

THE TALMID CHACHAM WHO HUMILIATED HIS FRIEND IS THROWN OUT OF GAN EDEN

In the Book NIFLAOT HAZOHAR pg. 39 it says: Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai was told by the messengers: “When we found out that you, Rabbi Shimon, wanted to know why was the Talmid Chacham in trial, we wanted to come and tell you ourselves”.

This is what happened: One of the students, a Talmid Chacham, was to give a public speech about a verse in the Torah; the Talmid Chacham that died and wanted to enter into the Gan Eden, studied in the same Yeshiva, and knew that the preacher, when he would arrive at a certain part of his speech, was going to give a wrong interpretation because he had no knowledge of something related to the subject; something he should have learnt. Just to see him embarrassed, he told all his Chaberim (friends), to keep quiet and not to correct his fellow student thus, making him to be ashamed in front of everybody. It did happen, he made the mistake, creating laughter amongst the listeners, and causing shame to the Lord.

THE DESTRUCTIVE ANGELS DO NOT ALLOW THIS TALMID CHACHAM INTO GAN EDEN

This is the sin why the Cherubim and the angels of destruction blocked the entrance to Gan Eden to the mentioned Talmid Chacham. From heaven, he was ordered to stay stranded for forty days with the destructive angels for the shame he had caused on his friend. After the forty days, he would go into Gehinnom for one and a half hours, and only this way he could return to Gan Eden. When Rabbi Shimon heard this sentence, he gasped with sorrow.

THE SLANDERER IS AS IF HE DENIES G-D

The book Share Teshuva (Pag 32) says: Our Rabbis said, Whoever tells slanderous gossip it is as though he denied the existence of G-d, as it says, “who have said, we will make our tongues powerful; our lips are with us; who is master over us?” (Palms 12:5) Therefore, they consider him as though he denied the existence of G-d. For he brings about great injury and much evil to his fellows by causing them to be repugnant in the eyes of people or by other forms of harm. It is not possible that a person would prepare instruments of destruction and damage more bitter than death for others, without it fulfilling some ambition for himself or yielding him some monetary gain unless his evil impulse has entrapped his soul, causing him to break free of the yoke of Heaven and break loose from its reins. As it says [in the song that David composed "when the Ziphites came and said to Shaul.... G-d...strangers have arisen against me...and have not set G-d before them.- (Palms 34:2,3,5) They [the Sages of blessed memory, explained that "they have not set G-D before them" because their intention was that Shaul would bless them, as he said to

them "May you be blessed by the Lord because you took pity on your master." (I Samuel 23:21) But they did not set before them G-d, Who wrote in His Torah "Cursed is he who strikes his fellow secretly." (Deuteronomy 27:24) And it says, "What benefit does the master of the tongue have?" (Ecclesiastes 10: 11) And it says about Doeg, "Your tongue thinks of destruction.... You have loved evil more than good, falsehood more than speaking righteousness." (Psalms 52.4-5)

A SIN FOR WHICH WE DO NOT DERIVE ANY BENEFIT

In Medrash Tehillim they explained this as follows: What benefit and what profit is there for you because you told slanderous gossip? You did not need money, for you were wealthy. As was said about him. "the chief of Shauls shepherds." (I Samuel 21:8) This is none other than your love of evil, which you cherish more than good, and of falsehood, more than speaking righteousness, for you broke free of the yoke. And it says, "A thief is not scorned when he steals," (Proverbs 6:30) after which it declares, -One who commits adultery is lacking in intelligence (ibid., verse 32) That is, he is worse than the thief who needs "to fill his soul when he is hungry." (ibid., verse 30) Our Rabbis, of blessed memory, said that one who speaks slanderous gossip is worse than either of them because he commits a great sin without actually deriving any benefit, As it says, "What will it give you and what will it add to you, deceitful tongue? (Psalms 120:3)

THE SLANDERER THINKS HE RULES OVER HIS TONGUE AND THAT G-D IS NOT AWARE

The second reason that one who tells slanderous gossip is considered as though he denied the existence of G-d, is that he says in his heart that his lips are in his domain because they do not perform actual deeds, and that he is the ruler over his tongue. He has made up his mind that he does not have to restrain the spirit of his lips from expressing whatever occurs to him. Is it only his [other] limbs that are not his, to use for sin? This idea is expressed by the verse, -we will make our tongues powerful; our lips are with us; who is master over us?" (Psalms 12:5) He does not say, where is G-d Who made me, to Whom is given all the movements of his impulses, with no exception; all of them are subjugated to the doing of his will. Rather they say, "It is nothing, the expression of our lips is in our domain." This is not the case with wicked people who commit other type of sins. For the latter are aware that their abandonment of G-d is evil and bitter, but they are drawn after their desires and their overpowering impulses, and they are anguished about this.

