



Mattot - Masei



English version

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You are what you say

Your speech defines who you are. Like it or not. The Shlah Hakodosh wrote, *the very saying Be'ezrat Hashem, Bsiyata Dishmaya, (with the help of Heaven,) before everything that you do, has in it the power to help you, and to make you successful, in that thing that you are dealing with.* (Shaar Haotiot 1) *It is good to get used to saying, Me'et Hashem, it is all from G-d. (Mishlei Hachamim 1)* This is the way of our Forefather Yaakov. (See Bereshit 27; 21- Rashi)

Why is it important to say this? Why can't you just think this in your heart? King David answered the question. **הִאֲמַנְתִּי - כִּי אֲדַבֵּר** I believed, when I spoke (Tehillim 116;10). Hassidic masters explain this, that the Emunah and the Bitahon come to a person through his putting it into words. This is because your heart is hardwired to your actions. Why? Why do the words you use carry such a heavy weight on your identity?

אִישׁ כִּי-יִדַּר לְדַבֵּר לִיקוּם אִוִּי-הַשָּׁבַע שְׁבַע לְאָסוּר אָסוּר עַל-נַפְשׁוֹ לֹא יִקַּח דְּבָרוֹ כְּכֹל-הַיָּצֵא מִפִּי יַעֲשֶׂה *A man who promises a promise to G-d or swears an oath to make something forbidden to his soul, he shall not make light his word. Whatever came out of his moth, this shall he do.*

Our Rabbis learn from here the power of speech of a man who keeps his promises. If

one is careful with his word, not to transgress it, G-d Himself, **יַעֲשֶׂה**, will do whatever comes out of this person's mouth.

Transgressing your vows, even a commitment or promise, can be one of the worst sins of the Torah, transgressing the second of the Ten Commandments. It is so severe that we begin Yom Kippur with Kol Nidrei. Some Sephardic customs are not only Hatarat Nedarim before Rosh Hashana, but a few times before Yom Kippur. For transgressing vows, commitments or promises that were not given the condition of "b'li neder", one's wife and/or children can – G-d forbid - die. (Shabbat 32b) What?! Why so harsh? Why is transgressing your word, without saying Bli Neder, so important? And does this mean that I should not promise or commit to anything at all?

The answer is that when you transgress such verbal transgressions, you show that you are not a real person, with real commitments. If you committed to something, you value it. You have positive feelings towards it. It means this is the spiritual you. To be a good husband, to be a good father, you need to be one who can stay committed. One who can't keep commitments, may risk losing his wife and children.



In life coaching, we are taught the power of a true commitment: it is made with deliberation, determination and motivation. It drives you towards your goals. It keeps you going, even though you haven't yet seen results. Commitment keeps marriages together. When you say, "Harei At...", you are committing to all that marriage entails. Commitment is the glue that holds any relationship together. If you cannot commit, you cannot remain a part of a community, synagogue, or any other group. Commitment holds our nation together, and it keeps G-d connected to us. Commitment is the very essence of what it means to be a Jew.

Businesses are built on commitment. All business concepts begin with the question, Who are you committed to serve and what are you committed to offer? Until you walk, talk, breathe your commitment, you have not started your business.

This is what a running coach has written. It gave me a whole new insight on the importance of what we commit to, and the severity of transgressing our word.

"There is a very real power in our words A verbal declaration should be clear and specific. It should detail "what" and "by when". "Bli Neder, I commit to ..." " Bli Neder, I shall ..." Avoid weak sentences: "I'll try..." "I want to ..." "I would like to ..." Another good example might be: "I will lose 3kg by May 30 this year" as opposed to: "I'll try to lose weight."

Your subconscious mind is a super powerful recording device that remembers all the times you have or haven't done what you said you would do. It doesn't record the excuses, and whether they are legit or not. If you promised to go to gym at 6am but you press snooze and

go at 6.30, this is recorded, and your integrity is compromised. Likewise, if you promise to meet a friend for coffee at 11am and you get there at 11:05, it's recorded [in your mind] as a time when you broke your word. These add up and impact your overall integrity or character. The gist is, how can you expect yourself to reach your BIG goals, if you cannot trust yourself with little ones? They are directly related, so keep a check on your integrity. It's the fuel behind the power of your word.

When G-d created the world, He did so through speech. הוא אמר ויהי *He said, and it was...* R Nachman from Breslev would teach that for your greatest desires to come to fruition, you must transform inspiration, motivation, what touches your soul, into words. As the passuk says, רצון יראיו יעשה ואה שוועתם ישמע ויושיעם. *The will of those who fear Him, He will do; and their cry, He will hear and He will save them.* Only after they put the requests of their heart into words, will G-d heed their prayer. When one speaks excitedly about his will, this brings his soul into his words, as it says נפשי יצאה בדברו. This takes his thoughts into action.

The Arizal was quoted saying that a person has only a certain amount of vain words in life. (Words of Torah and prayer are not part of this count.) Once a person finishes those words, life ends. This is hinted to into the words of Shir Hashirim. נִפְשִׁי יִצְאָה בְּדַבְרֵי (Shir Hashirim 5) *My soul left, when it spoke.* This idea was also mentioned in the words of the Darchei Tzedek, student of the Noam Elimelech. (Also see Derech Pikudecha L'T 34) Words, commitment and soul are inseparable.

