

# DAF TSAFON

20 April 2024  
12 Nisan 5784

Shabbat Hagadol  
Parashat Metzora  
ArtScroll 620 Hertz 470



In this week's parasha we continue with the laws related to the metzora. The person afflicted with strange lesions as a result of lashon harah – gossiping and other forms of bad speech.

The verses states, “The Kohen shall command and shall take for the person being purified [from the affliction of Tzara’at] two live, pure, birds...” [Leviticus 14:4]. The Zohar cryptically comments that one bird atones for evil speech and one bird atones for good speech.

Our Sages tell us that the word, Metzora (meaning one who has the disease of Tzara’at) is a contraction of the words “Motzi Rah” [one who spews forth evil], because Tzara’at comes as a punishment for ‘evil speech’ (lashon haRah). However, the Zohar is also informing us that the second bird comes to atone for ‘good speech’. What does this mean?

Rabbi Frand of Baltimore offers the following powerful insight. There are two reasons why a person would be afflicted. 1) For improperly using the gift of speech and 2) abstaining from uttering “good speech,” when that is called for. Just as speaking gossip can sometimes destroy a marriage, a partnership, or a friendship, so too, sometimes speaking words of encouragement and friendship can take a person who is depressed, lonely and disheartened, and bring him back to life. Sometimes, merely withholding that little compliment, the “Good morning”, the “How are you doing?”, “Thanks”, “Nice Job” can destroy a person. The Zohar is informing us that the sin of Lashon Harah includes both ‘Evil Speech’ and withholding ‘Good Speech’. Sometimes withholding the compliment or the good word can be as destructive as speaking evil.

Perhaps we can expand on this by explaining that these two sins – speaking evil and failing to speak well of someone really stem from the same sin. If we analyze the deeper nature of the sin of Lashon Harah, we discover that these are really two sides of the same coin. The first time Evil Speech is found in the Torah, is in connection with the primordial snake in the Garden of Eden. Eve refused the Snake’s suggestion to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, explaining that God had forbidden them to eat from it. The Snake dismissed this as a sinister plot on God’s part. “God knows that when you will eat from that Tree, your eyes will be opened and you will become god-like...” [Genesis 3:5] Rashi elaborates on the Snake’s argument: “Every professional hates competition. God ate from that tree, and then acquired the knowledge to create the world. He is jealous and does not want you to have the same capabilities as Him.

Adam had the best situation imaginable. He was sitting in the Garden of Eden. Angels fed him. Nothing could be better! But then the Snake came and argued – “Nah! It’s not so perfect. You do not have the Tree of Knowledge; you are not god-like!” The Snake looks at a situation that is virtually perfect and finds fault with it. He focuses on the flaw. This is the essence of Lashon Harah. Lashon Harah is not so much a crime of the mouth, it is a crime of perception. One can look at one’s neighbour and see a nice guy, see talents, see accomplishments, or one can look at the same person and see only his shortcomings and flaws. A person who gravitates to Lashon Harah has a jaundiced eye on the world. The root of this sin is always picking out the bad, rather than the good. The glass is always half empty.

The reason why we speak evil about someone is because we fail to see the good in him. We only focus on the negative. Likewise, when we see a person do something nice, and a mere compliment would cause him to feel good, but we cannot be generous enough of spirit to offer that compliment, this is also because of the same jaundiced approach, the inability to see and appreciate the good. Lashon Harah boils down to a stinginess of perception. It is not so much a crime of speech; rather it is a crime of how one perceives the world.

Rabbeinu Yonah (1200-1263) cites the following parable in his Sharei Teshuvah on the verse “the foolish person points out the evil, but the straight person sees the positive” [Mishlei 14:9]: Two people walked past a carcass. The carcass was putrid. One person said, “that stench is horrible”; the other person said, “Look how white its teeth are”. Rabbeinu Yonah says that the first person is called foolish, and the second person is called straight. The fact that the first person saw the negative does not mean that he is bad, but he is foolish because a person who only focuses on the negative becomes a negative, destructive, and bitter person. A person who speaks Lashon Harah has the strongest negative impact on himself. Forget about righteousness, forget about right and wrong – such a character trait is simply foolish!

As we approach the festival of freedom. One of the key meditations involved in removing the chametz from our house is also to remove the chametz from our hearts.

Shabbat Shalom and Chag Sameach.

**Haftarah**

ArtScroll 1220 Hertz 1005  
Malachi 3:4-24

The prophet foretells the punishment of all evil doers on the day of God’s judgment and condemns the people for neglecting to pay the tithes and offerings due to the Priests and Levites. Were they to honour their obligations He would shower blessings upon them and the land would yield abundant crops. The righteous who show impatience at the apparent prosperity of the wicked will reap the reward for their integrity on Judgment Day when the unrighteous will be destroyed. The prophet calls upon the people to remember the Law of Moses and foretells the coming of Elijah before ‘*the great and terrible day of the Lord*’ when parent and child will be reconciled and turn their hearts towards God.

מזל טוב

## Mazal Tov

This Shabbat we celebrate with

### Lenny Lipman

who is reading his Bar Mitzvah Haftarah in recognition of his

### 90<sup>th</sup> Bar Mitzvah anniversary,

an amazing milestone for the Lipman and Velik families,  
as well as a first for The North Shore Synagogue.

### Bar and Bat Mitzvah anniversaries

Joshua Buchwald

Stanley Dyne

Leonard Lipman

Richard Wittal

Jemma Lever

Lara Lever

**Our congregation acknowledges the following  
yahrzeit anniversaries and wishes long life to  
those who are commemorating a  
yahrzeit during the coming week.**

### חיים ארוכים

Paul Agranoff

brother of Sidney Agranoff

Chaim Mendel Bertram

father-in-law of Chaya Bertram,  
grandfather of Richard Bertram

Leah Goldstein

grandmother of Jenni Ulman  
and Belinda Braham

Lola Janks

mother of Peter Janks

Dalya Mankowitz

mother of Sharon Baskin

Sy Smith

grandfather of Railea Don

Thomas Traurig

father of Steven Traurig

## PESACH 2024 / 5784

- 21 April 10.30am 'Matzah Make' for our young ones.  
23 April PESACH DAY I, 9.15am – Shacharit service;  
10.30am – Children's service  
24 April PESACH DAY 2, 9.15am – Shacharit service.  
27 April PESACH DAY 5, 9.15am

### Chol HaMoed Pesach

### ANZAC DAY SHABBAT

This is always a special Shabbat, and we look  
forward to welcoming familiar and new faces.

- 29 April PESACH DAY 7, 9.15am – Shacharit service.  
30 April PESACH DAY 8, 9.15am – Shacharit service.