WOE TO THE ONE WHO MOCKS HIS “UNSUCCESSFUL” FELLOW MAN

Also in the book Shaare Teshuva (p. 28) says the following: “If someone mocks people, denigrating them in his heart because of their limited accomplishments in prestige or in temporal success, in honor or high office, or if he scorns them because of their poverty, - pride, or an excess of complacency, or pleasure has led him to this character trait. As it says, "Our soul has been greatly satiated with the mockery of the complacent, the scorn of the proud oppressors." (P'salms 123-4) Sometimes the scorner mocks holy people and prophets as it states, "Everyone mocks me." (Jeremiah 20:7) And Shlomoh, peace be upon him, said, "One who scorns his fellow is a sinner." (Proverbs 14:21)

ONE WHO MOCKS THE POOR DENIES THAT G-D CONTROLS EVERYTHING AND THAT RICHES AND POVERTY COME FROM HIM

And it further says, "One who scorns his fellow is lacking in heart [intelligence] (ibid. 11:12) and "One who mocks the poor has blasphemed his maker, one who rejoices at another's misfortune will not be exonerated." (ibid, 17:5) This can be explained as follows. One who mocks the poor shows his innermost thoughts: he imagines that success is in the hands of human beings, and that they can achieve it by their own wisdom, as is expressed by the verse, "and you will say in your heart my strength and the power of my hand have made this wealth for me." (Deuteronomy 8: 17) And it says, "For he said, 'I did this by the strength of my hand, and by my wisdom, for I have acquired understanding'." Isaiah 10:13) This is why he mocks the poor, he says in his heart that the poor man has not attained wealth because of his lack of intelligence and because of the lowliness of his hands. By doing this, he blasphemes his Creator - the Creator of both the poor and the wealthy. For everything emanates from G-d, blessed is He. As it says, "The wealthy and the poor meet; it is the Lord who makes all of them." (Proverbs 22:2)

THE ONE WHO REJOICES OVER ANOTHER'S MISFORTUNE WILL NOT BE EXONERATED FROM PUNISHMENT

And concerning one who rejoices over another person's misfortune, it says, "he will not be exonerated." Even though he has not done any harm by deed or by word, he will not be cleared. However, the evil of one who rejoices over another person's sorrow is not as great as that of one

who mocks the poor. And because mockery is caused by arrogance, which is the opposite of humility, Shlomoh, may peace be upon him said (Proverbs 3:34) "Surely He scorns the scorers; but he gives grace to the humble", meaning that G-d will mock the one's who really, in their heart mock others as it is written (Psalms 2:4) "He who sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision"...(UNTIL HERE SHAARE TESHUVA

Do not be afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; For when he dies he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not go down after him.

(Psalms 49:17-18)

WE SHOULD LEARN TO TALK LESS IN ORDER TO AVOID SINNING

This is what it says in Sefer ha Rokeach (page 2b): One's words should be few; his voice should be low, and he should minimize sarcasm and oaths taken in G-D's name, even regarding the truth. No lie should pass his tongue. He should not sit in the company of merrymakers. As is said of Yirmiyahu: "I did not sit in the company of merrymakers, nor rejoice; because of Your hand I sat alone, for You have filled me with indignation." (Jeremiah 15:17) *When one reads the Torah, the Prophets, the Writings, and the Talmud, and sees the reward and the punishment, and is aware that his [evil] deeds are formidable, he will be humbled and will lower himself His heart will be softened and he will be, afraid of the punishment for the deeds and will repent, like Yoshiyahu, who tore his clothing. And the Holy One, blessed is He, answered him, "Because your heart is soft and you submit yourself before Me...(II Kings 22:19)* Submission means humility; ruling over one's actions and spirit; when others express disapproval of him and he has the ability to take revenge, yet out of humility and lowliness he remains silent and bears it. And if some mishap or injury occurs to him, his property, his children, or his relatives, he justifies G-d's judgment. He stops his mouth from speaking and his heart from thinking [against G-d], as "and Aharon was silent." (Leviticus 10:3) And if people praise him, he should say, "Do not praise [me], for I am aware of my sins."