ברוך אומר ועושה ברוך גזר ומקיים. *Blessed is He Who says and does. Blessed is the One who decrees and keeps (His Word)* The very



beginning of our praise to G-d is that He keeps His word. We should follow His example.

HAVE A HEART

Secret Recipe for Ruach Hakodesh:

“Any wise Jewish man who has in him true words of the Torah, who mourns over the belittled Honor of G-d and the Honor of the Jewish People... and deeply desires, feels sorry and troubled over the honor of Jerusalem and the Temple, and the Salvation that should hopefully happen soon, and wishes that the Jewish Nation return from Exile- he will be worthy of having Ruach Hakodesh in his words... (Messilat Yesharim ch. 19, quoting a Tanna D’vei Eliyahu)

Why is a person granted Ruach Hakodesh in return for feeling deeply concerned about G-d’s Honor, the Temple and the Honor of the Jews? What is so special about crying and feeling bad about G-d’s Glory having been so greatly diminished ?

One of the highest levels of Ruach Hakodesh was having the breastplate – , אורים – חושן משפט – on the heart. Aharon Hakohen merited bearing the breastplate on his heart for something he did. When Moshe came from the desert and told his older brother, Aharon, the Gadol Hador of the Jews in Egypt, “I will be the leader of the Jewish People, to take them out of Egypt”, Aharon was genuinely elated. He was not jealous or hurt. He had a much bigger heart than that. And such a heart was worthy of having on it the חושן משפט. (Shabbat 139a) The Maharsha points out that Aharon was not just happy; he was *happy in his heart*. Some brothers would, in such a situation, be happy on the outside, but burn from jealousy within. Not Aharon. His natural reaction, coming from deep within, was happiness. He was happy in his heart. Such a

heart is deserving of the אורים ותומים, the Choshen Mishpat.

What difference does it make if one is happy for his brother in his heart or just on the outside, going through the mechanical expressions of joy? What difference does it make if one goes through Tish’a b’Av with his heart or without it?

If we look closely at how the Torah introduces us to building a Sanctuary (שמות כה), we will notice an unexpected order in the verses that makes us wonder at the reasoning behind it. First, G-d says מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו תקחו את תרומתי *“From each man whose heart is desirous of giving shall you take my donations.”* And only after that, a few pesukkim later, it says ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם *“And they shall make me a Sanctuary, and I will dwell amongst them.”* It would seem to us that the Torah should first tell us what the main idea is, i.e., building a Sanctuary, and only then say how to get the funding for it! Why is the passuk of the “generous hearts” giving donations mentioned first?

The answer is that the main purpose of the Temple was not the sacrificing of korbanot. G-d did not and does not need our korbanot. What He does want is our hearts. That is the main goal. The Temple was a place where we could express what was in the heart. Hence, the Temple is referred to as none other than הר הלבנון , Mt. of Lebanon. The root of this word is the Hebrew word לבן , meaning white. Lebanon – the Temple – the place where the sins of the Jews were made white – where they were transformed from “stains” to purity. On a deeper level, we find within the same word an



additional root: לב, heart. לבנון is a lot of hearts. And when someone would come to the Beit Hamikdash, he would get Ruach Hakodesh there. This is where Yonah received his prophecy for the people of Ninveh. This same Ruach Hakodesh was that with which, as Yirmiyahu explained to Plato, he was able to answer all Plato's philosophical questions. Clarity in life was one of the things that one got by just entering the Beit Hamikdash, and something that we lost along with the Temple. And this Ruach Hakodesh came to the hearts of the people, because our hearts were the way they were supposed to be.

What is the way the heart is supposed to be? We see from Aharon that he was praised for his heart having had room for his brother. Aharon was able to put his prestigious position aside for the purpose of his brother redeeming the Jewish People from Egypt. "Have a heart" means make place in your value system, your system of evaluating importance, for other people and for what they are going through. And this is what G-d wants. When we make place in our hearts for others, then our hearts are worthy of being whitened from sin. When we do not have a place for others in our hearts, שנאת הנם, senseless hatred takes over, and by default, there is no place for a Beis Hamikdash.

How does one open the heart? With a question. The Meggilat Eicha starts off each Perek with

the word Eicha – How. How did such a thing happen? The meggilah does not answer the question. Someone might ask, what difference does it make how it happened? It happened, and it is very sad. No! The whole of Eicha is a powerful question that leaves us thinking throughout the darkest parts of Galut. When someone is left with a question, the mind is always trying to come up with an answer. Until there is an answer, the heart is not at rest. Yirmiyahu wants us to open our hearts and to answer the question he asks, over and over, in Eicha.

We say in our Mussaf prayers on holidays מפני חטאינו גלינו מארצינו ונתרחקנו מעל אדמתנו *Because of our sins we were exiled from our country and we have been distanced from our land.* What is the repetition? In our prayers, we mention that not only are we in exile and physically distanced from our Land, we are also emotionally distanced from Eretz Yisrael. It is almost out of our hearts. The answer is perfect for our generation. We are in a cell phone generation. How do we know that someone took another person out of his mind, out of his heart and no longer cares about the guy? He deletes him from his cell phone. Jerusalem, the Beit Hamikdash, the עזר השכינה is almost deleted from our memories. The only memory we have left is in a back up. Tisha B'av. Let's restore what is almost lost...

To support this publication, or receive it by e-mail, please email me at rabbiyoseffarhi@gmail.com.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF SONNY AND IRENE GINDI A"H

