

LEARNING PROGRAMME FOR LADIES IN MEMORY OF REBBETZEN MARGA BRODIE z"l

A learning programme was created for the sheloshim, in memory of Rebbetzen Marga Brodie z"l, who excelled in Shemirat Haloshon. Please print this and continue to use it to learn in the Zechus of Mink Bas Shimon.

Monday 26 December 2011

Time is precious. What we do with our time counts. Time is also a gift from Hashem. The power of speech which Hashem has granted us is also a precious gift.

Speech takes time.

By being careful with our speech, not speaking Lashon Hora and such like, we are using these twin gifts in a constructive and a meaningful way. Let us feel motivated to refine our speech and use our time wisely.

Tuesday 27 December 2011

There are times when a speaker makes a positive statement about a person and intends it as such, but negative and harmful information can be inferred from his words. The Torah would not consider one who does this to be a Holech Rachil, peddler of gossip, since both his intent and his words are clearly sincere and positive. Rabbinically, however, this too is prohibited, under a category referred to as Avak Loshon Hora, the "dust", i.e. a derivative form of Loshon Hora, that is spread by way of carelessness. A common form of avak loshon hora is where one sincerely praises another person, but in doing so, alludes to a shortcoming of that individual. "Who would have believed that he would have come this far?" clearly suggests something negative about the person. Such a statement can cause the person embarrassment when said in his presence, and can be harmful to him even when he is not present. Hence, it is forbidden.

Wednesday 28 December 2011

What a person says, has an effect on his or her thinking and attitude. Speaking in a negative way about others, even if true in content, increases negative feelings and incrementally makes a person more sceptical and creates a spiral of self perpetuating hostility. Apart from the Halochot which strictly forbid such speech, we should realise the bad effect on ourselves. The Chafetz Chayim compares this to a fire taking hold in a confined space, destructive and very difficult to control. This situation can, and should be avoided

Thursday 29 December 2011

MAKING SHMIRAT HALOSHON INTO A SPECIAL MITZVAH (FROM DAILY SHEMIRAT HALOSHON)

The Torah is called a "tree of life for those who grasp it" (Mishlei 3:18). The way to grab onto a tree is to take hold of one its branches; in so doing, one has attached himself to the entire tree of which this branch is a part. So it is, explains Sefer Chareidim (ch. 61), with Torah. The way to attach oneself to the 613 mitzvos is by fulfilling one particular mitzvah with exacting precision and total dedication. Dedication and attachment to a single commandment will cause one's soul to become united with Hashem and His Torah and will lead to the proper fulfilment of other mitzvos as well.

Thus do we find, Rav Nachman said: "I will be rewarded [in the World to Come] for having [zealously] fulfilled [the mitzvah] to eat three meals on Shabbos". Rav Sheishes said: "I will be rewarded for having [zealously] fulfilled the mitzvah of tefillin (Shabbos 118b). The Talmud goes on to cite similar statements of other Sages and offers illustrations of how meticulously each sage fulfilled the mitzvah of which he spoke. Sefer Chareidim also cites Talmud Yerushalmi which states that fulfilment of a given mitzvah with total dedication and precision is a catalyst for earning the great reward of the World to Come. This can be done for any Mitzvah, but it especially meritorious for Shemirat Haloshon which has so many benefits for the person observing it and for Klal Yisrael in general.

Friday 30 December 2011

We should recognise the power of speech, in direct practical terms, how a good word, which costs nothing can help another person, cheer them up, support them, help them get a job, and in so many other ways. A bad word, even if true (because Loshon Hora is forbidden about truthful words) can destroy another person, cause the loss of employment, damage a marriage or friendship. In spiritual terms, good words enhance the world, bad words create negative spiritual forces in the world. In the times of the Bet Hamikdash, just a few short words of dedication were sufficient to make an object or animal holy and sacred (hekdesh) and forbidden to be used by anyone else outside the Mikdash. Thus the Chafetz Chayim remarks we see the spiritual power of words.

