
THE WEISS EDITION

שמות

Shemos



The Scary Truth about Lashon Hara

The Power of Positive Thinking

A Donkey with a History

Don't Mind Your Own Business

Light points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION



Lightpoints

לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת

הרה"ח הרה"ת הרה"ג ישעיהו זושא

ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם

נלב"ע ביום ד' שבט התשפ"ב

תנצב"ה



שמות *Shemos*

ב:יד | 2:14

וַיֵּרָא מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּאמֶר אֵלָיו נֹדַע הַדָּבָר

Moshe became frightened and said, “Indeed, the matter has become known!”

The Scary Truth about Lashon Hara

The redemption from Egypt marked the birth of the Jewish people—when Bnei Yisrael were chosen by G-d to be His nation.

This status was not earned through their virtues or merits. (In fact, due to the many years they spent in Egypt, many of Bnei Yisrael had fallen so low as to be drawn to idolatry.¹) Rather, they attained their status as G-d’s nation simply by His *choice*. In contrast with a *decision*, based on the qualities of the object or person selected, “pure choice” means to select

1. See Mishneh Torah, Hil. Avodah Zarah 1:3.

between options that may be of equal merit; the selection of one over the other is unrelated to its qualities. That is why it was possible for Bnei Yisrael in Egypt to be chosen by G-d (and therefore redeemed) despite their lowly spiritual state at the time.

Yet, when Moshe discovered that there were talebearers among Bnei Yisrael, he became alarmed. “Since this is so,” worried Moshe, “perhaps they do not deserve to be redeemed.”² Why did Moshe fear that *lashon hara*, gossip, would render Bnei Yisrael undeserving of being chosen and redeemed, more so than any other sin?

Lashon hara is unique among all other sins in its divisiveness. In addition to causing tension between people, gossiping about another person’s deficiencies demonstrates that you lack empathy toward that person, even if you have no intention of causing that person actual harm, G-d forbid.

Accordingly, we can understand the cause for Moshe’s concern upon discovering talebearers among Bnei Yisrael. Although G-d’s selection of Bnei Yisrael as His nation was not contingent on their virtues, in order to be the Chosen Nation it was necessary for them to be a unit, and not a group of isolated individuals. Moshe therefore feared that the divisiveness of *lashon hara* could ruin their cohesiveness and their identity as a unit, thereby preventing them from becoming the Chosen Nation. Though they might not have required any other virtue or merit to qualify as G-d’s choice, only through unity could Bnei Yisrael constitute a “nation” that G-d could choose as His own.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 31, pp. 8–12

2. Rashi, Shemos 2:14.

2:14-15 | ב:יד-טו

וַיִּירָא מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲכֵן נֹדַע הַדָּבָר:
וַיִּשְׁמַע פַּרְעֹה אֶת הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וַיִּבְקֹשׁ לְהַרְגוֹ
אֶת מֹשֶׁה וַיִּבְרַח מֹשֶׁה מִפְּנֵי פַרְעֹה

*Moshe became frightened and said, "Indeed,
the matter has become known." Pharaoh heard
of this incident, and he sought to slay Moshe;
and Moshe fled from before Pharaoh.*

The Power of Positive Thinking

When Moshe discovered that people knew he had killed an Egyptian taskmaster, he became fearful for his future. Indeed, Pharaoh learned of the episode shortly thereafter, and sought to have him killed.

With this episode, the Torah hints at the extraordinary power of *bitachon*—complete trust in G-d’s goodness and grace.

Having *bitachon* requires more than mere belief that since G-d orchestrates every detail of existence at every moment, whatever happens to you will certainly be for the very best. Rather, to have *bitachon* means to *be at ease* and trust that G d will grant you goodness in the most obvious sense of the word.

How can you be confident that G-d will indeed bless you with revealed good? Does the Torah not promise that G-d will reward those who are worthy and punish those who are not?

Based on the verse “He who trusts in G-d, kindness will encompass him,”³ the Sefer HaIkkarim explains: “Even if one

3. Tehillim 32:10.

is not worthy on his own accord, *bitachon* draws down gratuitous kindness [from Above] upon he who trusts in G-d.”⁴ In other words, fervent *bitachon* alone makes a person worthy of G-d’s blessings. Thus, if a person genuinely trusts that he is in G-d’s good hands (and therefore not subject to any natural limitations), then he can be certain that G-d will guard him and provide for him in a revealed way—even if he is not necessarily worthy of this for any other reason. To paraphrase the Tzemach Tzedek’s famous advice, “If you think positively, the future *will be* positive.”

