



A collection of
Torah thoughts
produced by the
Kollel

חידוש Chiddush

אין בית המדרש בלא

KOLLEL UPDATES

AVOS UBONIM

The final Avos Ubonim of the Summer term takes place this Sunday at 6:15pm in the Mezzanine. After Pesach we will resume on Motzai Shabbos with more learning, fun and of course hot soup

Our recent Yeshivas Mordechai Hatzaddik was a huge success. Over 60 boys in full costumes participated in this unique Avos Ubanim event. On a busy day like Purim it is very special to see so many boys and fathers make time for Limmud HaTorah.

HAGGADAH SHIUR

Rabbi Lazarus taught a fascinating shiur on the Haggadah for men and women.

Drawing on the commentaries and Chassidic masters, he explored key parts of the Haggadah, sharing insights and *vertelach* which the large crowd will now be able to share at their own sederim.

4 PARSHIYOS

The final 2 shiurim in the 4-Parshiyos series were well attended concluding a fascinating series. Crafting a structured presentation filled with Torah sources, Rabbi Johnson revealed the essence of each Parsha as a lesson in our personal growth and Avodas Hashem.



This edition has been kindly sponsored by
Mr & Mrs Yossi Kleiñ
in the zechus of their children and grandchildren and
The birthday of Sholom Dovber ב' ניסן
The birthday of Chana Devorah and her son
Menachem Mendel י"א ניסן

What Do You **twitter** ?

Social media has revolutionised the way we communicate. Facebook, Blogs, WhatsApp and of course Twitter's short 140 character "tweets" enables us to communicate our thoughts instantaneously across the world.

Parshas Metzora describes the purification of the Metzora. There are many negative qualities for which a person would be afflicted with Tzaraas, but the most famous is for speaking Lashon Hora.

The Metzora is treated *Middah Kneged Middah*. The victim of Lashon Hora inevitably experiences social isolation. The Metzora had to experience the same sense of isolation by being sent out of the city. As part of their purification, the Metzora would bring two birds. Why birds? Says the Talmud (Arachin 16a), because like the speaker of Lashon Hora, they Twitter!

Guarding our speech is an important part of Yiddishkeit. At the end of every Shemoneh Esrei we ask Hashem *guard my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceitfully*. Many great tragedies, including the sale of Yosef, the decree that Bnei Yisroel could not enter Eretz Yisroel and the destruction of the second Beis Hamikdosh and subsequent Golus, came about because of Lashon Hora. The Chofetz Chaim lists 17 *Issurim Deoraisa* which are possibly violated each time Lashon Hora is spoken.

A Word on Technology

Technology has changed our lives so much and brings with it its own halachic considerations. The Tzemach Tzedek says: *a spoken word will reach rabim (not only those present). A written word reaches the entire world, and the printed word is for all generations.*

This *pisgam* is applied in the positive sense: words of

Torah which are written or printed will impact for all time. It is also true in the converse. Lashon Hora which is spoken will have a limited reach. But Lashon Hora which has been printed is *ledorei doros*.

This is much more the case with social media. An email or blog can go viral, reaching literally the entire world within minutes. One click could lead to destroyed reputations, broken relationships and friendships, loss of *parnasa* and compromised shidduchim. Our posts can cause untold psychological damage and suffering.

The digital "footprint" means whatever is uploaded or put into cyberspace remains forever. Spoken Lashon Hora will eventually be forgotten or become old news. But in cyberspace it remains forever and the damage is perpetuated. If we take the famous parable of retrieving the feathers from a pillow shaken in the wind, retrieving online 'feathers' is a *virtually* impossibility.



The Chassidic Approach

Lashon Hora was traditionally a rarely discussed topic in Chassidic circles. This was not *chas veshalom* because the halachos are not important and need not be studied. Rather it is because Chassidus emphasises the assured way to control our speech – by increasing Ahavas Yisroel and speaking positively about others. In the Alter Rebbe's words;

"Therefore, my beloved and dear ones, I beg again and again that each of you exert himself with all his heart and soul to firmly implant in his heart a love for his fellow. And, in the words of verse "let none of you consider in your heart what is evil for his fellow." Moreover, [such a consideration] should never arise in one's heart [in the first place]; and if it does arise, one should push it away from his heart "as smoke is driven away," as if it were an actual idolatrous thought.



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HALOCHA SHIURIM

Women

Rabbi Johnson delivered two practical Halocha shiurim on cleaning the home and koshering the kitchen for Pesach.

The shiurim focused on reducing stress levels by distinguishing between what is halachically necessary and what is “spring cleaning”.

The Monday morning Halocha shiur for young women will resume after Pesach.

Men

Rabbi Michoel Stern delivered a shiur for men on the halachos of Pesach including Bedikas Chometz and this Tuesday night for a Pre-Pesach Halocha shiur.

KASHERING

The annual Kollel Menachem *keilim* kashering service will take place on Tuesday April 8, Nissan 8 between 6-9pm.