FIGHTING SOCIAL PRESSURE

The true strength of a person's piety is demonstrated under the following circumstances: a devout person does not cast off his piety even when people ridicule him; whatever he does is for the sake of heaven; he does not look at women. His piety is put to the test especially when he is in the company of other men in a situation where women are usually around—for example, in a wedding hall where women are dressed in elegant gowns, and all are gazing at the women, and he does not stare. For that, he will be rewarded with abundant good. Therefore, when a man meets a woman, whether she is single or married, gentile or Jewish, an adult or a minor, it is best for him to turn his face aside and not to look at her. And so do we read in Job, "I made a covenant with my eyes not to gaze on a maiden" (Job 3 1: 1). The verse "He shuts his eyes against looking at evil" (Isaiah 33:15) refers to the person who does not look at women when they are doing their washing.' When they wash their clothes, they lift their skirts so as not to soil them and thus uncover their legs; and we know that a woman's leg is a sexual excitement. And so said the Sage, "There is no greater barrier to sexual arousal than closing one's eyes.

(Sefer Chassidim 9)

Sexual temptation is the main test in life. It is sent as a challenge to refine us. When you are subjected to this test it puts you in a type of "exile". You should cry out to G-d: scream and cry out to Him over and over again, like a woman in labor who cries out from the pain of her contractions. Seventy times she cries out (Zohar III, 249b). You must do likewise and cry out to G-d again and again until He takes pity and helps you to strengthen yourself and break your desire. New ideas and new perceptions will be born within you. The secrets of Torah, which before were guarded, will now be unveiled for

you. The greater the determination with which you stand up to the trial, the greater the revelation you will receive in Torah and devotion to G-d. You will be able to see the seventy faces of the Torah

(Likute Etzot 36)

CHOOSE GOOD FRIENDS

THE NATURE OF A PERSON IS TO BE PULLED BY THE THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS OF HIS FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES AND TO BEHAVE ACCORDING TO THE CUSTOMS OF THE PLACE WHERE HE RESIDES, THEREFORE A MAN MUST ASSOCIATE WITH TZADDIKIM AND SIT NEXT TO THE WISE SO HE CAN LEARN FROM THEIR ACTIONS. AND HE SHOULD DISTANCE HIMSELF FROM EVILDOERS THAT WALK IN DARKNESS SO THAT HE WILL NOT LEARN FROM THEIR ACTIONS.

(Rambam, Hilchot Deot, chap. 6)

Pride and sexual immorality are bound up with one another. By guarding the Covenant in purity a person can rid himself of pride and find the light that will guide him on the path back to G-d

(LIKUTE ETZOT).

WE NEED GREAT STRENGTH TO FIGHT AGAINST SOCIAL PRESSURE WHICH DUE TO OUR MANY SINS RUNS COUNTER TO HOLINESS AND TORAH

A MAN MUST BE VERY CAREFUL ABOUT HIS FRIENDS AND SOCIETY IN GENERAL FOR THEY EXERT GREAT INFLUENCE ON THE INDIVIDUAL IN REGARDS TO HIS RELIGIOUS CONDUCT AND ESPECIALLY IN THIS PARTICULAR SUBJECT (PROPER SEXUAL CONDUCT). AND THROUGH EXPERIENCE WE HAVE SEEN HOW MANY FORMER GOOD AND OBSERVANT JEWS HAVE FALLEN AND STUMBLED TO THE LOWEST LEVEL THROUGH THEIR DEALING AND RELATING TO PEOPLE OF LOW MORALE THEREFORE HE WHO WANTS TO KEEP HIS LEVEL OF HOLINESS MUST RUN AWAY AND SEPARATE FROM ALL BAD INFLUENCES.

