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**“SAY AND YOU SHALL SAY” – CORRECTING THE DAMAGE
DONE THROUGH SPEECH**

On the verse that states, “Say to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and you shall say to them” (Leviticus 21:1), Rashi explains in the name of the Sages: “ ‘Say and you shall say’ – to warn the adults regarding the minors” (Yebamot 114a). We see a great principle here: The Torah warns the adults, the Talmidei Chachamim, and enjoins them to watch their words so that they penetrate the hearts of the minors, for a Rav should speak pleasantly and behave correctly (Hagigah 14b). Not only that, but he should speak from the depths of his heart so that his words enter the hearts of others (see Berachot 6b), for if he addresses his students with love and brotherhood, they will accept what he says. His words will penetrate their hearts and they will elevate themselves.

This is the meaning of the remainder of the verse, namely: “Each of you shall not contaminate himself to a [dead] person among his people” (Leviticus 21:1), for if an adult is not careful about his speech, he will make himself impure by his words among his people. A Rav should also be careful that his students not become impure among their people, all this by means of “say and you shall say,” i.e., he should reprimand them, as the Torah commands: “You shall surely rebuke your fellow” (ibid. 19:17).

On the same subject, let us add that a person’s words should be imprinted with holiness and purity,

which will enable them to enter the hearts of listeners. It may be that this is the connection between Parshiot Kedoshim and Emor. In addition, a person must speak with humility, which brings to mind the connection with Parsha Behar that follows, for there Mount Sinai is mentioned, the mountain that abased itself to such a degree that the Torah was given upon it (Sotah 5a). Without humility, one’s words will contain sin, for the word anavah (“humility”) has the same numerical value, counting the word itself, as avon (“sin”). By “say and you shall say,” the Torah warns us to speak with holiness and purity, and also with humility and submissiveness.

We may yet raise another point. By the words “say and you shall say,” the Torah teaches us not to say anything but constructive words in the home. This is so as not to provoke any regrettable incident, for “the Holy One, blessed be He, does not send any regrettable incident through the righteous” (Yebamot 28b), a subject that the Gemara discusses at length (Gittin 7a). A man should also demonstrate virtues in his behavior and not say anything but positive things to his students, for in this way they will be able to learn from him. We can actually observe how what we hear at home (for better or for worse) deeply affects us.

The end of our parsha applies this idea to the verse that states, “The son of an Israelite woman went out – and he was the son of an Egyptian man”

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(Leviticus 24:10), after which he blasphemed. In what way did this happen? It was by the Tetragrammaton (Vayikra Rabba 32:4), which he had heard on Mount Sinai. The Torah tells us, “The name of his mother was Shelomit bat Divri, of the tribe of Dan” (Leviticus 24:11). Why are we given the name of his mother? Rashi explains that she had committed a sin (see Vayikra Rabba 32:5). We call her bat Divri (literally, “daughter of my words”) because she was a chatterbox who spoke with everyone, which brought on this sin. It is difficult to understand how someone who had heard what was spoken on Mount Sinai could end up blaspheming!

The reason for this lies in the fact that everyone is endowed with free will, as it is written: “choose life” (Deuteronomy 30:19). He is the one who should make what he saw penetrate his heart; the Holy One, blessed be He, never forces him to accept it. At home, the son of the Israelite woman heard his mother speaking the forbidden, and he reasoned that what he had heard was acceptable to say, for “what the child says in the street is what he hears at home from either his father or mother” (Sukkah 56b). That is why he blasphemed. He had probably heard it at home, and he was a chatterbox like his mother.

To explain the expression “say and you shall say,” we may also see it as an allusion to the counting of the Omer. In fact we read this parsha during the counting of the Omer, which is a favorable time to perfect oneself in the area of inter-personal relationships. This introspection constitutes a preparation for receiving the Torah, with the 48 traits by which the Torah is acquired (Perkei Avoth 6:5[6]) corresponding to the 48 days of the counting, the last day comprising all the traits. True, in Egypt the Children of Israel had repaired the sin of gossip, as the Sages explained with respect to the passage, “Moses was frightened and said, ‘Indeed, the matter is known!’ ” (Exodus 2:14), meaning that he perceived that their slavery was due to gossip and treachery (Shemot Rabba 1:30). In addition our Sages have said (a teaching that Rashi brings up [v.28]) that the Children of Israel were delivered

from Egypt by the merit of four things, one being that they did not change their language. This means that they abstained from all forms of gossip. However the essential element of preparing to receive the Torah remained the acquisition of the 48 traits, and 48 days were required before the sin of gossip could be completely repaired, for its trace lingered and required a long time to be erased. On the other hand, if a person is content to stop slandering, yet he does not work on his other imperfections, he has achieved nothing.

