

PESACH
5780



PESACH MENU

Why Is This Pesach Different From All Others?

For most of us, this Yom Tov will be unique. Our extended families won't be gathering. *Sedarim seudos* and activities will be smaller and quieter. It's a Yom Tov no one will ever forget. So let the memory be a beautiful one, created by words of warmth, acceptance, patience and *emunah*. Discover how Shmiras Haloshon is...

THE TORAH'S Perfect Tool FOR A PESACH of Sweetness and Family Harmony

introducing... The Peh-Sach Project:

The Sfas Emes taught that a primary gain of our Redemption from Egypt is that Hashem redeemed Klal Yisrael's power of speech, enabling us to bring Hashem's presence into the world with our words of tefillah and Torah. One of the interpretations of the name "Pesach" is Peh-Sach, which means "the mouth that speaks," and that is why, on the anniversary of our Redemption, we bring you the Peh-Sach Project, elevating ourselves and our Yom Tov through the power of speech.

For a Sweet and Kosher Pesach

Part of
THE SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM

AT ANY TIME OF THE YEAR, THE WAY WE SPEAK TO AND ABOUT ONE ANOTHER IS VITAL TO OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH HASHEM. ON PESACH, HOWEVER, THE POTENTIAL OF SPEECH TO UPLIFT US AND THOSE AROUND US IS MULTIPLIED...

...because of all we invest in this Yom Tov. Nothing means more to a family than nurturing the connection to the next generation. The preparation, *divrei Torah*—the *Haggadah* reading itself—are all meant to be open channels through which the *mesorah* can flow on a stream of warmth, friendship and unity.

Positive speech keeps the channels clear. It enhances the spirit of togetherness and *simchah* at this year's smaller *Sedarim* and Yom Tov meals. It keeps our interactions positive, sensitive and friendly, ensuring that the connections we most treasure will flourish, strengthening our family, our *mesorah* and *Klal Yisrael*. And, it elevates the spiritual atmosphere of the entire table, allowing the sweetness and *kedushah* of Pesach to shine.

PESACH IS A TIME WHEN A PERSON CAN MAKE GREAT STRIDES...

On Pesach, says Rabbi Shimshon Pincus, zt"l, the world is invested with the power of *chipazon* (great haste). This power manifested itself the first Pesach, when the Exodus happened in great haste. Hashem took a nation of slaves steeped in idol worship, and dramatically and swiftly elevated us to a level that we could never have attained on our own at that point in time. Through this power, which is present on every *Seder* night, Hashem gives us the ability to lift ourselves far beyond our current spiritual level and soar to new heights. *Chipazon* defeats the *yetzer hara's* claim that refraining from *ona'as devarim* (hurtful speech) and *loshon hora* is beyond our spiritual strength.

On Pesach, Hashem gives us the power to remake ourselves into the people we thought we couldn't be. We can be people who do not demean others with our words. We can be the exalted, dignified people Hashem wants us to be.



Nine years ago, when we asked Rav Shteinman, zt"l, for his *haskamah* for the **Peh-Sach Project** and making a *Machsom L'Fi* at each Shabbos and Yom Tov meal, he responded:

“כל מה שעושים כדי
שידברו פחות דברים
אסורים וגם דברים
בטלים, זה חשוב מאוד”

“ANY EFFORT TO MINIMIZE
FORBIDDEN SPEECH AND
IDLE TALK IS OF GREAT
SIGNIFICANCE.”



Dear Friend,

As we know, *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is the cornerstone of *emunah* for generation after generation of *Klal Yisrael*. Pesach is the time when we instill this *emunah* in our children and strengthen it in ourselves, and for that reason, it is particularly important that our *Seders* and Yom Tov *seudos* be times of special *kedushah*. One of the best ways to ensure the right atmosphere is to keep the *mitzvah* of *Shmiras Haloshon* when our families are gathered together at the Yom Tov table.

I urge every family to participate in the Peh-Sach Project, which is a very effective way to keep conversations on the right track at the table and throughout Yom Tov. In the *zechus* of your undertaking this wonderful effort, may your family be blessed with a sweet and kosher Pesach, and may we all soon be *zocheh* to witness the Final *Geulah*.

[Signature]

How to Participate in the Peh-Sach Project:

Today, Hashem is remaking the world before our eyes; no one can guess what lies ahead. Shmiras Haloshon stands front and center as our protection against the dangers and turmoil. What more powerful response is there than to show Hashem that we love and honor each other—that we long for the danger to pass so that we can be together again with our families and communities? What could be more pleasing to our Father, and better stir His compassion for His children?

THREE Steps TO Success

1

Start each of your Shabbos and Yom Tov meals by reading the Chofetz Chaim's *Tefillah Al Hadibbur*, Prayer for Proper Speech.

2

Learn the lessons from this booklet at each *seudah*. See pages 4-9.

3

Designate your Shabbos and Yom Tov meal as a *Machsom L'fi*, where the entire family will avoid *loshon hora* and *ona'as devarim* as a *zechus* for a *refuah sheleimah* of all those who are ill, *brachah* for you and your family, and a *yeshuah* for our world. Say the *kabbalah* before each meal.

MORE STRATEGIES FOR ENJOYING THE SWEETNESS OF SHMIRAS HALOSHON THROUGHOUT YOM TOV

Make an effort to say more *divrei Torah* and sing more *zemiros* at your table. This will not only help to avoid *loshon hora*, but will also make your Yom Tov more beautiful and meaningful.

Prepare topics that you can introduce to quickly preempt any *loshon hora* that might get started. You might be surprised to find how easily you can change the topic and distract a person who is starting to speak *loshon hora*.

