



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

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## T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

### מזל טוב

A belated Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Michael Epstein on the wedding of their son Eli.

### חיים ארוכים

We wish **חיים ארוכים** to Mrs Etti Horwitz on the recent Petirah of her Father ז"ל.

### Summer Timetable

Please note we have now moved to the Summer timetable. The late Maariv during the week is at 10pm. On Shabbos there are three Minyanim for Mincha, at 2.00pm, 6.00pm and an hour and five minutes before Nacht.

### Pesach Shiurim

The second of two pre-Pesach Shiurim for ladies takes place this Tuesday and 8.30pm at the home of the Rov, 48 Waterpark Road.

The first men's Shiur takes place between Mincha and Motzei Shabbos this week.

### מעות חטים

Donations can be made to the Rov for **מעות חטים** for distribution to needy local families to help cover Pesach expenses.

### מכירת חמץ

The Rov is available for the sale of Chometz either at his home by prior arrangement, or in Shul after Davenning.

## T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

### Re'JEW'vination at the Source

Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

As we draw closer to Pesach we are increasingly caught up in the excitement of the upcoming festival and the feverish preparations that herald its imminent arrival. Scrubbing, cleaning (spring cleaning?) cooking and baking are all the order of the day. As strenuous as these activities are, we recognize that they enhance the essential mission of the chag. That mission is encapsulated in the words of our sages: "B'chol dor v'dor chayov odom liros es aztomo keilu hu yotzah mimitzrayim". In each and every generation we are obligated to see ourselves as if we ourselves are going out of Egypt.

The nature of this mission seems to be rather elusive. After all, we have been re-enacting the same scenario for some 3,328 years. What does it mean that we are to see ourselves as if we actually went out of Egypt? How do we transform the Pesach Seder from a commemorative celebration to a transformative experience, in which we leave behind the negative character traits and materialistic drives that represent the 'little Egypt' that hold us hostage?

Perhaps the answer is to be found in an important message in this week's Torah portion. In biblical times, a person who had strayed from his Divine mission was afflicted with the plague of tzoraas, and became a "metzora." The metzora's skin discoloration was a natural outgrowth of the person's

transgression and his disconnection from his Divine source. His loshon horah had distanced and separated him from his fellow Jews, at the same time driving a wedge between himself and his Creator. As part of his healing process, the metzora had to undergo a process of purification and teshuva. When this was successfully completed, the affliction mysteriously disappeared from his skin and he was restored to his full health, spiritually and physically.

Our bodies have a miraculous Divine property—they naturally heal. Given the right conditions, our bodies will regenerate and cure by themselves. Wounds heal, scars mend and sicknesses run their course, allowing the patient to be nursed back to health. So it is with our spiritual existence. Even if we err and commit grievous sins we can be confident in the knowledge that after addressing the source of our errant behavior, making amends and renewing our commitment to G-d, our neshamas can miraculously heal.

Rav Shimon Schwab develops this concept further. It is well known, he says, that our bodies are constantly in a state of transformation. Over the course of every few years, each cell in our bodies is cycled out; each molecule and fiber of body mass completes a regeneration process and each blood platelet is replaced. There are trillions of cooperative cells in each human adult; every second millions of blood cells die, to be instantly replaced with fresh substitutes.

Externally we continue function and look to one another exactly the same. But our physical beings are constantly being replenished and every few years we have shed the "old" person and become almost entirely a new one!

It is this amazing phenomenon, explains Rabbi Schwab, that allows us to appreciate the message of Chazal instructing us to personally experience the Exodus on Seder night in the same way our forefathers assumed a new identity upon leaving Egypt. They were not merely liberated from physical bondage; they were unshackled from the chains of materialism and paganism that constituted the true source of slavery.

Don't accept yourself as the same person as yesterday, the Torah tells us. You can change, you can grow.