This idea is alluded to in the fact that during the counting of the Omer, we celebrate two Hilloulot, those of Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. Now Rabbi Meir represents the written Torah, and Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (who spoke of rectifying the sin of gossip) the oral Torah (guarding one’s tongue). This is essential in preparing to receive the Torah.

This is the message that the Torah conveys in “say and you shall say.” It consists of teaching a person to practice the written and oral Torah. This is what constitutes emor (“say”): Rectify your language and abstain from speaking evil, followed by ve’amarta (“and you shall say”): Develop the 48 traits by which the Torah is acquired. This idea is alluded to in the word ve’amarta, for the letter taf represents the Torah, the letter mem (numerical value: 40) also represents the Torah, which was given in 40 days (Menachot 29b), and the letters vav, aleph, and resh have a numerical value (according to the method by which tens and hundreds are counted as ones; i.e., the resh is counted as 2 instead of 200) of 9. This combined with the numerical value of mem adds up to 49 – the 49 days of the Omer, in which we prepare for the 48 traits that enable us to acquire the Torah, the last day encompassing the whole. Actually, we damage all these traits when we slander, and they must all be repaired for us to merit arriving at the giving of the Torah in holiness and purity.

IN MEMORY OF THE TSADIKIM RABBI ISRAEL LIPKIN OF SALANT

In each era, Divine Providence sends us great souls that leave their mark on the generation and whose influence is felt both in their era and many generations afterwards.

One of these exceptional sages was Rabbi Israel of Salant. He was neither a Rabbi nor a Posek, and he dressed like an ordinary person. He fled from official positions and behaved like a simple Jew. However he was a great man, and in his heart was the sacred fire of the burning bush, a divine flame that to his very last breath was never extinguished. According to Rabbi Yossef Dov Soloveitchik (the Rav of Boston), Rabbi Chaim Halevi Soloveitchik of Brisk compared four Torah greats to the Rishonim, these being Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin, Rabbi Israel of Salant, Rabbi Yossef Dov Soloveitchik (Rabbi Chaim's father), and Rabbi Meir Leibush Malbim.

Even though many years have passed since his death, Rabbi Israel Salant's memory as the father of the Mussar movement remains alive, and his character serves as a beacon to this very day.

What follows are a few stories about his life:

Rabbi Israel Salant's confidence in G-d was extraordinary. He was certain that every prayer a person made would be granted if he had absolute faith in G-d. And if we see that a person's hopes are dashed, it is solely because his faith in G-d is not absolute.

Rabbi Israel once had a discussion with Rabbi Shemuel Strashun (the Rashash) on the Talmud. Their conversation centered on the question of whether it is legitimate to have faith in G-d for things that are unnecessary. Rabbi Israel believed that a person has the right to pray for something that he sees as superfluous, but Rabbi Strashun disagreed. Thus Rabbi Israel proposed that they attempt to see what in fact was the truth. When Rabbi Strashun accepted, Rabbi Israel said, "From this moment on, I have total confidence in G-d that He will send me a watch, something that I absolutely don't need [during that era only a few people owned watches]. Hence we will see if He will send me one."

Six months passed, until one day a Christian wearing a lieutenant's uniform came to Rabbi Shemuel and said, "A Jewish soldier in my regiment has just died, but before his death he gave me a watch to give to the local Jewish rabbi." Rabbi Shemuel took the watch and thanked the lieutenant for going to all the trouble. He then remembered his conversation with Rabbi Israel and asked that he come to see him. When Rabbi Israel arrived, Rabbi Shemuel gave him the watch and said, "G-d has heard your prayer and sent you this watch. From Heaven the Halachah has been proven to be according to your opinion."

