. (Slander -- malicious, false information is

called motzi shem ra, literally "giving another a bad name.")

When Hashem created the world, the Torah relates how Hashem spoke and the world came into being. (For example - when Hashem spoke and said 'Let there be light' -- light was created.) The process of creation of the universe was through speech. We have similarly been given the ability to create worlds through our speech. If we use our speech correctly to connect to others, unite and serve Hashem, we are building this world and the next. If we misuse the power of speech then we can cause much destruction. As Shlomo Hamelech stated "Life and death are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it (Lashon hara) will eat its fruit." (Mishlei 18:21).

The Talmud (Arachin 15b) explains that negative speech is even worse than a sword - since it kills many people, even at great distance.

The Chafetz Chaim relates how our brain orchestrates the whole body. The legs and hands only move forward once they receive an order from the brain.

Yet when a person talks, there are several organs in action at once. The throat, tongue, teeth and lips are all set in motion at the same time to produce the word.

He explains that it is a wonder of creation and a kindness from Hashem that we can

p.t.o.

**Shabbat Begins 19:58**

**Shabbat Ends 21:06**

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simultaneously utilise all these organs in order to speak so fast. This kindness exists in the world in order to allow us to achieve so much in this wonderful world. The mouth can be very constructive.

We are taught by our Rabbis that Talmud Torah Keneged Kulam – when one learns Torah it is as if he/she has performed all 613 Mitzvot. The Mitzvah of learning Torah carries much weight.

The Chafetz Chaim explains that every letter of a word of Torah is a Mitzva that is equal to all other Mitzvot put together.

With a bit of mathematical help he estimates we speak an average of 200 words per minute. At around 5

letters per word, we learn/say 1,000 letters a minute.

That's a total of  $613 \times 1,000 = 613,000$  Mitzvot worth a minute!

The Gemara relates how most people sin with Lashon Hara. It is tough to keep away. Yet the antidote can be found in the same organ used to sin. If we learn Torah, listen to Shiurim we can create a better environment and help fix the damage caused by Lashon Hara. In this manic generation when everyone is busy and apparently have 'no time' to learn, what are we supposed to do? Ideally we should fix a time at least once or twice a week when we learn Torah. But even if that is out of reach, then

we can learn on our way to and from work.

If for example we choose to spend our daily commute listening to a Torah lecture on our iPod, we could be performing up to 45,000 Mitzvot on a 45 minute ride.

In roughly two years, if we were to make this a daily habit, then we would learn the Torah and Code of Jewish law twice, the entire Books of The Prophets, and every Mishnah that comprises the Oral Law. We would still have those nine hours a day to make a living. Its all about putting things into perspective and keeping focused to maintain a fixed schedule.

Our mouths are powerful, lets utilise them to the best.

The Beis HaLevi, Rov of Brisk had an interesting custom. While receiving his townspeople in his study and offering them his sage advice and counsel, he would regularly open a small silver snuff box, peer inside, and then close it. This behaviour mode continued for many years and the townspeople were curious, what was their beloved Rov looking inside his snuff box - as he never used any snuff at all?

One man in the city could no longer contain his curiosity and one day, he peered inside the box. But what he saw made him even more perturbed. There were six Alef Beis letter neatly inscribed, and they weren't the initials of the Rov!

The letters were Shin Peh Vov Shin Mem Nun.

The curious man begged the Beis HaLevi for an explanation - and Reb Yoshe Ber smiled. Those letters are acronyms for the six famous words in Tehillim : Shoimer Piv Ulshono, Shomer Mitzoras Nafsho!

A constant reminder to guard ones mouth!

The Ba'al Shem Tov makes this point from the Mishna in Ovos Perek Alef - where we are instructed to judge our friends favourably. The Besht explains that we tend to see faults in others - however, it is

**“HKBH wants to see how we would judge others, our own verdict, the judgement that we passed onto others; and then HKBH uses that very ruling for ourselves.”**

HKBH's way of showing us our very own failings.

