



הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד מרדכי מלכא שליט"א
נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,
ישיבה קטנה ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד
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Parashat Tetzaveh The Benefit of Silence

Our *parasha* states (28:31), "And you shall make the Robe of the *Efod* entirely of *techelet* wool. (32) Its head opening shall be folded over within it... (33) You shall make on its hem pomegranates of *techelet*, purple, and scarlet wool, on its hem all around, and gold bells between them all around. (34) a gold bell and a pomegranate, a gold bell and a pomegranate on the hem of the robe all around. (35) It must be on Aaron for him to be able to serve. Its sound should be heard when he enters the Sanctuary before Hashem and when he leaves, so that he should not die." Commenting on *pasuk* 33, Rashi writes that the pomegranates were round and hollow like a chicken's egg, and that between two pomegranates was one bell, hanging from the hem of the robe.

Questions:

- 1) The Ramban asks on Rashi why he explained that there was a bell hanging independently between two pomegranates; for if that was the case, the pomegranates served no purpose!
- 2) If they were made for beauty, asks the Ramban, why were the pomegranates hollow and not solid gold?
- 3) Furthermore, asks the Ramban, the *pasuk* should have at least taught us what they were hanging from. Were they hanging from rings of some sort? The *pasuk* does not specify. Therefore the Ramban concludes that the simple explanation is that the bells were actually inside of the pomegranates.
- 4) Additionally, the Alshich asks why the Torah stresses that the bells were inside the pomegranates? For according to our Sages (cited by Rashi), a bell was actually **between** two pomegranates! So why does the Torah say that they were inside?

The media nowadays

In our times, we are witness to a modern day media phenomena, which has been caused by technological advancement. Any event, thought, or spoken word is broadcast on the Internet and automatically becomes the topic of conversation. People are being photographed all day in every type of situation, and man has no more privacy. He never knows what surprise is in store, since it is possible that his every action and word is being photographed or recorded, all under the banner of freedom of speech. Therefore any suspicion or fantasy can appear in the media and be spread across the entire world. Speculations are broadcast immediately, before matters are clarified, not taking into account the damage that this causes the individual being spoken about, his family, and business. All the more so, when they are writing about a servant of the public; all the more so, if they are writing about the leaders of the country. Besides for the damage it causes them, it also besmirches the entire nation in the eyes of the world. Furthermore, they dampen the leaders' motivation to continue serving the people. This is sadly the case in our land, where new stories appear in the media every day, and each day is worse than the next. When a leader of the country is suspected, he is pursued relentlessly. Is this a model society?



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Certainly, these investigations can be conducted discreetly, with all of the suspicions being laid on the table at one time, until the matter is clarified. Yet freedom of speech and the public's right to know takes precedence over everything else. This is the way a portion of the people think nowadays. However, our holy Torah teaches us that the exact opposite is approach is correct, as we will soon explain.

The Alshich's answer

The Alshich, based on the teachings of our Sages, writes that the robe paralleled the mouth. The bells which banged together and made noise, represented man's speech. However, the pomegranate, made from strings of wool represented silence. For there is nothing that is more silent than wool. Therefore the Torah wrote, "And gold bells between them all around." For when the bell knocks against the pomegranate made of wool, it lessens the sound, until it is barely audible. Therefore the Torah states later on (39:25) "And the bells should be placed inside the pomegranates," and not the opposite. For this teaches us that the bell was not primary; rather the pomegranate. For even the bell, which represented speech, nevertheless had to be inside the pomegranate, which symbolized silence. The more man limits his speech, and the more he succeeds in placing the bell inside the pomegranate, so too will he benefit.

The Alshich has taught us that the Torah relates more to the pomegranate than it does to the bell. It is like a diamond that that is found amongst other precious stones. An individual will have more interest in the diamond than in the other stones, because it is more valuable. So too, does the Torah place the main emphasis on the pomegranates that were on the robe and not on the bells, despite the fact that there were just as many pomegranates as there were bells. This teaches us that silence is more important and valuable than speech.

