

AHARON'S SILENCE

by Community Contributor

"The sons of *Aharon*, *Nadav* and *Avihu*, each took his fire pan, they put fire in them and placed incense upon it; and they brought before *Hashem* a strange fire that He had not commanded them. A fire came forth from before Hashem and consumed them, and they died before *Hashem*."

What was *Aharon's* reaction? He could've complained. As *Gemara* says, "A person whose suffering causes him to challenge G-d is not sinful." No, *Aharon* did just the opposite! He fell silent.

What is the *value* of silence? The *Gemara* says, "When a person ignores insults, Heaven ignores his or her sins."

Why?

Rashi explains that a person who "does not stand on principle" is someone who is not exacting with people who cause him grief overcomes his impulses [for vengeance] and just continues on his way. We also find that whoever is compassionate to people, Heaven will be compassionate to him. Rabbi Moshe Cordovero points out that it is far better to achieve atonement for a transgression by suffering an insult in silence than to undergo physical punishment which may interfere with one's ability to perform *mitzvos* or study Torah.

Here is some food for thought:

A stupid person who is silent is considered to be wise. Silence is lovely for a wise man, all the more so for a fool. Therefore, "One who guards his mouth and tongue protects himself from trouble." *Avos* recommends, "The best medicine that is most beneficial for one's body, is silence.

The *Maharal* writes:

The point is that taking into account that a person is a physical being, he gains from silence. Speaking is... a physically based power. Speech is a physical attribute, not a mental one at all. For that reason, speech should be shunned so as not to suffer from an error or mental disintegration. When a person is involved in verbal activity, he is negating his mental resources... One should, therefore [try to] maintain silence and take initiatives with his intellectual features that are not corporeal, as is the power of speech, thus avoiding errors."

Shlomo HaMelech says, "Silence is Your [i.e. *Hashem's*] praise!" In addition, "Silence is a protective guard for wisdom." Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says, "All my days I grew up among wise men and I found nothing better for a person than silence."

We also see that the strength of G-d is manifest through His non-reaction to the insult and blaspheming of the wicked. Furthermore, "Those who listen to their shame and do not respond in kind to their insulters," it is about them that the posuk refers to when it says, 'and those who love Hashem will shine as bright as the midday sun.'" The whole world exists only in the merit of the one who bridles his mouth in a moment of strife.

Want a "*segulah*" to ignore insults? At the end of *shemonah esrei*, it says, "My G-d... To those who curse me, let my soul be silent and let my soul be like dust to everyone."

When saying those words, concentrate on them intently. With Hashem's help, if someone hurls an insult at you, it will appear to you like a speck of dust on your jacket!

This article is dedicated:

In memory of *Eliyahu ben Mordechai, Mashah Tzivyah bas R' Shlomo Zalman, Altah Soshah Devorah bas Aryeh Leibush, Chaim ben Shmuel Efraim Zalman, Tuvyah Shlomo ben Naftali Tzvi HaKohein, Esther Perel bas R' Shlomo, Miriam bas Zelig Shaul, Menachem ben Shimon, Menachem ben Zev, Sarah bas HaRav Yisroel, Yosef ben Moshe HaLevi, Yisroel ben Yeshayah, Elisheva Basyah bas Yechiel Ephraim* and all the other departed souls of our nation.

For the complete recovery of *Chayah Malka bas Bas-Sheva*, among the other sick ones of our nation.

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