

The Peh Tahor Newsletter Parshas Ki Tavo 5786

Developing a Mouth Of Kindliness

In loving memory of our father Yosef ben Yitzchok Yehudah Brezak, A'H.

Bezras Hashem

Please share the following with your children.

We are nearing the end of the year. It is time to thank Hashem for all the happiness he has bestowed upon us this year. Let's focus on one specific source of happiness, our mouths.

1. What do we use our mouths for? (Tasting, chewing, swallowing, cutting ,drinking singing, talking, davening, brachos, thanking, complimenting, encouraging, greeting, blessing, asking, answering, consoling, comforting, joking, smiling, laughing and much more.)

2. Do the above activities bring me happiness? (Certainly!)

3. Why am I not happy when I do them? (Because I am so used to them that I do not appreciate what wonderful gifts these are. Someone recently showed me a clip of people that had their hearing restored through an operation. The people were filmed after the operation, at the first visit to the clinic. At this time the electronic devices, (that had been put in through surgery) were activated for the very first time. The clip captured their reactions at the first moment they were able to hear. Almost without exception, the moment they realized that they could hear they began to cry hysterically. They became so emotional that their crying could not be controlled. One of those in the clip was a young child of about 2-3 years old. He too began to cry profusely the moment he realized he could hear. He was crying and smiling at the same time. Why do we not cry when we hear?

Because we are very very very used to it and we do not realize what an enormous happiness this is.

4. What can help us to appreciate more? (To focus on people that don't have what we do. There are people that are dumb and not able to talk. I have sometimes seen them in shul. They can be in their twenties. They make noises but they cannot say the words of the davening. They certainly have no words with which to speak. They are not capable of saying words, just of making noises.)

5. How many words have I spoken this year? (Positive Word Power by the Chofets Chaim Heritage Foundation cites a study noting that people speak 40,000 words a day, on the average. A teen I met told me that he speaks 60,000 words a day).

6. How many words is that a year? (14million or 21million-based on 40 or 60 thousand.).

7. Does that mean that Hashem gave me happiness this year at least 14 million times. (That's exactly what it means. Every time I can speak a word it is genuine happiness)

8. Please say together with your children, "Thank you Hashem for all the words that you gave me this year. Thank you Hashem for the millions of times you have made me happy this year. (through being able to speak)"

9. Is there more to be thankful for? (The list is endless, still we are focusing on one segment of happiness, our words)

10. How can we repay Hashem? (We can't)

11. What then can we do? (We can at least be very very careful to use our mouths to not hurt others. How can we take this great gift of kindness, which brings us so much

happiness and use it to bring others so much sadness. Our mouths and our words can really hurt others greatly if we are not careful, chas veshalom)

12. Let us dedicate a special hour –on this Shabbos- when we will be especially careful with our mouths to not hurt others (bli neder). In this way even though we cannot pay Hashem back, we are at least showing him how grateful we are that we can speak. Please designate this time now together with your children. Then again let us all say together, and with all our hearts, “Thank you Hashem for all the words you gave me this year. Thank you Hashem for my mouth. Hashem please help me that I will always use my mouth to make You and others happy, and that I never use my words to hurt others or make them sad.