You can do this project as an individual, or as a family. To do it with others, read page 2 and page 10 of this brochure to the people at your table to inspire them to join. Let them know that the Chofetz Chaim promises that the strength of doing a mitzvah with others will give each of them the *siyata d'Shmayá* of all the participants combined.

תפילה על הדיבור

מאת מרן החפץ חיים זצ"ל

רבוננו-של-עולם, יהי רצון מלפניך א-ל רחום וחנון שתזכני היום ובכל יום לשמור פי ולשונך מלשון הרע ורכילות: ואזהר מלדבר אפילו על איש יחיד, וכל שכן על כלל ישראל, או על חלק מהם, וכל שכן מלהתרעם על מידותיו של הקדוש ברוך הוא. ואזהר מלדבר דברי שקר, חנופה, מחלוקת, כעס, גאווה, אונאת דברים, הלבנת פנים, ליצנות, וכל דיבור אסור. וזכני שלא לדבר כי אם דבר הצריך לענייני גופי ונפשי, ויהיו כל מעשי ודיבורי לשם שמים.

Master of the World, may it be Your will, compassionate and gracious G-d, that You grant me the merit today and every day to guard my mouth and tongue from speaking *loshon hora* and *rechilus*. May I be zealous not to speak ill of an individual, and even more so, may I be zealous not to complain about the ways of the Holy One, Blessed is He. May I be zealous not to speak words of falsehood, flattery, strife, anger, arrogance, hurt, embarrassment, mockery, and all other forbidden forms of speech. Grant me the merit to speak only that which is necessary for my physical and spiritual wellbeing, and may all my deeds and words be for the sake of Heaven.

TO START YOUR MACHSOM L'FI SAY THE קבלה:

הריני (הרינו) מקבל (מקבלים) על עצמי (עצמינו) בלי נדר שמירת הלשון בדבור ושמיעה במשך סעודת שבת/יום טוב, לזכות _____ לרפואה שלימה, (ON SHABBOS/YOM TOV ADD THESE WORDS) (שבת/יום טוב היא מלזעוק ורפואה קרובה לבוא ולזכות _____ ולישועת כלל ישראל.

I (we) hereby accept upon myself (ourselves), without the force of a vow, to observe the laws of Shmiras Haloshon in regard to what I (we) say and listen to during this Yom Tov/Shabbos meal as a source of merit for a speedy recovery for _____ (on Shabbos/Yom Tov add: "Shabbos/Yom Tov hi m'lizok u'refuah kerovah lavo.") and as a merit for _____, and the salvation of all of Klal Yisrael.

PESACH MENU HAS BEEN SPONSORED

לעלוי נשמת

ישראל ליב בן מרדכי ז"ל

נלב"ע כ"ד טבת

ברכה לאה בת ארי-ה לייב ע"ה

נלב"ע י"ב שבט

משה יעקב בן נחום ז"ל

נלב"ע ל' תשרי

עטיא פייגא בת ר' מרדכי ע"ה

נלב"ע י"ז טבת

שרה רחל בת ישראל ליב ע"ה

נלב"ע כ"ח טבת

SPECIAL NOTE

When Rav Shteinman gave his *haskamah* to this project nine years ago, he advised us to urge participants to conduct this program even during *Shulchan Oreich* of the *Sedarim*, despite the shortness of time.

Prepare a table

Sit for a King

with these short, engaging lessons on
Ahavas Yisrael, Judging Favorably, Anger and Shmiras Haloshon —
one for each seudah.

First Seder

THE NEXT REDEMPTION*

Why does Tishah B'av fall on the same day of the week as Pesach?

Pesach and Tishah B'Av are intertwined in many ways, a fact made apparent by their occurrence on the same day of the week each year. According to Rabbi Mattisyahu Salomon, shlita, the Mashgiach of Beis Medrash Gavoha, Lakewood, the connection is this: The lesson of Pesach equips us to end the present *galus*, and change Tishah B'Av into a day of rejoicing. That lesson is found in the two “dippings” that occur during the Seder.

The Ben Ish Chai explains that the first dip—*karpas* into salt water—recalls the sin that caused our descent into Egypt: the discord between Yosef and his brothers. In order to convince their father that Yosef had been killed by an animal, they dipped his garment into animal blood. Yosef was taken to Egypt as a slave, his family eventually settled there, and their descendants were enslaved.

The second dip is one that sweetens; we dip our bitter herbs into *charoses*. In this act, we commemorate the dipping of bunches of hyssop into blood, the act the Jews were commanded to fulfill on the night before the redemption. The bunches, “*agudos*,” symbolize *Bnei Yisrael's* unity as they acted together on that night to fulfill Hashem's will. This show of unity was the culmination of their achievement in the Egyptian *galus*, a time during which, the Midrash says, the Jews spoke not one word of *loshon hora*. Their unity “undid” the sin of Yosef's brothers, and set the stage for redemption.

From these two dippings, we learn what brings *galus* upon us, and what redeems us. On the Pesach that the lesson is finally absorbed fully into *Klal Yisrael*, we will have closed the last link between our first redemption and our final one. When we open the door for Eliyahu, he'll be there, with the news we've been waiting so long to hear.

A STEP FORWARD

Increase the unity in Klal Yisrael by connecting to those who are not at a Seder tonight because they are too ill to attend, too far from Torah to know what they are missing, or are incarcerated. Take advantage of the special eis ratzon of the Seder night to pray for their welfare.

Second Seder

WHAT WASN'T SAID*

Is it fair for someone who is temporarily suspected of tzaraas to endure the shame of being quarantined for a week, just as are those who are actually found to have the disease?