The Torah alludes to this principle of *bitachon* by telling us about Moshe’s worries, which preceded the actual threat to his life. Considering the Torah’s usual conciseness, the fact that it makes special note of Moshe’s unease even before Pharaoh sought to execute him suggests that Moshe’s fear actually contributed to the outcome. Had Moshe not been afraid, the threat to his life would never have materialized.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 36, pp. 1–6

4. Sefer HaIkkarim 4:46.

 4:20 | ד:ב

וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת בָּנָיו וַיִּרְכָּבֵם עַל הַחֲמֹר

*Moshe took his wife and sons,
and mounted them on the donkey.*

A Donkey with a History

The donkey that Moshe’s family rode on to Egypt was not your average donkey; it was what the Torah calls “The Donkey.” Rashi explains, “This was the donkey that Avraham saddled to travel to the Akeidah of Yitzchak, and it is the one upon which Moshiach is destined to appear.”

In view of this donkey’s uniqueness, we can understand why the Torah makes mention of Moshe’s means of transportation at all. Evidently, this illustrious animal carried particular significance for the mission upon which Moshe was about to embark.

For seven days, G-d implored Moshe to accept the mission of redeeming Bnei Yisrael.⁵ Moshe argued that his brother, Aharon, was older and more suitable for the task than he was, and Moshe did not want to offend him. Additionally, Moshe said, “I know that I am not destined to take them into the Land of Israel and to be their Future Redeemer. You have other messengers (i.e., the future Moshiach)—send them!”⁶

Ultimately, G-d insisted, and Moshe accepted the mission. To address Moshe’s concerns, G-d arranged that the donkey upon which his family traveled to Egypt was “The Donkey.”

5. See Rashi, Shemos 4:10.

6. Rashi, Shemos 4:13.

The donkey served as a reminder that although our forefather Avraham had good reason to hesitate when G-d instructed him to offer his son Yitzchak as a sacrifice, he “arose early in the morning, and he saddled his donkey.”⁷ As Rashi explains there, out of love for G-d and eagerness to obey His command, Avraham hastened to saddle the donkey himself, instead of commanding his servants to do so. Thus, the donkey represents the eagerness with which one must approach G-d’s instructions. Accordingly, even if Moshe was legitimately concerned for his brother’s honor, the donkey hinted that he should emulate Avraham and not hesitate to carry out G-d’s command that *he* redeem Bnei Yisrael.

Moreover, with this donkey’s distinction as the one upon which Moshiach is destined to appear, G-d responded to Moshe’s second argument as well. The donkey’s destiny hinted to Moshe that the redemption of Bnei Yisrael through Moshiach is not a separate, future redemption; it is contingent upon and will be a continuation of the redemption from Egypt that Moshe was about to lead.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 31, pp. 15–18

7. Bereishis 22:3.

5:4 | ד:ה

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לָמָּה מְשֻׁבִּים וְאַהֲרֹן
תִּפְרִיעוּ אֶת הָעָם מִמַּעֲשֵׂיו לָכוּ לְסִבְלַתִּיכֶם

The king of Egypt said to them, “Why, Moshe and Aharon, do you disturb the people from their work? Go to your own labors.”

Don’t Mind Your Own Business

When Moshe and Aharon asked Pharaoh to allow Bnei Yisrael to leave Egypt and worship G-d in the wilderness, Pharaoh dismissed them, saying, “Why do you disturb the people from their work? Go back to your own labor!” The commentaries note that Pharaoh told Moshe and Aharon to return to their *own* labor, indicating that their work was unlike the rest of the nation’s.⁸ For as the Ramban explains, Pharaoh recognized the need for a nation to have spiritual leaders. He therefore exempted the tribe of Levi from slave labor, and allowed them to be the scholars and teachers of Bnei Yisrael.⁹

Accordingly, Pharaoh told Moshe and Aharon to be thankful that they themselves were free to study and teach Torah, and not to interfere with the rest of the nation’s enslavement. Moreover, said Pharaoh, practically speaking (as well as by the Divine decree that they be slaves for 400 years) Bnei Yisrael are unable to escape Egyptian servitude at this time, so why waste your time trying to change the reality?