David descended from Tamar in merit of her silence

It furthermore states in *Masechet Sotah* (10b) in the name of R' Elazar, that when Tamar presented Yehudah's signatory ring and staff, the Satan distanced them. However, then the *malach* Gavriel came and moved them closer. Nevertheless, R' Yochanan teaches us that she still remained silent, and because of this David descended from her. We see, then, that even though she could have staked a claim and testified, she nevertheless remained quiet, and therefore the lineage of Jewish kings stems from her.

The Maggid's warning to Maran Beit Yosef

In the *sefer Maggid Meisharim* (*Parashat Vayera*), the Heavenly *Maggid* (angel) told the *Beit Yosef* that before he says anything, he should think if it is entirely necessary to say. If it is not, then he should not say it. Even if he is only doubtful whether or not he should say it, he should nevertheless refrain from saying it until he is certain that he must.

The Avreich who Decided to Work on Remaining Silent



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Even though mastering the skill of remaining silent is immeasurably valuable, however, when it comes to holy matters, such as Torah, mitzvot, and *chessed*, the opposite is the case; then it is better to speak than to remain silent. Therefore, a person must act wisely and control himself, knowing when to speak and when to keep quiet. But he should not act in the manner related in the *sefer Imrei Daniel*: There was a *kollel avreich* who heard about how meritorious it was to keep quiet and to be careful regarding one's speech. He therefore took upon himself not to speak at all. One day he returned home after a day of studying Torah, and his wife asked how he was doing. However, he did not answer her. She therefore asked him, "Why are you not answering me?" She asked him more questions and requested that he respond, but to no avail. This carried on for several days, and his wife was insulted and in terrible anguish. She therefore made her way to the house of R' Shmuel Salant, the Rav of Yerushalayim, who was known for his great wisdom, as she wished to seek his advice. The Rav told her to tell her husband that he wished to see him. When the husband arrived, he greeted the Rav and asked why the Rav had summoned him. Yet the Rav did not answer him, remaining silent for an hour! The husband once again asked why the Rav wished to see him, and once again, the Rav ignored him. This carried on for several hours, until the husband finally lost his patience and screamed, "With all due respect, but what does the Rav want from me?! I can't take this anymore!" At that point, the Rav answered in a sweet tone, "You have only been here for a number of hours, yet you can no longer take bear it and have lost your patience. That being so, try to understand what you have done to your wife by not answering her or paying attention to her. You should speak with her and make her feel good, and no longer cause her pain as you have been doing." The husband understood and corrected his ways. We see therefore that man is required to know when to speak and how to speak. This was our Sages' intention when they wrote that speech is similar to a trade.

Words of Mussar

We have learned that while the power of speech is very great and because of speech man is praised more than all other creations, that is only when one is using it for Torah, mitzvot, good deeds, and to earn a living. Yet regarding other matters, silence is twice as beneficial as speech. For speaking excessively will eventually lead man to speak forbidden speech. All the more so, should one refrain from speaking forbidden, harmful speech, for it can destroy one's home and society as a whole. The wise man, who remains silent, will be successful in life. Even though he may think that he losing out financially because of remaining silent, unable to cut lucrative deals and the like, he is wrong, for just the opposite is true. Rather, it is the one who speaks excessively who loses out tremendously and loses many merits. True freedom of speech is possessed by one who controls and guards his speech. For once man has spoken, he has relinquished control. Even though it appears as if the silent one is a fool, Shlomo HaMelech, in his wisdom, has taught us, "Even when a fool remains silent, he is nevertheless considered a wise man." This is as the Tanna imparted from his own life experience, that he found nothing better for the body than silence. Praiseworthy is he who merits keeping quiet, for he upholds the entire world.



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This is the great trade that man is required to master in his time in this world. By doing so, he will be loved by mankind and in Heaven. We should merit refraining from defiling our mouths, and then Hashem will fulfill each word that we speak.

Shabbat Shalom U'Mevorach,

With Friendship and Love,

Rav Mordechai Malka