

דברי מנחם

Diorei Menachem

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In this week's Parsha, we see Par'o rejecting the notion of one God, perhaps because he fancied himself as a god. Like other powerful tyrants over the generations, he decreed anti-Semitic and increasingly horrific edicts, only to rid himself of the Jews.

Not for nothing, the Hebrew letters of his name can rearrange into PEI-HEI and REISH-AYIN, PEH-RA, meaning a "Bad Mouth". Unfortunately, at that time, there were Jews who also suffered from that malaise, as the Jew who sneaked on Moshe to Par'o concerning Moshe's smiting of the Egyptian who had hit a Hebrew man, one of his brothers (Sh'mot 11-15).

Indeed, R. Mendy Kessen reminds us that Bnei Yisrael brought their servitude upon themselves because of tale-tattling and slander, i.e., Lashon Hara, which was rampant at that time. But, citing the Midrash, the rabbi tells us also the good news: Bnei Yisrael gained their Ge'ula - the Redemption from Egypt - because they later refrained from slander and gossip. Maybe they learned from Moshe who was shown the sign of Tzara'as, a form of leprosy, after he had maligned Bnei Yisrael (4:48).

This idea is expressed in the name of PESACH, the Holiday of our Freedom, which can be reshaped as PEH SACH - 'The Mouth that Talks [of good and holy matters]'. With that thought, let us look forward to the Complete Ge'ula that, hopefully, will arrive because of Lashon Tov, the positive, brotherly communication that we share with all our fellow Jews.