When Rabbi Israel moved from his father-in-law's home, he settled in Kovno to find some work. Before anything, however, he began by going to the Beit Midrash to study some Torah. At that point a wealthy man from Kovno also entered the Beit Midrash, and when he saw Rabbi Israel he felt sorry for him. He went to say hello and asked him what he was doing in Kovno, to which he replied that he had come in search of work and wanted to go into business. The wealthy man looked at him and said, "Listen to me, my young man. You don't have the look of a merchant, and it's better for you to devote yourself to religious endeavors. I've heard that in a certain small town people are looking for a teacher of young

boys. I will provide you with a letter of recommendation and they will give you the job."

Rabbi Israel refused and said, "The responsibility of teaching Jewish children is too great and heavy a burden for me – I cannot accept it. I would like to be a merchant."

The wealthy man thought for a moment, then he suggested that Rabbi Israel become a Shochet, for people were looking for one in Kovno. "Absolutely not," Rabbi Israel replied. "A Shochet must be extremely meticulous in his work, for it is a sacred responsibility. At the slightest mistake, he could end up giving treif food to the whole city! I would like to be a merchant."

The wealthy man then asked him if he had any money to open up a shop, and Rabbi Israel replied that he did not. "Under these conditions, how can you start a business?" he said in shock. "It's very simple," Rabbi Israel retorted. "You are going to lend me 300 rubbles to start one."

"What! What did you say?" the man began to mutter. "I'm going to lend you 300 rubbles? That's a huge amount, and I don't even know you! How do I know that I can trust you? Perhaps you're a swindler, a deadbeat! Do you think I'm crazy or something?"

Rabbi Israel arose and said to the man, "Listen to me, my dear Jew. A few minutes ago you considered me to be a person of trust. You wanted to give me a position as a teacher of precious Jewish children. You had enough faith in me to put the kashrut of Jewish homes in my hand. Yet when it comes to lending me a little money, you already don't know me and say that perhaps I am swindler! Our father Abraham behaved differently. In material matters, he trusted his servant Eliezer, as it is written: 'His servant, the elder of his household who controlled all that was his' [Genesis 24:2]. However when it came to spiritual matters, such as finding a wife for his son Isaac, he did not trust him. He made him take an oath."

One day a distinguished Rav was a guest at Rabbi Israel Salanter's home. Rabbi Israel offered him something to eat, and he added that the dish was strictly kosher. His guest was taken aback by this statement, and Rabbi Israel explained that for himself (Rabbi Israel), it was possible that the dish was not kosher because his earnings came from a generous disciple, one who may have been mistaken in believing that Rabbi Israel was a Tzaddik and a Gaon. Hence in giving Rabbi Israel money to buy this food under such a false assumption, the food would not be kosher, since the money would have stemmed from theft. However for his guest there was no question of the kashrut of the dish, since by taking it he became its new owner. Hence for him it was strictly kosher according to all opinions (Tenuat HaMussar).

For that matter, this is the reason why Rabbi Israel said in the presence of Rabbi Fishel-Ber of Rassein, an extremely wealthy man, that it was forbidden to desecrate Shabbat for him if he fell sick, for he had the status of a thief. Rabbi Fishel-Ber recounted this to Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan, the Rav of Kovno, who did not laugh when he heard this. Instead, he thought about it for a few moments and said, "Tell Rabbi Israel that he is mistaken. It is permitted to desecrate Shabbat for him." In fact, his disciples recounted that Rabbi Israel

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IN MEMORY OF THE TSADIKIM RABBI ISRAEL LIPKIN OF SALANT (CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 3)

fell ill on a Sunday and died the following Friday morning, so that no one had to desecrate Shabbat for him (heard from Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky).

Rabbi Israel was born in 5570 (1810) in the town of Zhagory, Lithuania. His father was Rabbi Zev Wolf, author of Hagoat ben Aryeh on the Talmud.

Rabbi Israel was first educated by his father, and then studied with Rabbi Tzvi Broida, the Rav of Salant. He succeeded very well in his studies, and before turning 13 he already knew the Talmud by heart.

At the age of 18 he settled in Salant, whose name he carries. Other than his greatness in Torah, Rabbi Israel was a genius in Mussar and character development.

