

The message is clear. Things are never as bad as they look. Never despair, because out of the darkest of situations came the brightest of lights. (Rabbi Dovid Green)

## Long Range Missiles

The danger of a weapon in the hands of an enemy is measured not only by the destructive power of its impact, but also by its range. A missile that can travel long distances is far more dangerous than a tank or bazooka.

In interpersonal relationships, the effect of an insult or emotional hurt also has a range. Words have the power to inflict great pain and suffering, and their long distance capabilities certainly require caution on the part of all who use these potential weapons of destruction. It is not only the long range of words that can be dangerous, but also the long-term effects of verbal damage. Therefore, it is particularly important to always consider the long-lasting effects of any statement before launching potent words from your mouth.

Holding back a feisty, slippery creature such as the human tongue is a difficult task, to say the least. The laws of *lashon hara* – forbidden, harmful speech – arouse a sense of caution and sensitivity, encouraging people to guard their tongues and to dole out words with careful stinginess.

One good way to develop word control is to improve your visual sense. Look for the good in everything around you. If you see beauty in nature, appreciate art and music, and enjoy the talents and quirks of friends and relatives, even though you may not be able to control your tongue, you will speak your mind with a positive view whenever expressing inner thoughts.

The verse in *Tehillim* (34:13) says: “Who is the man who seeks life, loves days to see good – guard your tongue from evil...” In order to guard your tongue, you must see good. There is so much that is positive in Hashem’s Creation and in the people around you. Look for it and you will find it. Focus on it and teach your tongue to speak good. (One Minute with Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

## A Greek Tragedy

In September 2000, R’ Shaal Tzvi (Tommy) Czeisler was sitting *shivah* for his 87-year-old father, R’ Shmuel. The mourners were in R’ Shmuel’s home on Bedford Road in Montreal. One morning a Greek gentleman, a total stranger, walked in and made his way to where Tommy was sitting. Before Tommy could say anything to him, the fellow pointed and said, “You are a champion!”

The gentleman introduced himself and said that he lived directly across the street. “I am retired,” the man said, “and I don’t have to get up at 5:30 in the morning. But a number of years ago I was up one morning and I saw how you came to pick up your father. I watched how you held his hand gently and helped him down the front stairs. I watched how you walked him to your car to take him to the synagogue. I could not get over how you treated him with such dignity.

“I got up the next morning and watched again how you treated him with such loving care. No one in our Greek community does this. I made it a point to get up every morning just to watch how you came for your father and how you cared for him. That daily scene carried me through the entire day.” The gentleman became choked with emotion, but continued, “But now that he died, where am I going to get my inspiration? What am I going to do now?”

And with that he burst into tears and ran out of the room and out of the house.

Many of us fail to realize that often, totally unbeknownst to us, people are observing us, and our actions can make indelible impressions. (Reflections of the Maggid)

*The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition*

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת לֵאָה בַּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

## Congregation Magen Abraham

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SHABBAT VA'ERA ☆ שַׁבַּת וַאֲרָא

Haftarah: Yehezkel 28:25-29:21

**JANUARY 15-16, 2021 3 SHEBAT 5781**

Friday Minhah: <b>4:36 pm</b>	Shaharit: <b>6:18, 7:00, 8:00, 8:15, 9:00 am</b>
Shir Hashirim (midrash): <b>4:26 pm</b>	Morning Shema by: <b>9:07 am</b>
Minhah (midrash): <b>4:36 pm</b>	Shabbat Minhah: <b>1:30 &amp; 4:15 pm</b>
Candlelighting: <b>4:36 pm</b>	Shabbat Ends: <b>5:36 pm (R"Y 6:08 pm)</b>
Evening Shema after: <b>5:34 pm</b>	Sunday Minhah: <b>4:40 pm</b>

**These times are applicable only for the Deal area.**

This bulletin is dedicated by **Joey and Sophia Mizrahi**  
in memory of **Joseph I. Mizrahi** לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת יוֹסֵף בֶּן מִרְיָם

