

# Power of Words

1) Rabbi Gamliel once sent his servant to buy the best and worst piece of meat. For both he bought tongue. When asked to clarify he said that "the tongue is the best and worst. If it is a good one, there is nothing better; if it is a hurtful one, then there is nothing worse!"

(Vayikrah Rabbah, 33:1)

2) Rabbi Shimon Ben Yochai was asked by his disciples, Why were the enemies of Israel in that generation deserving of extermination?...He said to them: It was because they bowed down to the image.

(Meggilah, 12:A)

3) "Had not the Lord of Hosts left us a remnant, we would soon be like Sodom; we would resemble Gomorrah." Hear the word of the Lord, O rulers of Sodom; give ear to the law of our God, O people of Gomorrah!

***Rulers of Sodom:*** Princes whose deeds are like those of Sodom. From here, [the Rabbis] deduced that a person should not open his mouth to Satan.

(Isaiah, 1:9-10 with Rashi)

4) In the West they say: The talk about third [persons] kills three persons: him who tells [the slander], him who accepts it, and him about whom it is told.

(Arachin, 15:B)

5) A resident of Mezibuz had a quarrel with another. Once, while in the Baal Shem Tov's shul, he shouted that he would tear the other fellow to pieces like a fish.

The Baal Shem Tov told his pupils to hold one another's hand, and to stand near him with their eyes closed. Then he placed his holy hands on the shoulders of the two disciples next to him. Suddenly the disciples began shouting in great terror: They had seen that fellow actually dismembering his disputant.

This incident shows clearly that every potential has an effect - either in physical form or on a spiritual plane that can be perceived only with higher and more refined senses.

(Hayom Yom, Tishrei 29)

6) For your sake, I made a request that I might be allowed to teach this to you, but permission was denied. I am still bound by this oath, but this may I inform you and may G-d help you, your way shall ever be in the presence of G-d and never leave your consciousness in the time of your prayer and study. And every word of your lips intend to unite [i.e. be aware of and meditate upon each word]: for in every letter there are Worlds and Souls and Divinity, and they ascend and connect and unify with each other, and afterward the letters connect and unify to become a word, and [then] unify in true unification in Divinity.

Include your soul with them in each and every state. All the worlds unify as one and ascend to produce an infinitely great joy and pleasure, as you can understand from the joy of groom and bride in miniature and physicality: in the physical microcosm, how much more so in such an

exalted level as this. Surely G-d will be your aid and wherever you turn you will succeed and reach greater awareness. "Give to the wise and he will become ever wiser."

(Appendix to Ben Porat Yosef p.128a)

**7)** Therefore our Rabbis, of blessed memory, have said, "The study of the Torah equals all the commandments." For the commandments are but "garments" whereas the Torah is both "food" as well as "garment" for the rational soul, in which a person is clothed during learning and concentration. **All the more so when a person also articulates, by word of mouth; for the breath emitted in speaking [the words of the Torah] becomes something in the nature of an Encompassing Light**, as is explained in Peri Etz Chayim.)

(Tanya, Chapter 5)