Moshe and Aharon, however, ignored Pharaoh’s warnings. They were not content with being free to study on their own,

8. See Rashi ad loc.

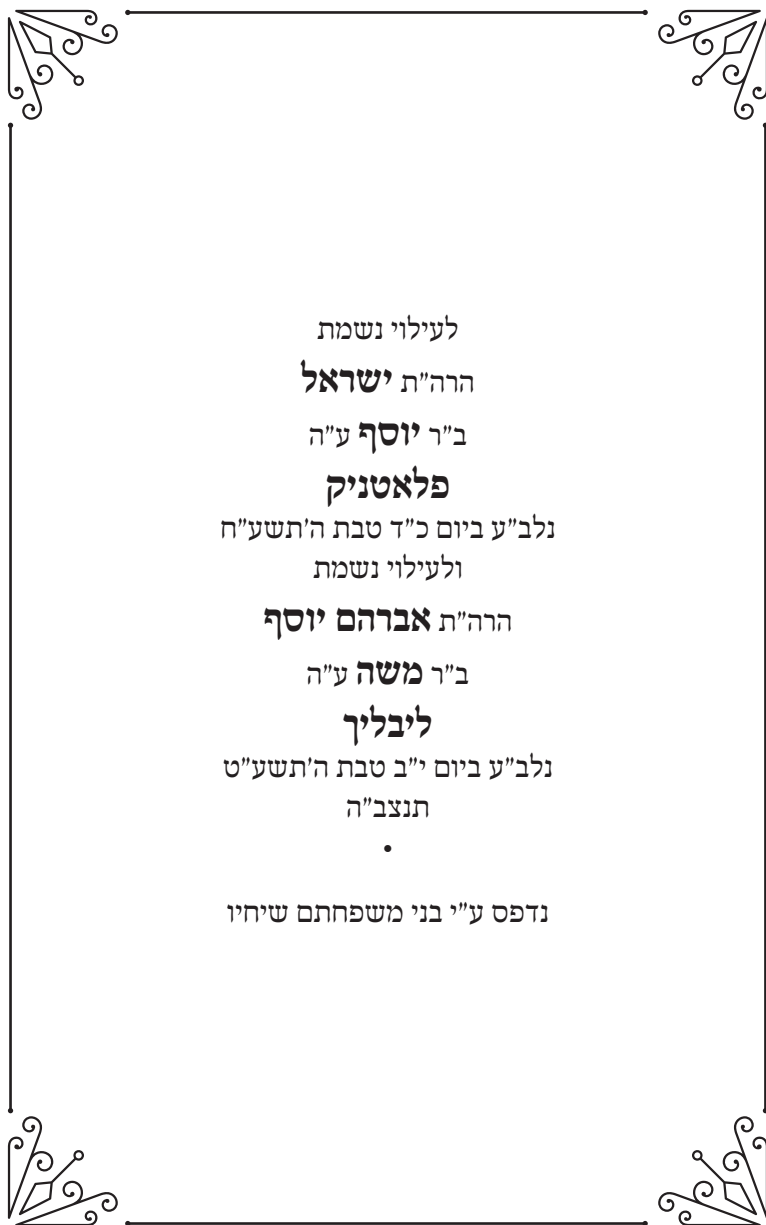
9. See Ramban ad loc.

or even to occasionally teach the rest of Bnei Yisrael. Instead, despite the odds against them, they campaigned for the entire nation to be set free, ultimately saving them just in the nick of time. As the Arizal taught, had Bnei Yisrael remained in Egypt for even one moment longer, they could never have been redeemed from the spiritual abyss to which they would have plunged.¹⁰

From Moshe and Aharon's debate with Pharaoh we learn that to concern ourselves exclusively with our own Torah study and observance is an attitude that stems from Pharaoh. In contrast, a Jew strives to ensure that his fellow Jews are also serving G-d, and studying and observing His Torah, no matter how unlikely it seems for him to succeed at this mission. When there are lives to save from Pharaoh, or from the spiritual Pharaohs of our time, every chance is worth taking, and no moment is too soon.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 16, pp. 29–31

10. See Siddur HaArizal, Haggadah Shel Pesach, s.v. Matzah Zo.



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ב"ר **יוסף** ע"ה

פלאטניק

נלב"ע ביום כ"ד טבת ה'תשע"ח

ולעילוי נשמות

הרה"ת **אברהם יוסף**

ב"ר **משה** ע"ה

ליבליך

נלב"ע ביום י"ב טבת ה'תשע"ט

תנצב"ה

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נדפס ע"י בני משפחתם שיחיו

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בת ר' מנחם מענדל ע"ה

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