HKBH wants to see how we would judge others, our own verdict, the judgement that we passed onto others; and then HKBH uses that

very ruling for ourselves. We are our own judges.

As we tearfully recite on the Yomim Noraim, in the moving Tefilla of Unesane Tokef : "Vechoisom yad Kol Odom bo" - we have signed our own decree. Isn't it thus admirable to do as the Mishna teaches us, to judge others favourably? We are then the winners!

Perhaps it is even deeper...

HKBH deliberately allows us to see the failings in others - in order for us to pass judgement - on ourselves! In Mishlei Perek Daled, Shlomo Hamelech declares: "einecho lenochach yabitu, afapecho yaishiru negdecho". The author of the Nesivos Hamishpot, Reb Yaakov of Lisa explains that although ones eyes tend to face others, we should contemplate deeply within ourselves that scene

p.t.o.

## The Beis Halevi

### Guest Writer



that we have witnessed as it is a personal and direct message from Above.

In fact, on Chol Hamoed, Reb Isser Zalman Meltzer zatzal insisted on writing this Possuk before members of his Kehilla came to greet him; and he told his Talmid, that seeing this Possuk in front of him, when his congregants would be there - was Pikuach Nefesh, it would save his life from thinking the worst about others!

This message resonates deeper, when we realise that after WW2, the Tzadik Reb Aharon of Belz settled in Tel Aviv and witnessed many occasions of Chilul Shabbos. Yet, his reaction was astounding. Every time he saw a vehicle driving on Shabbos - he would joyfully exclaim that there must be another woman going into Hospital to have a child! To a Tzadik it was inconceivable to consider the possibility of Chillul

Shabbos - as that was an option far removed from him! It didn't exist in his mindset, he was so far removed from Chillul Shabbos - that he never saw any actions as the desecration of our Holy day!

This behoves us to rethink our own thoughts and actions when we see others behaving in a questionable manner.

If we are Shomer Piv Ulshono - then we can merit the blessing of Shomer Mitzoras Nafsho!

- When does a woman who has given birth to a son go to the *mikveh*?  
**12:2 - At the end of seven days.**
- After a woman gives birth, she is required to offer two types of offerings. Which are they?  
**12:6 - An olah and a chatat.**
- What animal does the woman offer as a *chatat*?  
**12:6 - A tor (turtle dove) or a ben yona (young pigeon).**
- Which of these offerings makes her *tahor* (ritual purity)?  
**12:7 - The chatat.**
- Which of the sacrifices does the woman offer first, the olah or the chatat?  
**12:8 - The chatat.**
- When may a *metzora* not be pronounced *tahor*?  
**14:2 - At night.**



- In the *midbar*, where did a *metzora* dwell while he was *tamei*?  
**14:3 - Outside the three camps.**
- Why does the *metzora* require birds in the purification process?  
**14:4 - Tzara'at comes as a punishment for lashon hara. Therefore, the Torah requires the metzora to offer birds, who chatter constantly, to atone for his sin of chattering.**
- In the purification process of a *metzora*, what does the cedar wood symbolize?  
**14:4 - The cedar is a lofty tree. It alludes to the fact that tzara'at comes as a punishment for haughtiness.**
- During the purification process, the *metzora* is required to shave his hair. Which hair must he shave?  
**14:9 - Any visible collection of hair on the body.**

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The wife of Rav Yitzchak Kaduri (the late chief sefardi kabalist) told over that one time she arrived at the home of Rav Mordechai Eliyahu, and saw him learning with a man dressed in white who had an extremely impressive appearance. Since she did not want to disturb their learning, she decided to

return the next day. When she returned the next day, she told the rav that she came the day before but didn't want to disturb his learning with the man in his room. The rav asked surprisedly, "you saw him?" she answered "yes, why is the rav surprised?", "if so", he answered "you merited to see Beniyahu ben Yehoyada!" (see Shmuel II ch.23:20-22)

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