He published an important article entitled Iggeret HaMussar, in which he invites the reader to study Mussar. This article spread to every yeshiva, and people began to study his holy words in detail. This marked the beginning of a great event – the Mussar movement.

Rabbi Israel Salant fell ill while in Koenigsberg in 5643 (1883). He passed away on Shevat 25, his pure soul ascending to Heaven.

Rabbi Israel did not leave behind any books, but he did leave his disciples, and they spread his Torah throughout the world.

THE MORAL OF THE STORY FROM THE MAGGID OF DUBNO

It is written, “Speak to the Children of Israel and say to them: The L-RD’s appointed festivals ... For six days labor may be done, and the seventh day is a day of complete rest” (Leviticus 23:2-3).

Let us illustrate this by a parable:

Coming home from a trip, a man decided to give his son the gift of a beautiful watch for him to enjoy. The boy began to play with it, but he soon got carried away and ended up ruining it, its parts being broken and his joy changing into sadness. His father said to him “Was it to make you sad that I brought you a watch? All I wanted was to see you happy, not to see you ending up like this!”

Similarly, the Holy One, blessed be He, gave us Shabbat so that we could rest, which is a gift stemming from His treasures. It is designed so that everyone can be relieved from sadness, anger, and work – not for becoming a cause of distress in itself. Now if people spend this special day doing foolhardy things and wasting time, the end will be bitter. This is the meaning of “a day of complete rest”: That its beginning be restful and its end in the World to Come also be restful.

THE STORY OF THE WEEK WISDOM GOES HAND IN HAND WITH RESTRAINT

In his youth, Rabbi Shalom Sharabi traveled from Yemen to Jerusalem. Concealing his knowledge in Torah and Kabbalah, he went to see Rabbi Gedalia Hayun (who directed the Beit E-L yeshiva) and asked that he hire him as the Shamash for the Beit Midrash, requesting a salary of just bread and water. Rabbi Shalom pleased the Rav, and he accepted him as his assistant. During the Rav’s lectures, Rabbi Shalom remained sitting in his corner and pretended to be dozing off, yet in reality he was listening to the slightest sound that emanated from the Rav’s mouth. At times, when Rabbi Gedalia encountered a problem that he was unable to solve, Rabbi Shalom was in a quandary. On one hand, it was easy for him to solve the problem, but on the other hand he did not want to reveal himself. He thought about what was preferable: To relieve his Rav’s pain by solving his problem, or to continue to conceal his scholarship.

He finally came up with an idea. He would write the solution to the Rav’s problem on a piece of paper, and when he was putting books back in their place after a course (as was his normal practice), he would slip the piece of paper in the book that the Rav was studying. Come one day, a problem occupied Rav Gedalia’s mind to the point that he did not even eat. He was turning in circles immersed in his thoughts and looking into his books, but he could not find a solution. The next time that classes began and the Rav opened his book, he immediately came upon a slip of paper that had been placed within it. Then when he read it, his face brightened! Simply put, his problem disappeared. He spoke to his students about the slip of paper and ordered that they reveal who wrote it, but nobody knew who it was. This scene occurred several times, with each time the Rav finding the solution to his problem on a slip of paper hidden within a book. Nobody imagined that there was any reason to suspect the humble Shamash.

The Rav’s apartment was next to the large Beit Midrash, and he had a window that gave him a view into it. Rav Gedalia had a daughter by the name of Chana, and when she heard of these mysterious slips of paper, she took the matter to heart and from time to time would peer into the Beit Midrash after classes were over. Then one day she noticed the Shamash, Rabbi Shalom, taking her father’s book and leafing through it, then closing it and putting it back on the shelf. She told her father that she suspected the Shamash of being responsible for the slips of paper, and Rav Gedalia immediately ordered that he reveal the truth to him. Rabbi Shalom yielded to him and revealed the truth, asking that he not disclose the matter. Upon hearing this, Rav Gedalia stood up, kissed Rabbi Shalom, and said to him: “Now that G-d has revealed all this to me, there is no one as wise as you, which is why you will replace me. Don’t reject this responsibility, for the time has come to reveal yourself.” Without delay, Rav Gedalia appointed him as a teacher in the yeshiva, and his daughter Chana – who merited that the Rashash (Rabbi Shalom Sharabi) be revealed through her – also merited marrying him.