Reminder: All *keilim* being koshered should be thoroughly cleaned and left unused for 24 hours prior to koshering.

KOLLEL STUDIES

After recently having welcomed 5 new Yungeleit to the Kollel, the Beis Medrash is a buzz with serious learning throughout the day.

We are currently learning Dinei Taharah in depth with weekly shiurim on the sugya being studied and regular tests.

We have a talented group of Yungeleit who are ready and available to learn. If you are interested in the opportunity to make a Chavrusa, please contact Rabbi Johnson.

The Zman comes to an end this week Wednesday and seder will resume after Pesach with some new and exciting shiurim and learning opportunities for the whole community.

For to speak evil [of another] is as grave as idolatry and incest and bloodshed. And if this be so with speech, [then surely thinking evil about another is even worse]; for all the wise of heart are aware of the greater impact [on the soul] of thought over speech!" (Tanya Igeres Hakodesh 22).

The ultimate way to overcome negativity and darkness is by focussing on the positive and bringing light. In the famous Sichah on Parshas Emor (Likkutei Sichos 27), the Rebbe observes;

The Midrash teaches that Lashon Hora kills three people – the one who speaks it, the one who hears it and the one of whom it is being said. It is understandable why the ones who hears or speaks Lashon Hora is affected negatively because they are involved in a sin. But why should the innocent person about whom it is said be affected?

The Rebbe explains that speech reveals that which was hidden. When we speak negatively about others, we harm them by bringing their faults into the revealed state. Until then, their faults may have been hidden and unexpressed. When we ‘reveal’ it through our speech, we bring that fault into the “world of speech”, activating it and bringing it out into the open. This is the negative impact on the one spoken about. The label becomes self-fulfilling.

The Torah is interpreted *מכלל לאו אתה שומע הן* - from the negative we can deduce the positive, and the good is always infinitely more powerful than the bad.

Speaking positively about others and complimenting their strengths and qualities creates an infinite good-

ness. When we make a point to focus on and emphasise the virtues of another person and reveal that in our speech, we reveal it within them and help them to actualise those very virtues.

In his famous Tefillah the Noam Elimelech writes *Place into our hearts that we should see the qualities of our friends and not their shortcomings. And that each of us should speak about their friend in a way which is upright and favourable before You.*

Shlomo Hamelech says, *Life and death are in the hands of the tongue* (Mishlei 18:21). Our tongues, our blogs, online comments and email and social media accounts are powerful tools which literally hold the balance between life and death, between Golus and the Geulah which are all awaiting. How we use them and what we use them for is in our hands.

Let’s unleash a revolution of Lashon HaTov and go viral with words of positivity. Let’s print words which will impact generations with Ahavas Yisroel and Achdus Yisroel. Let’s see and focus on the good qualities in others and always try to judge them favourably. Remember to compliment others and praise their actions. A word of support, acknowledgement and encouragement can go a long way.

Our community has experienced enough sadness and suffering. Now is the time for spreading happiness and light.

So the next time you “tweet” fill your 140 characters with words which will promote peace and harmony, respect and love and do your part to eradicate the world of negativity and darkness. Those 140 characters just may have the power to bring the Geulah. ■

A Selection of Halachos

The Rebbe referred to the Chofetz Chaim as someone who championed Ahavas Yisroel and in this merit his Mishna Berura was accepted throughout the world. His masterpiece *Chofetz Chaim* discusses the halachos of Lashon Hora in great detail, including some of the following halachos:

- Lashon Hora is specifically *true* information which is negative or harmful to another person. False slander falls into a different category known as *Motzi Sheim Ra*.
- Lashon Hora applies even when *not* spoken out of hatred or intent to do harm.
- The *Issur* of speaking Lashon Hora applies when spoken about any Jew, whether male or female, adult or child, whether they are alive or deceased. It makes no difference if they are related to you.
- Lashon Hora should not be spoken even between family members or between husband and wife.
- It is forbidden to accept or believe Lashon Hora. One who accepts Lashon Hora is even worse than the one who spoke it (Kitsur Shulchan Aruch 30).
- It is still Lashon Hora even when written or only implied through hints and gestures.
- Anonymous *Pashkvilin* (or blog comments) violates not only Lashon Hora but also *מכה רעהו בסתר*.
- If the intention is to further the Lashon Hora, or it is spread to those would not otherwise know, it remains *ossur* no matter how many others have already heard it. This is an often mis-understood halacha.
- Lashon Hora about *Talmidei Chachamim* violates the *posuk* *את דבר ה' ביזה* (Yoreh Deah 343:6). The Chofetz Chaim writes that by slandering a Rov who paskens shaalos this can cause great damage, encouraging people to stop asking shaalos or follow piskei halocha.
- If and when matters arise which need to be discussed or communicated as a *Toeles*, they need to be done in a forum and manner which is appropriate (in private and without embarrassment) and only in a manner which can be constructive and in consultation with a Rov or Mashpia.