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News

Parashat B'midbar 5780

Rabbi Aaron Goldstein – 21 May 2020

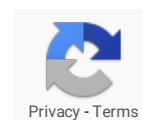
Speak for Mental Wellbeing

"Let me speak, that I may find relief (Job 32:20)."

"One of our early morning prayers: *Barukh she'amar vehayah ha'olam* – "Blessed is the One who spoke and the world came to be," notes that God created the world through speech: "And God said, "Let there be light!" (Gen 1:3)." When God speaks, whole worlds come into being: God speaks them into being. God's speech creates *yesh me'ayin* (something from nothing)."

Speech – saying, speaking, telling: has the power to transform, it has the power to create from nothing. This power can of course be used destructively, violently and words should be guarded as our Sages warned, "One who multiplies words invites sin (Pirkei Avot 1:17)." However, the efficacy, the positive strength of speech is a vital human resource for relief.

"The words "say" and "speak" are verbs which convey the act of expressing one's thoughts through uttering words.



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"Say" is defined as the act of expressing through words either to express a supposition or to direct somebody to do something. It is synonymous to the words "speak, articulate, declare, remark," and "tell."

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"Speak," is defined as the act of uttering words or talking. It may also mean the delivery of an address, lecture, or speech. This is clearly seen through this *sidrah*: God *vaydabeir*, speaks, instructs Moses and Aaron, so that they can communicate God's will to the Israelites.

Biblical Commentators have sought through millennia to find the deepest meaning in the difference between the words "say" and "speak." Let us settle on a definition for both as having the ability to communicate to another one's wishes.

In our current situation, it is vital that we keep communicating with each other; and stay connected when isolation and loneliness can play havoc with our mental wellbeing. The opportunity to speak when we need a simple conversation or to say that we are struggling is a lifeline; The chance to speak words of comfort and say that there is hope, can be a balm. In Mental Health Awareness Week may we not miss the opening to meaningful conversation.

And what of our ability to communicate to another one's deepest wishes, that we may find relief. During the pandemic, most of us will have considered our own mortality. To communicate our wishes and fears regarding our mortality, whilst often bringing tears – for it is painful to love what death can take away from us – also provides relief. At the moment of speech it is often a relief to speak of what has otherwise been internal anxiety and at the time of dying and death, to have communicated one's wishes provides relief for both the dying or deceased and family for not having to guess their loved ones wishes. It may not be a particularly British thing to do but perhaps a holy conversation.

If you ever feel the need to speak outside of the home, to help you to find words, your rabbis of CoLRaC are available to you and always wishing to speak with you.

Vaydabeir Adonai el Moshe v'el Aharon laymor

And the Eternal One spoke to Moses and Aaron saying

We repeat these words over and over, year in year out as we read through the Torah. We know their power to create, to transform, and to heal. Eternal One, You have created words in each one of your beings. Grant us the strength and the power to speak. Eternal One "Let me speak, that I may find relief (Job 32:20)."

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