AND WE HAVE TO MENTION THE HARMFUL INFLUENCES OF THE TELEVISION AND THE COMPUTERS THROUGH THE INTERNET WHERE WE ARE CONFRONTED CONSTANTLY WITH THE YETZER HA RA THAT WANTS TO LEAD US ASTRAY FROM THE WAYS OF LIFE AND INTO THE DEEP DARKNESS. FOR ONLY ONE PIECE OF INFORMATION THAT WE READ LIKE FOR EXAMPLE THE DISCOVERY OF A NEW FOSSIL THOUGHT TO BE 30 TRILLION YEARS OLD ABOUT WHICH A WISE MAN KNOWS THAT IT IS ALL SPECULATION FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY TALK ABOUT BESIDES THE FACT THAT THEY COME UP WITH A DIFFERENT AGE FOR THE UNIVERSE EVERY OTHER DAY. FOR ONLY THIS INFORMATION IF WE HAPPEN TO BE WEAK IN OUR FAITH IN THE HOLY TORAH WE CAN LET IN THE SEED OF DISBELIEF INTO OUR SOULS AND WHO KNOWS WHERE WE CAN BE LED THROUGH THIS, G-D FORBID

AND ON TOP OF THIS DANGER WE HAVE SOMETHING THAT IS MANY TIMES WORSE AND THAT IS THE IMAGES THAT WE ARE EXPOSED TO EVERY TIME WE TURN ON THE INTERNET. IF WE DON'T HAVE THE STRONGEST DETERMINATION AND IF WE ARE NOT AFRAID OF THE PUNISHMENT FOR OUR ACTIONS OR IF WE FEEL THAT WE CAN PLAY WITH FIRE WITHOUT GETTING BURNED, THEN WE ARE FOR SURE BOUND TO END UP ENSNARED IN THE NETS OF PROMISCUITY AND PROSTITUTION. AND IT WILL NOT MATTER HOW MUCH TORAH YOU LEARN EVERYDAY AND IT WILL NOT MATTER HOW MANY GOOD DEEDS YOU DO EVERY WEEK, THE DAMAGE THAT WILL COME TO YOUR SOUL FROM YOUR ACTIONS IN FRONT OF A SEEMINGLY HARMLESS COMPUTER WILL LEAD TO GEHINOMM WITHOUT A DOUBT.

MAY THE MERCIFUL ONE GIVE US STRENGTH TO PASS THE MANY TRIALS OF OUR EVERYDAY EXISTENCE AND MAY OUR ACTIONS BE ACCORDING TO WHAT WE SAY AND DECLARE DAY AFTER DAY TWICE A DAY IN OUR PRAYERS "VE LO TATURU ACHARE LEVAVCHEM VE ACHARE ENECHEM ASHER ATEM ZONIM ACHARECHEM. AND AS OUR SAGES SAID: "ACHARE LEVAVCHEM- THIS REFERS TO HERESY, ACHARE EINECHEM- THIS REFERS TO PROMISCUITY. MAY WE FIND FAVOR IN G-D'S EYE FOR WITHOUT HIS HELP WE ARE COMPLETELY HOPELESS. MAY G-D SEND HIS SALVATION AND MAY THE REDEEMER COME TO ZION, AMEN

“THEREFORE MUST A MAN BE CAREFUL NOT TO ASSOCIATE WITH THE FOOLS AND THE LIGHT HEADED AND THOSE WHO SIT IN THE CORNERS [CAFES], SO THAT HE NOT FALL ON EMPTINESS AND WAYS OF LEVITY AND PROMISCUITY AND HE SHOULD REMOVE FROM ALL GROUPS THAT EXERT NEGATIVE INFLUENCE, EVERYONE ACCORDING TO HIS LEVEL”

(Meiri, Bet ha Bechira, Nedarim 20)

DON'T TRUST YOURSELF TO RESIST THE PRESSURES

AND THE PERSON SHOULDN'T TRUST IN HIMSELF AND THINK HE CAN CONTROL HIS EVIL TENDENCIES, SAYING SINCE MY HEART IS PURE AND COMPLETE IN THE FAITH OF G-D, WHAT LOSS CAN THERE BE IF I ENJOY SOMETIMES IN THE PLEASURES OF REGULAR MEN, TO MINGLE WITH JESTERS AND TO TALK ABOUT FOOLISHNESS FOR WHICH NO SACRIFICES WOULD NEED TO BE BROUGHT IF THE TEMPLE WERE STANDING, DON'T I ALSO HAVE A HEART LIKE THEM? AND WHY ARE THEY GOING TO LEAD ME AFTER THEM?