Shabbat 31 December 2011

There is a special merit in keeping Shemirat Haloshon on Shabbat. Just as in the physical melachot and activities, we have Shabbat rules designed to elevate the mundane. Also when it comes to speech, we are challenged by the Navi-Yeshaya to sanctify and elevate our speech on Shabbat.

דְּבַר יוֹדֵבַר חֲפִצָּה מִמְצוּא , דְּרִכֶּיךָ מַעֲשׂוֹת וְכַבְדֶּתוּ

AND YOU SHALL HONOUR IT,(SHABBAT) NOT DOING YOUR ORDINARY WAYS, NOR PURSUING YOUR BUSINESS, NOR SPEAKING ABOUT THESE (CH 58)

Sunday 1st January 2012

For every moment one guards ones tongue, he earns reward that is beyond the comprehension of Angels. (The Vilna Gaon citing Midrash) The principle way of meriting the World to Come is through guarding one's mouth, which is greater than Torah learning and Mitzvot, because the mouth is the Holy of Holies (excerpts from a letter by the Vilna Gaon). Take a few minutes to dwell upon what the Vilna Gaon is saying, think about it. Internalise it.

Monday 2nd January 2012

The Chafetz Chayim wrote that he in turn had seen in the writings of the Ari, that a person who is careful with his or her speech, in addition to fulfilling many great mitzvot, earns the reward that other people will not speak badly of them. This is part of the concept of Middah Kenegged Middah (measure for measure). Many people think this is just to do with punishment, but that is not the case, it applies equally to reward.

Tuesday 3rd January 2012

It is a common mistake to think, there cannot be anything wrong with saying something if it is true. This is incorrect. The first paragraph of the Sefer Chafetz Chaim states, it is forbidden to relate something shameful about another person even if it is perfectly true. It is included in what the Torah said, “ You shall not go around gossiping among your people”

Wednesday 4th January 2012

If someone speaks Loshon Hora it is certainly a serious sin. However, if one habitually speaks Hoshon Hora it enters a different realm of sin altogether. It is as if he is saying, I don't care about that particular law of the Torah. This casts doubt on the validity of all his observance of Mitzvos.

Thursday 5th January 2012

Even if your parent or teacher pressurise you to talk Loshon hora it is forbidden to do so. Similarly if by refusing to talk Loshon Hora you would lose money, because you employer or your customers expect you to talk Loshon Hora with them, it is still forbidden to do so.

Friday 6th January 2012

Our Sages teach us “It is better to be called a fool all one's life, and not be an evil person for one hour”. This means if you are sitting in a social gathering where you are expected to indulge in Loshon Hora, you have to be prepared to be considered a fool, rather than partake in Loshon Hora. Nodding your head or indicating in any way agreement with Loshon Hora, is the same as talking loshon hora.

Shabbos 7th January 2012

If a phrase is ambiguous and could be understood as a praise or understood as a criticism, then if it is said in front of three people, one can assume the speaker did not mean to speak Loshon Hora because he would expect the subject of his remarks to hear about them since they were said in front of many people.

Sunday 8th January 2012

If you take part in a meeting to decide something, about another person, for example whether he should get a particular job; it is forbidden to shift blame for the decision on to other people at the meeting.

Monday 9th January 2012

After a lecture or a speech one may not tell another person “he did not say anything worthwhile” It is far better to go to the speaker in privacy and give good advice on how to improve his speech.

Tuesday 10th January 2012

If one says something just to make a joke; but the joke involves saying Loshon Hora about someone, it is forbidden to say it. Even if you would be prepared to say it in front of the person you are talking about, that does not make it permitted. On the contrary, saying it front of the other person would involve other prohibitions as well such as putting a person to shame.

Wednesday 11th January 2012

Frequently Loshon hora has grievous results such as spoiling job prospects, disturbing friendships or even marriage relationships. But even if the loshon hora does no damage whatsoever, it remains Loshon hora and it is forbidden to say it.