Perhaps this is the underlying mitzvah of Pesach. We have to see ourselves

### The Week Ahead

#### פרשת מצורע

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.30pm
Candle Lighting	No later than 7.34pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.52am
Mincha	2.00pm / 6.00pm / 7.37pm
Rov's Shiur on Inyonei Pesach	following
Motzei Shabbos	8.42pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Monday / Thursday	6.45am / 7.10am
Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday	6.45am / 7.20am
Mincha & Maariv all week	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm
Mincha & Maariv Next Shabbos	7.30pm (Shabbos 7.47pm)

as if we are actually experiencing an exodus from one dimension into a new one. Although our negative habits and mindset are deeply ingrained in our psyche, we can reconfigure and assume a new spiritual identity. We can grow and mature.

Just as our physical being changes, so can our spirit. The Pesach seder is not simply an exercise in education or a celebration of our past. We are not simply jogging our ancient memories. The purpose is rather to use all one's imaginative powers and spiritual hunger to produce a profound and lasting inner experience—an ennobling re'jew'vination.

### **Shemiras Halashon and Pesach** Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

This shall be the law of the leper on the day of his cleansing: he shall be brought to the priest.” (Vayikra 14:2)

When you think of the kind of person who might be plagued by tzara'as, you might think of someone who has a difficult time keeping gossip to the him- or herself. Great people, especially if they are spiritually great people, do not get tzara'as because quite simply they do not do anything to deserve it.

For the most part, that is probably true. However, one of the most famous cases of tzara'as in history was the case of Miriam, Moshe Rabbeinu's sister. She had spoken loshon hara about her brother and THE Gadol HaDor of all history as mentioned at the end of Parashas BeHa'alosecha.

Even though she was directly involved in the birth of Moshe Rabbeinu by advising her parents to remarry in spite of Pharaoh's decree to drown all male babies, she received no preferential treatment. And, even though what she said was for the benefit of another, she still had to go through the entire treatment of a metzora including living outside the entire camp for one week. How humiliating for her.

There is a message in this. In fact, it reminds me of a section of the Talmud which I will excerpt here:

Our Rabbis taught: The poor, the rich, and the evil will come before the [heavenly] court. They will ask the poor, “Why have you not occupied yourself with the Torah?” If he says, “I was poor and worried about my sustenance,” they will say to him, “Were you poorer than Hillel?” It was reported about Hillel the Elder that every day he used to work and earn one tropaik, half of which he would give to the guard at the House of Learning, the other half being spent for his food and for that of his family. One day he found nothing to earn and the guard at the House of Learning would not permit him to enter. He climbed up and sat upon the skylight to hear the words of the living G-d from the mouth of Shemayah and Avtalion . . . To the rich man they will say, “Why have you not occupied yourself with the Torah?” If he says, “I was rich and occupied with my possessions,” they will say to him, “Were you richer than Rebi Elazar?” It was reported about Rebi Elazar bar Charsom that his father left him a thousand cities on the continent and corresponding to this a thousand boats on the sea. Every day he would take a sack of flour on his shoulder and go from city to city and from province to province to study the Torah . . . To the evil person they will say, “Why have you not occupied yourself with the Torah?” If he says, “I was handsome and bothered with passion,” they will say to him, “Were you more handsome than Yosef?” It was told of Yosef HaTzaddik that the wife of Potiphar every day endeavored to entice him with words, and the garments she put on for him in the morning she did not wear in the evening, and those she had put on in the evening she did not wear in the morning . . . Thus [the example of] Hillel condemns the poor, [the example of] Rebi Elazar bar Charsom condemns the rich, and Yosef HaTzaddik condemns the evil. (Yoma 35b)

We could add to this list, perhaps, Miriam the righteous, prophetess, and servant of the Jewish people. When they ask the loshon hara speaker, “Why were you not more careful with what you said and avoid loshon hara?” If her or she answers, “I didn't think it was loshon hara! I spoke it for altruistic reasons! It was for the benefit of others!” they will answer, “Were you more altruistic than Miriam? Were you as concerned about the well-being of another as she was?”

This is a warning not to speak loshon hara, commanding us to remember the terrible punishment that Miriam received [even though she was] a righteous prophetess, and she spoke only about her brother and only privately with her brother, not in public, so that Moshe himself would not be embarrassed... But despite these good intentions, she was punished. How much more so must we be careful never to speak loshon hara. (Ramban, Devarim 24:9).