PLEASE MY SON, GUARD YOURSELF FROM THEM LEST YOU BE CONSUMED BY THEIR EVIL. MANY HAVE DRUNK FROM THEIR CUP AND HAVE FALLEN, BUT YOU GUARD YOUR SOUL. (Chinuch, Mitzvah 16)

WE MERIT TO HAVE FEAR OF G-D ONLY THROUGH SEPARATION AND SANCTITY

“For we are His people and the flock that He tends to, His portion and His inheritance, therefore we need to sanctify ourselves with His sanctity and to love and fear Him, and there is no man that merits to fear Him but only through separation and sanctity, that a man should fence himself in all things and in all his actions and in particular with what pertains to guarding the Holiness of the sign of the Brit, with which he must be extra careful, because this is a place that is ready to receive and station the Yetzer ha Ra...

GREAT STRENGTH IS NEEDED TO FEND OFF THE YETZER HA RA

And great strength is needed and mighty barriers have to be erected to fend off the Yetzer ha Ra because most of its actions and machinations are in this area and it doesn't demand much from a person but only to yield into temptation a little, because it will make the person yield a lot and fall so far that it will get him out of this World. (Seder ha Yom, Nightly conduct)

TO OBSERVE NEGATIVE COMMANDMENTS OUT OF FEAR OF G-D AND NOT FEAR OF OTHER MEN OR GOVERNMENT

How can one consider himself that he keeps the negative commandments that are impossible for him to perform be it because the Creator gave him no chance to perform them or be it because he is afraid from the government or ashamed to commit a particular sin like theft or robbery in front of other people? But the true measure of man is when he refrains from doing the sins that he is not ashamed to perform, and for which the government will not punish him, like LASHON HA RA, LEVITY, DISCHARGING SEMEN IN VAIN in secret. When a person refrains from doing these transgressions out of love and fear of the creator, The One who knows hidden things will testify for him that even regarding other negative commandments, he would not transgress them first and foremost for fear of the Creator than for other reason like shame or government.

(Derech Pikudecha, Introduction 2, 4)

THE ONE WHO SANCTIFIES G-D'S NAME IS THE ONE WHO AVOIDS SIN FOR G-D'S SAKE

He who refrains from sinning not for any reason in the world- fear, shame, honor but only because thus commanded the Creator Blessed be His Name, he is one that sanctifies the Name of G-d. (Rambam, Hilchot Yesode Torah 5:10)

THE PROPER INTENTION IS TO TREAT THE PLEASURES AS A MEANS OF SERVING G-D AND NOT AS AN END IN THEMSELVES

In all the pleasures of this world, one shouldn't consider his enjoyment but only serving the Holy One Blessed Be He, as it is written: "In all your ways acknowledge Him" and our sages said: "All your actions should be for the sake of heaven" and even permitted things like eating, drinking and marital relations should be all for the service of the Creator (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 231)

OTHER PEOPLE CAN BE GREAT DETRACTORS

If you were alone, without the influence of others, you would always direct yourself towards the path of life. You might be confronted with every type of confusion, worry and frustration, but you would still eventually end up on the right path. Even if you sinned, you would regret it and find the true path in the end. It becomes much more difficult when others confuse you.

You might associate with those who think they know something about philosophy. Or you might have friends who are involved in studies that ridicule everything sacred. Such people can confuse you and frustrate you more than anything else.

The world may consider this sophistication, but it can result in great confusion. It teaches that all values are relative and everything is absolutely permissible. This is especially true of philosophy, which can cause tremendous spiritual damage.

There is also a certain sarcasm, even among those who seem religious. This is as harmful as philosophy. This sarcasm is literally the same as philosophical skepticism. It can even be worse, since most Jews recognize the dangers of philosophy and avoid it. They know that it can drag them down into the deepest pit. But Jews are not so heedful of avoiding sarcasm and sophistication, especially when it emanates from people who appear to be religious. This makes it all the more dangerous.

There are people who seem religious and disguise all their sarcasm in the language of truth. People do not avoid them, thinking that they are on the right path. These are the ones who can cause the most harm, frustrating and confusing one who truly wants to serve G-d.

Happy is the man who walks the true path, avoiding all sophistication. He is "simple and upright, fearing G-d and shunning evil." (Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom 81)