

LONG RANGE MISSILES

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

The danger of a weapon in the hands of an enemy is measured not only by the destructive power of its impact but also by its range. A missile that can travel long distances is far more dangerous than a tank or bazooka. In interpersonal relationships the effect of an insult or emotional hurt also has a range.

Words have the power to inflict great pain and suffering and their long distance capabilities certainly require caution on the part of all who use these potent weapons of mass destruction. The laws of lashon ha ra - forbidden, harmful speech - arouse a sense of caution and sensitivity in a person to guard one's tongue and to dole out words with cautious stinginess. It is not only the long distance that is dangerous but also the long-term effects of verbal damage that make this type of transgression so serious. One should always consider the long-lasting effects of any statement before launching potent words from one's mouth.

Holding back a feisty, slippery creature like the human tongue is a difficult task to say the least. One good way to develop word control is to improve your eye. Look for the good in everything around you. A person who sees beauty in nature, appreciates art and music and enjoys the talents and the quirks of friends and relatives may not be able to control his or her tongue but will speak his or her mind -- with a positive view whenever expressing inner thoughts. The verse in Tehillim says: "Who is the man who seeks life, loves days to see good-- guard your tongue from evil..." In order to guard your tongue --you must see good. There is so much that is positive in G-d's creation and in the people around you. Look for it and you will find it. Focus on it and teach your tongue to speak good.

DID YOU KNOW THAT

When one leaves a rest room after relieving oneself one must recite the blessing "Asher Yasar" -- "Who formed the Human being..." --because the creation of the human being is a wondrous accomplishment that requires thankful acknowledgment.

The container - the body - is full of air and has many openings yet it still holds the air inside. It is made up of so many complex organs that contribute to the proper balance and functioning of the whole. We thank Hashem that it all functions constantly -- for were any opening to seal up or any closed organ to puncture it would not be possible to continue to live.

[Source: Shulhan Arukh, o'h, siman 6]

CONSIDER THIS FOR A MINUTE

The gossip looks over his shoulder to make sure that his target is not listening. Why isn't he worried that Hashem is listening?

A Lesson A Day

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