The Torah tells us that a person suspected of having *tzaraas* (a form of leprosy brought on by sin), was quarantined for one week—kept away from family and friends in isolation. And because *tzaraas* was a punishment for *loshon hora* the ordeal brought shame with it as well. But after that week, the person was re-examined, and at that time, if the *kohen* determined that the suspect discoloration wasn't *tzaraas* at all, the person would go free. Case closed.

So, it would seem that an innocent person had suffered; he had been shamed and separated from the community for seven days, all for nothing. The Imrei Emes explains that, in fact, it was not for nothing. This “false alarm” was a punishment in itself, not for forbidden words that had been spoken, but for positive words that had been left unspoken.

From this we learn the importance of “*loshon tov*,” of using our power of speech to create good in the world. There is a vast difference between noticing the good in others and putting it into words. Sometimes we underestimate the impact of our compliment, our thank you, our quick “moral support” phone call. We think the world can get along fine without it.

But *loshon tov* is the fiber of *Ahavas Yisrael*. Sometimes the context is dramatic—empathy and comfort in troubled times, or *mazel tovs* upon a *simchah*. But often the context is commonplace—a hello and a smile in passing, a thank you for a small favor, a compliment on your child's behavior. All of this is just words, yet the words are profound acts of *chesed* as well. We are not allowed to leave them unspoken.

A STEP FORWARD

Right now, tonight, at Shulchan Oreich, say something sincere to make someone feel appreciated, included and happy.

Thank someone for his help; compliment someone's dvar Torah, new outfit, new hairdo. Praise a child's good behavior. Thank those who prepared the wonderful seudah.

WHAT DOES TOELES MEAN?

*At times it may be necessary to relate *loshon hora* l'toeles, for a constructive purpose. It is imperative that you know the seven rules of toeles to ensure that your words will be truly constructive.*

YOU ARE SPEAKING IN ORDER TO:

PROVIDED THAT:

1 The information is accurate; based on first-hand information and careful investigation. One must have seen the person's behavior oneself. The only time that one can repeat second-hand information is to protect someone from potential harm. Even then, one must state that he is conveying second-hand information.

A Help the one you are speaking about.

B Help someone victimized by the person or prevent others from being victimized.

- 2** The situation is well understood. Any possibilities to judge the person favorably have been explored.
- 3** All other options were tried. If there is any other way to achieve the desired result, without conveying the negative information, then one may not relay the negative information.
- 4** One tried to speak to the person himself, before speaking about him. Note: This condition does not apply if speaking to the person oneself will make it impossible to achieve the desired result.

KICKING THE HABIT*

How long can the average person go without speaking loshon hora?

The Chofetz Chaim said most people believe the maximum is a day or two, after which they would inevitably fall back into their old ways. But that's not so, he argued, because gossip is a habit, and bad habits can be broken.

Once a person starts learning about Shmiras Haloshon, the motivation to kick the loshon hora habit becomes overpowering. With literally hundreds or even thousands of individual, serious *aveiros* springing from one conversation gone wrong, it obviously pays to keep any conversation from going wrong.

Think of the smoker. He enjoys his habit, it doesn't seem to be doing him any harm, and he can't imagine ever stopping. That is, until he begins to have trouble breathing, his heart weakens and he finds himself coughing his way through the day. Once he understands what smoking is really doing to him, he finds the motivation to break the habit. The longer he goes without smoking, the more accustomed his mind and body become to the new situation. The urge lessens, and the battle becomes less pitched. Eventually, there is no more battle.

Like the smoker, the first step for the loshon hora speaker is awareness. When he understands what loshon hora is doing to him, he can't participate in it the same way anymore. Instead of blithely speaking what's on his mind, he begins to listen to an inner

voice that says, "Maybe you should leave this unsaid."

At first, of course, he may slip back into old habits. The Chofetz Chaim says it's essential to keep one's determination, even if the *yetzer hara* wins a round. Don't despair; don't become frustrated. Just keep giving yourself strength to continue your effort, knowing that the longer your run of success, the easier Shmiras Haloshon is to maintain. With knowledge of what the Torah wants from us and real resolve to keep reaching for that standard, the Chofetz Chaim tells us we will ultimately succeed.

The Last Ounce of Effort

On Pesach we re-ignite our wonder at the spectacle of Israel's masses marching on dry land as the Red Sea stood in solid walls around it. Only Hashem's hand could have performed this miracle, but it was a man's heart that set it in motion. That man was Nachshon ben Aminadav. Like all of *Bnei Yisrael*, he saw how dire the situation was. The Egyptians were in close pursuit, and certain death closed off every avenue of escape. The only clear path was through the sea—a seemingly impassible route. Yet, Nachshon ben Aminadav was certain that Hashem would not lead His people to destruction. He waded into the sea. He proceeded farther and farther, into ever-deepening water, until at the last possible moment, the seas parted.

In our times, miracles of epic proportions are in far shorter supply. But miracles do happen every day, and these, like the splitting of the sea, are set in motion by our own willingness to use every last shred of effort to perform Hashem's will, and the faith that when we're "up to our necks," Hashem will extend His helping hand and carry us the rest of the way.

*Reprinted from *Chosen Words*, the biweekly family newsletter of the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation

THE SIX QUESTIONS *A Guide to Judging Favorably*

The Torah teaches that, whenever we experience or hear about the negative behavior of another person, we must "judge favorably." In simple terms, that means giving the benefit of the doubt. But how can one follow that advice when it seems that the facts clearly point to someone's guilt?

Sometimes we jump to the wrong conclusion because the facts are different from what we perceive them to be. Even if our facts are accurate, we often misinterpret the intent behind them. When we drop the assumption that there was a negative intention behind someone's action towards us, we automatically deflate much of the anger and hurt we feel.

Here are six possible ways to analyze a situation and jump to a good conclusion."

