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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,
שיבה קטנה ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד
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Parashat Vayetzai

"Do Not Open Your Mouth to the Satan"

Our *parasha* teaches us that when Lavan was desperately searching for his idols that Rachel swiped, Yaakov told him (31:32), "The one whom your gods are found with shall not live ... and Yaakov did not know that Rachel stole them." Rashi comments on the *pasuk*, "This was a curse, and because of it Rachel died. From here we learn that one should not open his mouth to the *Satan*, and that which one speaks is guaranteed to occur [*brit kerutah le'sefataim*]. One who guards his mouth and lips, guards himself from misfortune."

Questions:

- 1- Rav Chaim Paltiel mentions (*Bereishit* 31:32) as well as the Riva, that Yaakov words, "The one whom your gods are found with shall not live" constituted a curse, because of which Rachel died. They ask that Lavan never actually found the idols, therefore why did the curse befall Rachel?
- 2- Furthermore, asks the Maharal, in his *sefer Gur Aryeh*, why did Yaakov say, "will not live," and not simply, "will die."

Way of the World

We will begin by saying that people do not lend importance to the way they speak. This applies all the more so when they are angry. Then they start to speak wickedly, wishing others, including their own family and friends, harm. There are those who even go so far as to outright curse others. They do this so often that it becomes habitual for them. Furthermore, sometimes a person will even say something like, "If I am wrong, then such and such a thing should happen to me," and the like. This is a result of not placing enough value on the words that he speaks. However, our holy Torah teaches us just how serious a matter this is, and how much damage he can wreak to both himself and his family by speaking in such a manner, as we will explain. Therefore, one who guards his tongue from speaking negatively will guard himself and his family from misfortune.

The Severity of One Who Opens His Mouth to the Satan

Now we can come to explain our *parasha*. Rav Chaim Paltiel answers the question he posed in the following manner: He writes that our Sages teach that the curse of a *chacham* is fulfilled even if the curse was based on a condition. Whether or not the condition is met, the curse will still be fulfilled. Therefore, even though Lavan did not actually find his idols, nevertheless, Yaakov's curse was carried out. This is as the *Zohar* (*Vayishlach* 175a) asks from where we know that Rachel died because of Yaakov's words. Rebbi Yosi answered by quoting the *pasuk* from *Mishlei* (27), "A curse uttered for no reason will not [לא] be fulfilled." The *pasuk* states לא, which means "will not," yet the *Zohar* expounds that it could also be read with a *vav*, as in, לו תבא, "it will happen to him." This means, teaches the *Zohar*, that if the one who cursed was a *tzaddik*, then even if he does not intend to curse, since it left his mouth, the *yetzer hara* takes hold of it and uses it to prosecute at a time of danger. Therefore Yaakov's



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curse, even though he was unaware that that Rachel took Lavan's idols, was seized nevertheless by the *Satan*, for he is always in close proximity. This is as we learn that "one should not open his mouth to the *Satan*." This is similarly stated in *Eicha Rabba* (5:16).

The Maharal's Proof

The Maharal, in his *sefer, Gur Aryeh (Vayeitzei 31:32)*, brings a proof that Yaakov's intention was not that whoever stole the idols would be punished with death, the penalty meted out to a gentile who steals. Rather, his intention was that a curse would befall the one who stole the idols. For Yaakov did not say that "the one with whom your gods are found will die," which would imply that he would be killed in accordance with the *halacha*. Rather, Yaakov said, "The one whom your gods are found **shall not live.**" This implies that he would die as a result of a curse. Sadly, the curse befell Rachel.

One Who is Ill Should Not Publicize It

Therefore it is stated in *Masechet Berachot* (55b) that on the first day that one takes ill he should not reveal it to anyone, so as not to negatively affect his *mazal*. Yet from then on he should reveal it to others. The Maharsha writes that this is in accordance with our Sages teaching (*Berachot* 19a, 60a, *Ketubot* 8b) that one should not open his mouth to the *Satan*, lest he uses his words to prosecute. Therefore on the first day that one is ill and his illness has not yet settled in completely, he should not reveal it to anyone so that the *Satan* does not hear and cause his illness to become more severe.

