



Table Talk



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24th April 2009

Birthdays



Aron	Glass
Adam	Shasha
James	Desser
Millie	Foster
Rachel	Goldenfield
Daniel	Kay
Jason	Linz
Natasha	Amroon
Anat	Dean
Harriet	Alex
Daniel	Fine
James	Gold-
Charlotte	Caution
Noa	Hyman
Nadine	Landes
Elizabeth	Hayton
Katie	Rose
Adam	Barr
Elena	Black
Danielle	Kayman
Adam	Savinson
Deborah	Mehlman

A Bite of Inspiration

Parashat Tazria Metzora

This week's Parasha talks of the consequences of negative speech about others, known as *lashon hara*. "Sticks and stones will break my bones but words will never hurt me." While we might tell our children not to be bothered, the reality is that words hurt a great deal more than sticks and stones. The pain caused by sticks and stones is temporary; the pain caused by words can be eternal. When someone hits you, it is a very crude and superficial expression of contempt for your humanity. What he is saying, in effect, is that you are an object, not a person. There is a sense of violation. Words, however, can express that contempt infinitely more eloquently and thus penetrate much deeper. When you talk badly about another person, it can be much more personal and biting, and cut to the core of his individuality. Beyond this, the Sages say that whoever speaks *lashon hara* denies G-d Himself. It is, to be sure, an indefensible action to talk badly about a fellow human being, but to say that one who does so denies G-d seems a little harsh. Every human being is made in the image of G-d. No one of us is inherently any more or less G-dly than anyone else. We are G-dly no matter what we do. The question is only whether we will act in a G-dly fashion or not. The Jewish concept

is that although a person may 'do' bad, his or her essence 'is' still good. When one recognizes this, one is able to appreciate the goodness, the greatness and almost unlimited potential of those around us. At the same time, all of us G-dly human beings make mistakes. Yes, we are G-dly, but we are not God. And only God is perfect. When one speaks *lashon hara*, one is focusing on the bad that people do. G-d created a world of G-dly and elevated souls and we, in our minds and with our words, turn it into a world of small and petty people. We are looking at G-d's most precious creation, a human being, created in his image, and not even noticing that goodness. If we wish to see G-d in those around us, He is always there to be seen. But equally, if we want to ignore G-d, we will see the bad and end up speaking *lashon hara*. When one puts it into that perspective, it becomes obvious why there are few things in Judaism that are considered worse than talking badly about another person. Next time you are tempted to do so, take a moment to consider how unbecoming it is for a dignified soul to stoop to such depths. It simply doesn't pay.

After Dinner Joke

Three friends are on a boat far from land. They decide they are going to confess their shortcomings.

One asks another, 'What is something that you have a problem with?'

The first one says, 'Well, I have a problem with alcohol. I like to take to the bottle sometimes.'

The second one says, 'Well, I have a problem with jealousy. I want so many things.'

One of the others asks the third one, 'Well, what is something that you have a problem with?'

The third friend replies, 'Gossip, and I can't wait to get back to shore!'



שבת
שלום

Side Dish

Science

At the end of March this year, twenty pupils from the Main school and Yavneh went on a science field trip to Blencathra, in the Lake District. The group spent four busy days collecting vital information for their coursework. Fortunately the weather was good and the group were able to complete all their necessary

tasks. Support was given by class teachers and staff from the centre. Several experiments were carried out such as identifying invertebrates in a river. Enthusiastic students have reported that they "definitely benefited from the trip and they enjoyed this more practical way of learn-



Celebrating Success

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Daniel De Wijze and Naomi Mercer

for winning places on the Hallé Youth Orchestra. Over 300 musicians competed for 80 places. For more information see:

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