1 Are you sure it happened at all?

Sometimes our perceptions of what we see and hear are mistaken.

2 Are you sure the details are correct?

One small detail can completely alter the scenario. Something may have been exaggerated or omitted that would make a big difference.

3 Do you know if the other person intended harm?

Often the consequences are unforeseen.

4 Do you know the assumptions the other person was operating under?

Maybe the other person was operating under a misconception that would explain his behavior.

5 Could the other person's act have been the result of an innocent, human error?

Everyone has limitations. Perhaps this person lacked experience, was forgetful, distracted or simply didn't think carefully enough before acting.

6 Do you know what events preceded the negative action?

The other person may be enduring a great deal of pain, frustration or stress. This might be a response to a specific situation, like an illness or financial loss. Or it could be a deeper, more pervasive problem that affects the person's entire life.

"Although the Torah requires us to judge others with favor and compassion, we are not required to accept abusive behavior from others. Physical, verbal or emotional abuse must be addressed and corrected.

C Resolve major disputes.

5 Your intent is truly *l'shem Shamayim*. One does not bear a grudge against this person or have any reason to take pleasure in relating this negative information.

6 One may not exaggerate or alter any facts. One may also not leave out information that would minimize the severity of the person's behavior. In addition, one may only say the minimum necessary for the intended purpose.

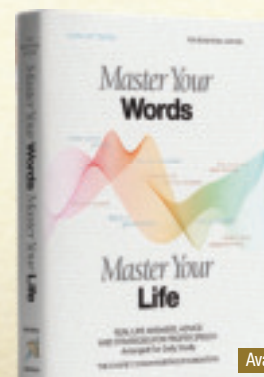
D Help others refrain from improper behavior.

7 No undue harm will be caused. If the person will receive a more severe punishment or incur more damage than *beis din* would assess, one may not relate the incident.

In addition, there must be a reasonable chance of bringing about the desired result, otherwise one's words will not be *l'toeles*.

Reminder: You must preface your words by saying that you are speaking *l'toeles*.

REAP THE BENEFITS!



An Easy Way for Your Family to Join Shmiras Haloshon Yomi!

To order
"Master Your Words"
Call
845.352.3505
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Available at all Jewish bookstores

NO ONE CAN DO IT ALONE

Many people have excellent *middos* when they're sitting alone in front of a *sefer Tehillim*, thinking about Hashem and His kindness. They may feel very elevated and close to Hashem when they're learning Torah. They may feel a wave of love for their fellow Jew when they're dancing in a circle on Simchas Torah. Theoretically, such people are proud members of *Klal Yisrael*. But for some, that feeling of connection lasts only until they have to deal with the actual people who comprise the *klal*.

Then, they set themselves apart. Somehow, other people are always causing them stress. Perfect peace, in their view, is some time alone in a quiet setting.

For a Jew, however, "Leave me alone" is never the right option. We can't be complete Jews without others. The Chasam Sofer illustrates this idea with a *gematria*, based on the verse, "*Torah tzivah lanu Moshe, morashah kehillas Yaakov*"—The Torah that Moshe commanded us, the inheritance of the community of Yaakov."

YOU ARE ONE OF THEM

A person who finds Shmiras Haloshon difficult can make it far easier for himself by setting himself up for success. The best way to do that is to choose to be among people who don't speak *loshon hora*.

We can certainly understand why the opposite would be true; someone who sits among people who gossip will be drawn into the gossip. At the very least, he will be forced to listen to it. When that is the case, he becomes "one of them."

On the positive side, when we seek out the company of those who are respectful and caring in their speech, we become "one of them" as well. As if we've stepped in an elevator, we rise up just by putting ourselves in the right place.

An elderly Russian Jew was sitting in a secret room with a group of men who were listening to a Gemara shiur. The room was filled to capacity, but a few men, eager to participate, approached the old man and asked him to give up his seat for one of them. "You don't understand the shiur

Of the 613 *mitzvos*, two were given to us directly by Hashem. The remaining 611 were commanded to us through Moshe. The *gematria* of the word "Torah" is 611. Of the 613 *mitzvos*, we can fulfill only 60 on our own. The other 551 require us to be in a gathering of other Jews. That number—551—is the *gematria* of "*morashah*." For us to fully grasp our inheritance, we need each other. Otherwise, we can accomplish only 10 percent of what Hashem has commanded us—hardly a passing grade.

As we look around us this Pesach, we have the perfect opportunity to grasp the "*morashah Kehillas Yaakov*" by acknowledging everyone in our circle as a necessary and important part of our *avodas Hashem*. A little peace and quiet can be a great thing, but warm, strong and respectful connections to others is the perfect thing.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Has the recent health crisis changed how you feel about being connected to other people?

anyway," one of the men argued.

The elderly man rolled up his shirtsleeves and showed these men his two arms, which were discolored with many large marks. "When I was a young man," he said, "I was drinking a cup of coffee in a room where Bolsheviks were gathered. All of a sudden, a group of their opponents burst into the room and began beating everyone with clubs. I told them, 'I'm not with them! I'm just having my coffee!' And you know what they told me? They said, 'If you're sitting with them, then you're one of them.' That's what they taught me. And that's why I'm sitting here in this shiur. Even if I don't understand what they're learning, I can still be one of them."

For better or worse, we become identified with the company we keep. Although that makes it easy to be pulled down, it also makes it easier to rise to new heights when in the right company.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What can you do to bring your environment to a higher level of Shmiras Haloshon so that everyone can benefit from the uplift?



Shalom:

HOW TO ACQUIRE THE BLESSING OF PEACE

The Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation is pleased to provide you with these pre-publication excerpts from our new daily learning book on shalom.