One Should Not Curse Himself

The *Kaf Hachaim (Yorah Deah 116:105)* writes that a person should not curse himself, because there are destructive angels which answer "*amen*" to his curse and see that it is carried out. One should also not curse his friend, for if he does so, the curse will befall **him**. Later he also quotes the *Zohar* which states that there are three things that hurt a person, the first one being when who curses himself. The *Shelah* writes similarly in *Shaar Ha'otiot (shitikah 27)*. He also writes that one should not curse his wife, for they are two halves of one whole. *Maran* the Chidah also writes this in his *sefer Tziporen Shamir (siman 11:183)* that one should not curse his wife, for by doing so he curses himself, since they are two halves of one body. He should furthermore not curse anybody at all, since that person possesses a soul, which is a part of Hashem, as it were. Therefore, if one individual curses another it is as if it is directed towards Heaven, *chas ve'shalom*.

Not to Call People "Corpses" or "Priests"

The *Sefer Chassidim (siman 479)* writes that there was someone who used to call people who said things that he did not agree with "corpses." Or sometimes he would say, "You are acting like a priest." A wise man said to him that it is impossible that a Jew should speak this way and it not happen either to him or to his descendants. He therefore stopped saying such things.

Reveal your Dreams to One You Love

It is written in *Shailot veTeshuvot Min HaShamayim (siman 22)* that the author was asked why one should only reveal a dream to one who loves him. He responded that one should not open one's mouth



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to the *Satan*, and it is therefore important that his dream be interpreted favorably. This is because there is an angel standing by his side, who seizes the interpretation of the dream as it comes out of the mouth of the listener and says, "Amen. So it should be." If the person he tells the dream to hates him and interprets it negatively, then an angel standing on his left side says "amen." The way it is interpreted is the way the dream will be carried out.

True Story

It is related in the *sefer Keter Shem Tov*, and I have heard from trustworthy sources that there was a woman who called her first born child "*Dagan*," which means "grain." This was simply the name that she liked. Her husband however was not in favor of this name; he wanted to give the boy a holy name "*Yosef Chaim*," a name of a Torah great. Yet once having named the child *Dagan*, she refused to change the name, since one only changes the name of an ill individual. One day, while sitting in the presence of one of the *Gedolei Yisrael*, the husband expressed his displeasure with the name *Dagan* and angered his wife. Furious, she exclaimed, "Only if *Dagan* is on the verge of dying will I call him Yosef Chaim." When the man told his wife that she is "opening her mouth to the *Satan*," she said the exact same thing two more times! It was not long before her son lost consciousness and indeed became a "vegetable." They then changed his name to Yosef Chaim and he recovered.

Words of Mussar

We have learned just how careful one must be not to say bad things, not about himself, his family, or about anyone else. For as our Sages teach us, *brit keruta l'sefatim*, a pact has been made with one's lips that the words he speaks will be fulfilled. One who opens his mouth to the *Satan* brings misfortune both upon himself and his household. But one who wishes to guard his life should guard his tongue, and then nothing bad will happen to him. Once there was gardener in my house, and I learned a lesson from him. Since children are likely to get in the way and disturb someone working in the house, he may tend to lose his temper and say things that should not be said. But this gardener did not do so. On the contrary, whenever he got angry he blessed the children and asked them to stop. Everything he said was in the form of a blessing. Instead of cursing and the like, he only spoke words of blessing. The *pasuk* teaches us that "*Tov ayin yevorach tamid*, One who has a good eye will be blessed constantly." Instead of reading *yevorach*, "will be blessed," one could read *yevareich*, "blesses." In other words, "One who has a good eyes constantly blesses." By doing so, he will merit every blessing. *Amen ve'amen*.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Mordechai Malka



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