



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

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Having just celebrated *Rosh Chodesh Nisan* this past week, we begin to prepare and look ahead to the *yom tov* of *Pesach*. It is no coincidence that over these next two *Shabbatot* leading up to *Pesach*, we'll read the *parshiyot* of *Tazria* and *Metzora*, which both focus largely on the spiritual affliction of *Tzaarat*. *Chazal* in *Masechet Arachin* explain that *Tzaarat* appears as a consequence of slanderous speech.

In contrast, among the many incredible messages inherent in the *Seder Layl Pesach* experience is the fundamental idea of sacred speech. Speech plays a central role in the entire evening. Our *Chazal* teach us that we must verbally express and recall the many details and nuances of the redemption from Egypt. Our youngest children traditionally verbalize four questions to begin this dialogue. We then reply to those four questions by stating:

“Avadim HaYinu LeParoh BMITzraim- We were Slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt...and there is a mitzvah incumbent upon each of us to discuss and tell of the redemption from Egypt.”
“Vchol Hamarbeh lesaper b'yetziat mitzrayim — harei zeh meshubach...” — *“All who say **much** in their description of the redemption from Egypt are to be praised...”*

In the *Haggadah* text of the *Rambam*, we note a slightly different version of this last statement: *“Vchol Hamaarich — lesaper b'yetziat mitzrayim, harei zeh meshubach...”* — *“All who speak **extensively** in their description of the redemption from Egypt are to be praised...”*

How are we to interpret the subtle difference between our more familiar version of this text and that of the *Rambam*? What lesson might we glean from clarifying the difference between the words **hamarbeh** (much) and **hamaarich** (extensive)? Why ultimately do most of us not utilize the *Rambam's* version of this important text?

To further amplify these questions, it would seem at first glance that the *Haggadah* itself seems to see these terms as synonyms, and introduces us to the story of the Sages who gathered together in *Bnai Brak* and indeed, spent the entire night discussing the Exodus from Egypt.

However, later on in the *Haggadah's* discussions of the ten plagues. After listing those ten plagues, we are then introduced to several rabbinic interpretations of those plagues, but the first comments included are those of *Rebbe Yehuda*.

Unlike the other *chachamim* mentioned, *Rebbe Yehuda* doesn't choose to elaborate extensively about each of the plagues; rather, he teaches us an acronym to recall the plagues in a short, concise, memorable way. *Rebbe Yehuda* seems to be telling us that the most memorable ideas are clear and succinct- instead of the most verbose or extensive.

What *Rebbe Yehuda* is teaching us is that we need to become more accustomed to realizing the power of our words. When we are able to share important information in a most direct and clear manner, it is more

likely to be understood, received favorably and remembered by others. When we are not aware of this important concept, our intended messages might get lost or misconstrued.

This very idea of the power of speech is actually an important lesson that is also alluded to in the Exodus story itself. The Chasidic Master **Rebbe Moshe Yechiel HaLevi Epstein of Ozarov, zy'a**, makes an interesting observation in his commentary on the *Haggadah*. The Rebbe points out that the prime villain in the Exodus story is not simply called *Melech Mitzrayim*, the King of Egypt, but also **Paroh**. The *Rebbe* taught that the word **Paroh** is made up of the same Hebrew letters (*pay, reish, ayin, and hay*) as the words **peh ra**, a wicked mouth! The *Rebbe* wrote that inherent in the Jewish People going forth and becoming freed from Egyptian oppression is the need to work to leave behind that power represented by **Paroh**; that is, to leave behind the use of words for wicked purposes and begin to use our words to speak appropriately and for sacred purposes.

On the *Seder* night, we recall *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, and we are mandated to speak with clarity of all the miraculous events that transpired as we went free from Egypt. Each year, as we tell this sacred tale and come together to experience leaving behind Egyptian oppression, may we also merit to emulate this beautiful message introduced by the *Rebbe* of Ozarov.

These past many months we have seen the damage caused by so many misleading social media posts and news headlines, which have used slanderous language and misled the entire world as to what Israel has endured.

As we begin to look ahead to *Layl HaSeder*, may we merit to speak with clarity, and may the words of Torah we share on the *Seder* night inspire us to realize the sacred gift that is speech, and the potential redemptive power inherent in channeling our words to inspire, bring clarity, build unity among us, and heal the entire world. ■



Be'er Tziporah a"h - Bottled Water Gemach



Walking down King George St. in Jerusalem and want a cold bottle of water?

Come help yourself to a bottle at
52 King George.

In loving memory of Yoni's wife **Tziporah a"h**, a true Eishes Chayil, always full of chessed, kindness and laughter, and brought life and strength to so many people, that she touched! She was like Aron, who loved peace and pursued peace.



Yoni thanks Hashem for having the opportunity of having Tziporah in his life, to learn of her caring, patience and happiness, to overcome her challenges. May Tziporah's Neshama be a light onto the world, in a time of darkness, and may her Neshama shine to Gan Eden. Yoni misses Tziporah with tears in his eyes, as Hashem gave him a gift, a crown jewel, now he returns her to Hashem.

With thanks and Toda. Love, Yoni

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