Imagine a salesman who comes along and offers you some options:

- You could have everything money can buy, but every day of your life will be filled with conflict.
- You could win your way in every argument, but no one in your life will feel close to you.
- You could climb to the pinnacle of power and command the respect of many people, but all of your energy will be spent on maintaining your status.
- You could be someone no one would dare step on, but you'll rarely have a peaceful night's sleep.
- You could have the love of your family, closeness with your friends, the respect of your associates, a clear conscience and a peaceful heart—but you'll have to do a lot of compromising, forgiving and overlooking of slights and injustices.

Each of us has this choice. We can spend our life wondering why we can't find any joy or inner serenity that lasts, why the people we love and care for constantly disappoint us, why our *tefillas* are distracted and empty, why our life seems so unsatisfying despite all our blessings.

Or we can choose shalom. But it's not just a choice; it's a commitment. This is because shalom is rooted in *shleimus*—wholeness. To live a life of shalom, we have to put together all the pieces of our personality, our character traits and our spirituality, each in its proper place, until we complete the picture of who and what Hashem designed us to be. The closer we come to this perfected picture, the more such feelings as anger, spite and resentment feel foreign to us.

A person who is living with ongoing conflict and hostility in his life is living just a fraction of the life he could have. He's like someone who has gotten accustomed to a headache that never goes away. The day it finally does go away, his eyes open up on a whole new, wonderful world. He is reborn.

DAY 3 THE THREE-DAY RULE

The Wisdom: It takes three days for a seed of hatred to sprout.

A sting of a small insult hits a person. Maybe someone made an insensitive joke, or did something thoughtless. It's nothing to go to war about but still, like a sharp little splinter in his finger, it keeps hurting. Sometimes a person will think about such an incident and put it into a better perspective, and the pain heals. Sometimes, the person will choose to confront the speaker and thereby clear the air. However, often people do neither. They are perhaps embarrassed to admit that they were

IF WE DON'T WANT TO WALLOW IN A WORLD OF RESENTMENT, WE HAVE TO LIFT UP THE VEIL OF SILENCE AND SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE IN OUR LIVES.

hurt, or fearful of starting a conflict by approaching the other person. Instead, they avoid contact.

How might this play out? Imagine a man who normally has a friendly conversation with his neighbor as they leave shul together after Maariv. However, since the man still feels the sting of the insult, he leaves shul quickly, avoiding his neighbor. Or imagine a woman who notices that her friend is shopping in the supermarket a few aisles away. While normally she would head toward her friend, now she plans her route to ensure that they will not end up in the same aisle. Or, perhaps a person normally who calls a friend on a daily basis stops calling, or someone who would normally answer his friend's phone call chooses not to answer.

If this kind of behavior goes on for three days, Chazal tell us that the person who has broken off communication has violated the prohibition against "hating your fellow in your heart" (Vayikra 19:17).

It might not feel like hatred, and yet, because he has neither cleared the air between himself and his friend, nor cleared away the resentment inside himself, the seed of hatred has fertile soil upon which to germinate.

Shalom among people thrives when their communication is sensitive and at the same time, honest. If we don't want to wallow in a world of resentment, we have to lift up the veil of silence and speak to the people in our lives even if we have something difficult to impart, such as "I felt hurt..."

Wisdom in Action

The Diamonds' daughter was engaged. When Mrs. Rachel Diamond called her close friend, Tziporah, to share the news personally, Tziporah told her, "I can't wait to see you at the vort!"

The big night came. Rachel, the wife of a successful businessman, oversaw every detail of the occasion. She helped the party planner design the event and chose the pastries and hot dishes with care. Because she and her husband belonged to many social circles, she rented a large hall for the event.

The one thing Rachel wasn't able to plan, however, was the weather. Tziporah looked out her window and saw the heavy, wet flakes piling up on the road. She hated driving in the snow. Now she would have to clean off her car, get dressed up and risk a slippery ride to the hall just to go in and say "mazel tov." She would tell Rachel that she wasn't feeling well; she actually did have a cold and maybe even a slight fever.

The next morning, she called Rachel and left a voicemail apologizing for not coming and explaining that she had been sick. By the end of the day, Tziporah hadn't called back. "She must be busy with a million things," Rachel thought. She tried again and

left another voicemail.

The following day, Tziporah called and Rachel picked up. "Sorry I didn't return your calls," Rachel said. "It was a very busy day. In fact, I have to go now to speak to a caterer." They hung up.

"Something is wrong," Tziporah thought. "She didn't sound like herself." As that thought ran through her mind, Rachel called back.

"Can I be honest with you?" she asked her friend.

"Of course," Tziporah answered.

"I was very hurt that you didn't come to the vort. I was so excited and I put so much effort into it. And because of the weather, the place was half-empty. But I thought for sure that you would come. I was disappointed."

Tziporah's heart sank. Rachel was right. She should have made the effort and now it was too late.

"I'm glad you told me that," Tziporah said, "and you're right. And I'm so sorry."

"Well, I didn't want to be walking around angry at you," Rachel said. "You're my friend."

Practicing Peace: Don't let grievances hang in the air. Make sure to keep the lines of communication open.



A GIFT-WRAPPED WORD*

(Day 6 in Positive Word Power)

Imagine taking a vow to never speak a negative word about another person again. You might find yourself frightened to open your mouth. You might feel repressed, unable to let your thoughts and feelings flow. But if that were your reaction, it would be because you were focusing all your attention on half of the picture. You would be seeing each word as a potential trap that could ensnare you in sin and punishment, but failing to see each word as a potential gold mine of blessing.