This bulletin is dedicated by **Dr. & Mrs. David Pinhas**  
in memory of **Rosie bat Esther** לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת רוֹזֵי בַת אֶסְתֵּר

## A Message from our Rabbi

”הֲוֹן בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ אֵלַי וְאִידָּךְ יִשְׁמְעֵנִי פְּרַעֲהַ”

“Behold the Children of Israel have not listened to me, so how will Pharaoh listen to me?” (*Shemot* 6:12)

Moshe argues with logic to Hashem. If the Jews won’t listen to me, for sure Pharaoh won’t listen to me. It seems that the logic is flawed because the Jews didn’t listen because of the pressure of the slavery, and Pharaoh didn’t have that pressure so maybe he will listen!

Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch answers that every Jew has a special spark in his soul. That spark will make him listen, but the slavery covered that spark. Pharaoh doesn’t have that spark so he is even more likely not to listen. From this we learn that every Jew, even one who doesn’t practice his religion, has a spark from Hashem. One can never give up on any Jew because that spark can always be ignited to be a great flame. We see nowadays that we have merited a great awakening. Many that have fallen to the lowest level have repented and returned. It is in the merit of our holy fathers that the children are returning.

A truly amazing story is told by Rabbi Yitzchak Hisiger. In 1980, Rabbi Avraham Abba Leifer zt”l (known as the Pittsburger Rebbe) was flying with eight followers,

from Israel to New York. The plane experienced serious trouble and was forced to make an emergency landing. With prayers on their lips, the passengers braced themselves, aware of the danger involved. Thankfully, the pilot skillfully landed the aircraft at a small airport and everyone emerged safe and sound.

Upon disembarking, the Rebbe and his followers immediately focused their attention on finding a place to pray, as the time to pray was approaching. The Rebbe and his people were a total of nine men, so one person was needed for a *minyán*. They approached a random man and asked if he knew of a synagogue nearby in this Anywhere, USA locale, as they were seeking a place to pray.

The man turned white. It took him a few moments to respond.

“What’s the matter?” asked one of the people. “Are you okay?”

“Let me explain,” said the man. “I don’t look it, but I am Jewish. I was born and raised Jewish, but I left religion years ago, cutting off all ties to my family and community, and moving out here. Last night, my father came to me in a dream. ‘Please say *kaddish* for me tomorrow,’ he said, ‘as it is my *yahrzeit*.’

“I said to him, ‘What’s the use? What does my *kaddish* mean anyway? I am not religious.’ But my father insisted that I say *kaddish*, explaining that it will be good for his soul.”

“I protested, ‘But how can I say *kaddish* here in this spiritual wilderness, where there are no Jews and no synagogue?’

“My father responded, ‘And if I send you Jews to pray with, will you say *kaddish*?’ And I said, ‘Yes.’

“Now you understand,” the man continued, “why, when you asked me where you can pray, I was shocked. None Jews have ‘fallen from Heaven’ just as my father had promised, so I can recite *kaddish*.”

The miraculous arrival of the Rebbe was truly remarkable, but, more amazing is the value of this man’s *kaddish*, even though he left religion years ago.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

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## Shortness of Spirit

In the opening *pesukim* of this week’s *perashah*, Moshe *Rabenu* is given his mission, to take the Jewish nation out of Egypt. Moshe *Rabenu* delivers this Divine message to *Klal Yisrael*. However, “they did not listen to Moshe, because of shortness of wind and hard work.” They were so tired out from working that they were literally short of breath, and they simply did not have peace of mind to listen to what Moshe had to tell them. This is the simple reading of this Scriptural narration.

It is somewhat strange that in the previous *perashah*, the *pasuk* says that Moshe *Rabenu* and Aharon came to the people, they showed the people the “signs” provided by *Hashem*, and the reaction was quite different: “And the people believed...and they bowed their heads and they prostrated themselves.” How, in this relatively short span of time, did they go from belief and prostration to impatience, and even disinterest?