As an “expert” loshon hara speaker (which is loshon hara on myself), I will

confess how easy it is to fall prey to the yetzer hara to speak it. When it comes to some sins, if you are a decent person, it usually requires somewhat of a negative change of lifestyle to do them. They are just so “out there” that it is hard to go to sleep at night with a clear conscience after having done them, so we don't.

Loshon hara, however, can be seamlessly woven into the fabric of everyday conversation that you can go to bed at night without even knowing that you spoke it. Indeed, sometimes it is easiest to speak it while discussing truly important issues when there might be a halachic justification for saying some things, but not others.

When becoming inflicted with tzara'as was a real issue it was easier to be more cautious about the cause of it. It was not something you could deal with by privately going to a doctor or taking some meds. There was no secret operation a person could have at some private clinic to get rid of it before others knew you had it. There was but one path to leaving the state of a Metzora, and it wasn't by crossing state lines.

Rather, as described in this week's parshah, it was a process, one that involved a kohen, isolation, hair removal, and sacrifices. Even Miriam who epitomized self-sacrifice for the Jewish people and a modest lifestyle was forced to endure it in order to return to her place among the rest of the nation.

The real problem is what we think about speech itself. Everyone agrees that speech is an important attribute of being human and would not want to do without it. But, how many people see it as one of the holiest activities in which a human being can engage? How many people see what comes out of their mouth as being a defining factor of the value of their very existence?

Here's a tip for anyone interested in curbing their speaking of loshon hara. Before you say anything that might be loshon hara, say one word: Pesach. “Pesach?” you might be asking yourselves right now. “What does Pesach have to do with loshon hara?”

Everything, as the Zohar says:

From a man's mouth you can tell what he is. (Zohar, Bamidbar 193)

As the Arizal explains, Pesach is a combination of two words: peh and sach, which mean the “mouth that spoke.” At first that seems to be irrelevant because the holiday seems to have nothing to do with speech until we recall that it has everything to do with speech. An example is the first dialogue between G-d and Moshe Rabbeinu about saving the Jewish people.

Moshe said to G-d, “I beseech You, G-d. I am not a man of words, neither from yesterday nor from the day before yesterday, nor from the time You have spoken to Your servant, for I am heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue.” But G-d said to him, “Who gave man a mouth, or who makes [one] dumb or deaf or seeing or blind? Is it not I, G-d? So now, go! I will be with your mouth, and I will tell you what to say.” (Shemos 4:10-12)

Another example is the main antagonist, Pharaoh, whose Hebrew name can be read: peh ra'ah—evil mouth. Furthermore:

The Egyptians made the Children of Israel serve b'pharech—with rigor. (Shemos 1:13)

Rebi Elazar said: “Bepharech” means “with a soft mouth” . . . (Sotah 11b)

And let's not forget that when all was said and done, G-d told Moshe:

Speak to the Children of Israel, and let them turn back and encamp in front of Pi HaChiros—the mouth of freedom . . . (Shemos 14:2)

No wonder Moshe Rabbeinu was heavily criticized by G-d for speaking loshon hara about the Jewish people:

Moshe answered and said, “They will not believe me, nor listen to my voice; they will say that G-d has not appeared to me.” G-d said to him, “What is in your hand?” He said, “A staff.” He told him, “Throw it to the ground.” He threw it to the ground and it became a snake, and Moshe ran away from it . . . (Shemos 4:1)

This indicated to him that he had spoken loshon hara about the Jewish people, and that he had imitated the trade of the serpent. (Rashi)

Thus, as I said earlier, if you want to remember not to speak loshon hara just say the word “Pesach” before you speak. It was to avoid speaking loshon hara that we were freed from Egyptian slavery at the beginning of Jewish history. As we will see next week, b"H, it will be in the merit of not speaking loshon hara that we will survive to be redeemed at the end of Jewish history.

It's not for naught that we spend the entire Seder speaking.