Once a person moves past the human tendency to vent frustrations through negative speech, the focus shifts to the other half of the picture: *loshon tov*, positive speech. This is where speech fulfills its potential to make a person the parent, sibling, friend, teacher, son or daughter he or she is meant to be. The positive word is so powerful that the Zohar teaches that one may not bypass the opportunity to speak it. Noticing something positive about

someone, thinking it, but not saying it, is wrong. Speech is not a loose cannon we have to rein in before it hurts someone; it is a precision tool for growth. Even one word can have an immense positive impact, as the story below illustrates.

Rosa was from Guatemala. For four years, she had worked in the Nussbaums' home, keeping it tidy and operating smoothly. She was honest, pleasant and reliable, and the Nussbaum family appreciated her tremendously. In fact, shortly after she had started working for her, Mrs. Nussbaum had thought that she would learn a few words of Spanish so she could communicate with more than gestures. However, the years went by, and all she had learned to say was "muchas gracias, senora."

One fact Rosa had managed to communicate was that she had not seen her daughter since she had left Guatemala 10 years ago, when the girl was 14. One day, Rosa arrived at the Nussbaum house with an ecstatic smile on her face. Her daughter had arrived in the U.S. with her husband. The yearned-for reunion had occurred, and this mother's heart was bursting with joy. Mrs. Nussbaum wanted her to know that they

shared in her joy, and so, she finally set about learning a word in Spanish, "feliz," meaning happy. The next day, when Rosa arrived, Mrs. Nussbaum proudly expressed her feelings in Spanish. "Feliz," she told her. "We are feliz."

Rosa's eyes lit up. She recognized the effort to reach out to her and express a heartfelt sentiment. It was as if the single word had been carefully wrapped, adorned with a bow and placed in her hands.

This is the power of *loshon tov*. Each positive word can be given as a gift, carefully chosen, wrapped with love and handed to the recipient to savor. It has the power to lift a heart, put a light in someone's eyes and make the world suddenly appear to be a kinder, more welcoming place.

IN OTHER WORDS

I will try to add more loshon tov to my conversations, and in doing so, strengthen the positive power of my speech.

"WELL, WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?"*

(Day 32 in Positive Word Power)

At 10:30 p.m., just a few moments after Aviva Gross had gratefully settled into her bed for a night's sleep, the telephone rang. "Why do people call so late?" she complained to her husband as she grabbed the phone on her night table.

"Hello? Yes, this is Aviva," she confirmed wearily to the voice on the other end of the line. The other woman was the class mother for Aviva's daughter's class. She was looking for a chaperone for tomorrow's trip to the park.

"You can't just call people at the last minute, and I've asked a million times not to be called past 10," Aviva responded irritably. "Even if I had the time, I wouldn't do it now," she concluded. "Next time, call me earlier."

The class mother on the other end of the phone mentally noted that next time she should not call Aviva Gross at all. She made a few more calls and finally, having found a willing volunteer, went to bed still smarting from Aviva's hostile response.

Aviva, however, went to bed with a peaceful heart. If people did not want to abide by her simple request, they got what they deserved, she told herself.

Few people make hurtful remarks to be cruel. Most often, there is some rationale behind the words they speak: they are just being honest, protecting their own interests, teaching someone a necessary lesson, or responding to some provocation that the other person knew would arouse a negative response.

When someone has what he considers a valid reason to criticize another person, there is still another step to take before speaking the words. That is, to find a way to say one's piece without hostile, angry words. This is especially true when one can pinpoint a particular person or situation that tends to provoke one's anger. Knowing in advance that a certain situation is likely to arouse a negative response, a person can prepare a different response. He should even rehearse that response in his mind, imagining that the irritating situation has

arisen, and that instead of lashing out, he responds in his new way.

For instance, if Aviva in the above story is frequently bothered by late-night phone calls, she can think of firm but nonconfrontational ways to convey her feeling to those who persist in calling late. "I realize that most people are still up at this time of night, but I am really serious about not getting calls after 10. This is very important to me."

When a doctor must treat a disease, he starts with the weakest appropriate medicine and only progresses to stronger medications if he sees that the weaker formula doesn't work. This is a valid paradigm for choosing one's words as well: the kindest, softest words that will do the job are the ones we are obligated to try first, no matter what the provocation, no matter what the rationale.

IN OTHER WORDS

If I am about to speak harshly in the belief that I am justified, I will pause a moment until I can think of a kinder way to make my point.

"The test of a person's spirituality
is how he treats other people."

— RAV YERUCHEM LEVOVITZ

THE HAPPY BUYER*

(Day 59 in Positive Word Power)

It had been awhile since Michal had been able to buy a new outfit. She shopped around and finally found the right combination of quality and price. The next Shabbos, she wore her outfit to shul. She relished the special feeling of newness, the sharply pleated skirt and well-cut jacket.

"Hey, Michal, nice suit," said Avigail as she caught up with her neighbor on the way to shul. "It's new, isn't it?"

"Yes," Michal said proudly. "I got it at The Dress Spot on sale. I got a great price."

"The Dress Spot? Are you kidding?" Avigail said incredulously. "Value Palace has the same brands, and even without a sale they're 10 percent cheaper. And now they're having a sale. You probably paid twice what you had to. You know, why don't you bring it back and go to Value Palace?"

"I can't return it," said Michal. "I already had it tailored."

Now Michal's regal "new suit" posture was a little more slumped as she continued on her way to shul. She hadn't even considered traveling a half-hour out of town to Value Palace.

When someone purchases a new item, one must be careful not to unnecessarily rob him of the joy of his new purchase. Unless there is a constructive purpose in criticizing the purchase, one should find something about it to praise (*Kesubos* 17a). The more expensive the item, the more careful one must be not to comment negatively.

Even if the item does not meet one's own standards of quality or value, it is likely that the person who made the purchase is satisfied on those counts. Otherwise, he would not have made the purchase. If one cannot find something to praise, he can at least acknowledge that the item is bringing the other person satisfaction: "It must feel great to walk into the living room and see a new couch."