The simple reason is that the amount of work imposed on *B’nei Yisrael* had been greatly increased. They now had to find their own straw, while still maintaining the same brick quotas. Perhaps the situation deteriorated to the extent that even though they listened the first time, by the second time they were simply too exhausted to listen anymore. That would be the superficial interpretation.

The *Ralbag* says a mind-boggling idea. He interprets that the words “*m’kotzer ruach*” are not referring to “shortness of breath” and are not even referring to the people! The *Ralbag* interprets that the words *kotzer ruach* are referring to Moshe *Rabenu*. Moshe was “knocked for a loop” – he was somewhat dispirited by recent

events, which lead to his *kotzer ruach*.

At the very end of *Parashat Shemot*, Moshe complains to Hashem: “Why have You sent me? From the time I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your Name he harmed this people, but You did not rescue Your people!” Moshe apparently expected that he would come to Pharaoh with the Divine message, Pharaoh would listen to him, and the people would be out! That is not how it happened.

Instead, the situation deteriorated. Moshe *Rabenu*, the leader who feels the pain and frustration of the people, was broken and depressed by this outcome. His spirit was broken. That is the interpretation of “*m’kotzer ruach*”—from shortness of spirit.

The first time Moshe came and addressed the people with the message of Divine Promise of redemption, he spoke with spirit, with conviction, and with optimism. The people believed him, because he believed in himself. The second time, Moshe still believed what Hashem told him, but it was not with the same conviction. He was not able to deliver the message to the people as powerfully as he had before. He could now only deliver it “with shortness of spirit.” Therefore, the people did not listen to him.

The *Ralbag* is not suggesting that there was any doubt on the part of Moshe *Rabenu* in the eventual *geulah*. However, now Moshe’s message was delivered *me’kotzer ruach*. It was not with the same oomph as previously because he felt he failed in his mission to Pharaoh. The Egyptian king did not listen to him. On the contrary, matters became worse since he began his mission. This deflated Moshe’s spirit and therefore his second message, which was delivered out of “shortness of spirit” (*kotzer ruach*), was not at all effective. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

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## Null and Void

In this week’s *perashah*, G-d instructs Moshe and Aharon to go to Pharaoh. G-d tells them how Pharaoh will react, and what will occur step by step.

“And G-d said to Moshe ‘see that I have made you a master over Pharaoh...and (ultimately) he will send The Children of Israel from his land. I will strengthen Pharaoh’s heart...and Pharaoh will not listen to you (at first), and I will place My hand on Egypt, and I will bring out My legions, My people, from the land of Egypt...’ And Moshe and Aharon did just as G-d commanded them...and Moshe was eighty years old, and Aharon was eighty three years old when they spoke with Pharaoh.”

Everything in these seven short verses makes perfect sense together except the last one regarding the ages of Moshe and Aharon. This verse is seemingly out of place.

Rabbi Shimon Schwab, in his work *Mayan Bet HaSho’evah*, notes the inconsistency, and offers the following solution.

If we would think about the era in which Moshe and Aharon were born, we would be reminded of an astounding thing. The decree of “if it is a male child you shall kill it,” which Pharaoh ordered to the Jewish midwives, was at the time that Aharon was born. When Moshe was born, the decree of “every male child born should be thrown into the river.” The root of the name Aharon means “conception,” as in conceiving a child, possibly because it was so amazing that Aharon managed to see the light of day.

Rav Schwab says that there is an undercurrent being conveyed here in the Torah. Here are Moshe and Aharon, living and breathing manifestations of Pharaoh’s decrees made null and void!

I find this an encouraging message. “There are many thoughts in the heart of man, but the counsel of G-d, it (alone) sustains.” Pharaoh did everything he could to annul the astrological prediction that the redeemer would come from a child born in that time of vicious decrees. Nevertheless here stand Moshe and Aharon who somehow managed to make it through. As Rabbi Berel Wein always says, “G-d has a sense of humor.”