There may, however, be a constructive purpose in telling someone about a significantly lower price or a better quality or a defect in an item. A key factor is

whether the item can be returned. If it can be, then the person has the option of acting on the advice and saving money or obtaining a better product. However, the *Pele Yoetz* (*Derech Eretz*) says that if the purchaser cannot return the item, one should not tell him that he overpaid.

Neither should one ascertain this fact by saying, "Can you return this? Because if you can, I want to tell you something. If you can't, though, there's no point." In making such a comment, one is putting the other person on notice that he has some information that would motivate him to return the item if he could. Most of the time, all someone wants is for others to admire his purchase and share his joy. It's one of the simplest ways in the world to make another person happy; it requires no expertise, no great advice: just a generous heart and a kind word.

IN OTHER WORDS

My first response when someone shows me a new purchase will be to find something about it to praise and to enhance the pleasure the purchase gives him.

THE CURE*

(Day 111 in Positive Word Power)

Moshe struggled mightily to keep his suburban lawn green and clean. Every two weeks a lawn service came to spray it with whatever insecticides or fertilizers it needed. Another crew came to mow. His sprinkler system lavished the lawn with generous showers of water at 5 a.m. each day. Indeed, it looked beautiful.

When Moshe's children asked if they could take a pile of discarded wood from their neighbor's yard and build a clubhouse on the lawn, his answer was an unequivocal "no." Such an idea would never even enter into the realm of possibility.

Why would Moshe never allow the children's clubhouse on his lawn? The reason is that he cared for it scrupulously. He invested tremendous money and effort into nurturing it, and would therefore never incline himself to do something that could damage it.

Likewise, when someone lavishes great care upon another person, damaging that person runs deeply against his grain. It makes no sense to hurt that which one

tenderly, carefully nurtures. Therefore, one powerful preventive measure against speaking *ona's devarim* is to use one's words for the opposite purpose. A person who trains himself to speak words that bring comfort, confidence and happiness to others simultaneously loses his urge to speak words that damage.

Building this capacity in oneself enables one to offer true comfort to people facing difficult times. While a person may not have the answer for the one who is suffering — he may not have the cure for the illness or the antidote to grief or worry — he can help the person recognize that Hashem is there with him in his time of darkness. The person may be in pain, but he need not feel alone if he has a friend who can gently reconnect him to the Source of all comfort.

It is not as difficult as one may think to become this kind of person. One can arrive at that level by developing an *ayin tov* — an eye that looks for the good in others — and *loshon tov* — a manner of speech that expresses the good. Often one sees something he admires or appreciates, but doesn't mention it. He notices that

his son is waking up on time for *minyan* more frequently, or his wife has been serving a dish he particularly likes, but the recognition of these small gift packages does not make it all the way from his mind to his mouth.

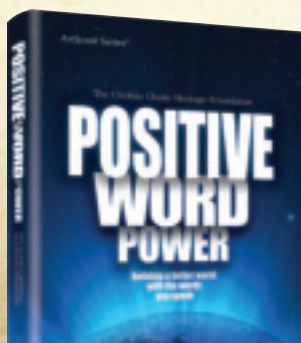
By learning to notice the good and then articulate it, one can reconstruct his entire way of interacting with others in his life. Surrounded by a world filled with good people whose lives he himself has helped to nurture, the last thing he would wish to do is mar this beautiful landscape with words that would damage it.

IN OTHER WORDS

At the same time that I work on restraining myself from speaking hurtfully, I will look for opportunities to say positive, encouraging words to others.

"A soft reply
turns away
anger."

— MISHLEI 15:1



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to work on Shmiras Haloshon,
by learning a daily lesson of Shmiras Haloshon
with your family.

Now is the time to say out loud:

“Hashem,
I forgive anyone
who has ever spoken
loshon hora
about me.”

-Based on Tefillah Zukah recited before Kol Nidrei

SHMIRAS HALOSHON YOMI CALENDAR NISSAN-IYAR 5780

SEFER CHOFETZ CHAIM

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Thursday, 1 Nissan	March 26	Hilchos LH, Klal 7, 9
	Friday, 2 Nissan	March 27	Hilchos LH, Klal 7, 10-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shabbos, 3 Nissan	March 28	Hilchos LH, Klal 7, 13-14
	Sunday, 4 Nissan	March 29	Hilchos LH, Klal 8, 1-2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monday, 5 Nissan	March 30	Hilchos LH, Klal 8 3-4
	Tuesday, 6 Nissan	March 31	Hilchos LH, Klal 8, 5-7
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wednesday, 7 Nissan	April 1	Hilchos LH, Klal 8, 8-9
	Thursday, 8 Nissan	April 2	Hilchos LH, Klal 8, 10-11
<input type="checkbox"/>	Friday, 9 Nissan	April 3	Hilchos LH, Klal 8, 12
	Shabbos, 10 Nissan	April 4	Hilchos LH, Klal 8, 13-14
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sunday, 11 Nissan	April 5	Hilchos LH, Klal 9, 1-2
	Monday, 12 Nissan	April 6	Hilchos LH, Klal 9, 3-4
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tuesday, 13 Nissan	April 7	Hilchos LH, Klal 9, 5-6
	Wednesday, 14 Nissan	April 8	Hilchos LH, Klal 10, 1-2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thursday, 15 Nissan	April 9	Hilchos LH, Klal 10, 3-4
	Friday, 16 Nissan	April 10	Hilchos LH, Klal 10, 5-6
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shabbos, 17 Nissan	April 11	Hilchos LH, Klal 10, 7-8
	Sunday, 18 Nissan	April 12	Hilchos LH, Klal 10, 9-10
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monday, 19 Nissan	April 13	Hilchos LH, Klal 10, 11-12
	Tuesday, 20 Nissan	April 14	Hilchos LH, Klal 10, 13-14
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wednesday, 21 Nissan	April 15	Hilchos LH, Klal 10, 15-16
	Thursday, 22 Nissan	April 16	Hilchos LH, Kal 10, 17
<input type="checkbox"/>	Friday, 23 Nissan	April 17	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 1, 1-3
	Shabbos, 24 Nissan	April 18	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 1, 4-5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sunday, 25 Nissan	April 19	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 1, 6-7
	Monday, 26 Nissan	April 20	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 1, 8-9
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tuesday, 27 Nissan	April 21	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 1, 10-11
	Wednesday, 28 Nissan	April 22	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 2, 1-2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thursday, 29 Nissan	April 23	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 2, 3-4
	Friday, 30 Nissan	April 24	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 3, 1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shabbos, 1 Iyar	April 25	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 3, 2-4
	Sunday, 2 Iyar	April 26	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 4, 1-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monday, 3 Iyar	April 27	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 5, 1-2
	Tuesday, 4 Iyar	April 28	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 5, 3-4
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wednesday, 5 Iyar	April 29	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 5, 5
	Thursday, 6 Iyar	April 30	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 5, 6-7
<input type="checkbox"/>	Friday, 7 Iyar	May 1	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 6, 1-2
	Shabbos, 8 Iyar	May 2	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 6, 3-4
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sunday, 9 Iyar	May 3	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 6, 5-7
	Monday, 10 Iyar	May 4	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 6, 8-10
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tuesday, 11 Iyar	May 5	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 7, 1
	Wednesday, 12 Iyar	May 6	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 7, 2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thursday, 13 Iyar	May 7	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 7, 3-4
	Friday, 14 Iyar	May 8	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 7, 5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shabbos, 15 Iyar	May 9	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 8, 1-3
	Sunday, 16 Iyar	May 10	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 8, 4-5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monday, 17 Iyar	May 11	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 9, 1-2
	Tuesday, 18 Iyar	May 12	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 9, 3-4
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wednesday, 19 Iyar	May 13	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 9, 5-6
	Thursday, 20 Iyar	May 14	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 9, 7-9
<input type="checkbox"/>	Friday, 21 Iyar	May 15	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 9, 10
	Shabbos, 22 Iyar	May 16	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 9, 11-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sunday, 23 Iyar	May 17	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 9, 13
	Monday, 24 Iyar	May 18	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 9, 14-15
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tuesday, 25 Iyar	May 19	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 9, Tziyurim 1-3
	Wednesday, 26 Iyar	May 20	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 9, Tziyurim 4-5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thursday, 27 Iyar	May 21	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 9, Tziyurim 6-7
	Friday, 28 Iyar	May 22	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 9, Tziyurim 8-9
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shabbos, 29 Iyar	May 23	Hilchos Rechilus, Klal 9, Tziyurim 10-11



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YOU PLACE YOURSELF UNDER HASHEM'S PROTECTION.

"Hashem says: I can save you from all harm, provided that you 'Conceal yourself from a prowling tongue' (loshon hora)."

— Zechor L'Miriam, perek 3

YOU LIVE IN HARMONY WITH OTHERS

"Through Shmiras Haloshon one is blessed with the precious quality of peace. By refraining from speaking ill of others, one ensures that he will not be the object of their enmity; to the contrary, others will love him and confide in him."

— Sefer Shmiras Haloshon, Shaar Hazeichirah, perek 11

YOU SECURE YOUR LIVELIHOOD

"I would advise those seeking to improve their economic situation to take exceedingly great care in regard to loshon hora..."

"If one respects another person's feelings and possessions, his own possessions shall certainly be blessed more than if he had performed any segulah."

— Sefer Shmiras Haloshon, chelek beis, perek 9

YOU MAXIMIZE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR TORAH AND TEFILLAH

TORAH Through the loshon hora and rechilus one speaks, one loses the little Torah one has... but, the Chofetz Chaim concludes, the Torah of someone who is careful with Shmiras Haloshon is cherished in the eyes of Hashem, since it will contain no shortcoming.

— Sefer Shmiras Haloshon, chelek beis, perek 26

TEFILLAH The prayers of one guilty of loshon hora do not appear before the Holy One. But the Torah writes that as soon as one repents and resolves to change, then:

"On the very day he purifies himself, he shall be brought to the Kohen..."

— Vayikra 14:2

YOU CREATE DEFENDERS IN HEAVEN WHO WILL INVOKE COMPASSION FOR YOU

"One who speaks well of his fellow man, the angels speak well of him in front of Hashem."

— Midrash Mishlei 12

YOU ACQUIRE GREAT BLESSING

"One who refrains from speaking loshon hora receives an extraordinary blessing."

— Sefer Shmiras Haloshon, chelek beis, perek 23

"There is no family in the world who studies the laws of loshon hora daily who has not seen some form of salvation in their lives."

— Rabbi Yehuda Zev Segal, Manchester Rosh Yeshivah, zt"l, founder of Shmiras Haloshon Yomi

YOU HELP REBUILD THE BEIS HAMIKDASH

"Whoever strengthens himself to correct this sin will have a share in the future Beis Hamikdash."

— Sefer Shmiras Haloshon, chelek beis, perek 7

YOU BUILD YOUR SHARE IN OLAM HABAH

"The main way to merit Olam Haba is through guarding one's tongue. This is more important than any Torah or good deeds he has...because the mouth is 'holy of holies'."

— Vilna Gaon, in his famous Iggeres HaGra

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