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SHABBAT TABLE

**PARSHAT
TAZRIA**

Every Child

I heard a profound insight from R' Paysach Krohn that relates to the fast-approaching Pesach. In the Haggadah, we introduce the 4 sons: the wise, the wicked, the simple, and the ignorant. We start off that paragraph with the words: ...ברוך המקום – blessed is the Omnipresent [*haMakom*]. Though the word "*haMakom*" means "the place," it is also a reference to Boreh Olam, Whose presence is everywhere.

R' Shimon Schwab asked: Why is it that we praise Hashem at this junction while referring to Him as "*haMakom*"? Generally, we tend to use that terminology in sad and distressing situations! When consoling a mourner, one says, המקום ירחם – *may Hashem ("haMakom") comfort you*. When someone incurs a significant financial loss, we tell him, המקום ימלא חסרונוך – *may Hashem ("haMakom") fill your loss*. And when praying for those suffering globally, we say, ...ירחם עליהם – *may Hashem ("haMakom") have mercy on them*. In each of these situations, those grieving or suffering otherwise might feel overlooked or abandoned by G-d, *chas v'shalom*, so we use the word "*haMakom*" to convey that G-d is running everything everywhere, and that He will take care of them. So why are we using "*haMakom*" here, in the Haggadah?

R' Schwab explained that as the parents or grandparents look around their Seder table at their children or grandchildren, in some instances they can wonder disappointingly, "How did these kids become like this?" They can observe the child – or sometimes several children – struggling immensely in life, having perhaps succumbed to dangerous addictions, falling down the path of the gentiles, *rachmana litzlan*... "How did this happen?" the parent may despondently think. That's why the paragraph starts with "*haMakom*," to address this dejected parent.

However, Rav Schwab continued, the passage also contains the word "*baruch*" [blessed] four separate times: **ברוך המקום, ברוך** – corresponding to each of the four children. This reinforces a vital concept that can sometimes be overlooked: EVERY child is a *blessing*. We can never, ever give up on any child – or any Jewish soul, for that matter – because every one of them can come back. There is always hope, no matter what he or she watched or did – every child is a blessing, and not only can we never give up on any of them, we need to appreciate them for who they are while never losing sight of their inherent potential.

Soaring

This week's Parsha, as well as next week's, discusses the *tzara'at* affliction in length, and, as is commonly known, one of the major causes of *tzara'at* is engaging in the terrible and ugly sin of *lashon hara* – slandering and speaking ill of others. After seven days in the *metzora's* purification process, if he is found pure, he offers 2 birds as sacrifices – one is slaughtered as a *korban*, and the other is sent off to fly away.

R' Yechiel Spero shared a penetrating question asked by R' Shlomo Gantzfried (the author of the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*): since *lashon hara* is such a horrible thing, why don't they slaughter *both* birds when bringing the *korban*, as more of an atonement, perhaps...? Why do they only slaughter one bird, and send the other off on its way?

The answer he gave is beautiful. Indeed, *lashon hara* is a tremendous mistake, and to absolve oneself of it, he slaughters a bird as a *korban* – symbolizing the riddance of the negativity that would consume someone to malign another. The *metzora* learned his lesson to abstain from evil speech. However, Hashem doesn't want us to stop speaking entirely. Hashem gave each of us a mouth as a precious gift, and now that the *metzora* learned not to misuse it, the Torah commands setting the second bird free to soar, in essence conveying that now, the *metzora* isn't meant to keep silent forever, but rather allow his mouth and the power of speech within it to soar to the great and meaningful heights that it was created for. One can speak nicely about people, express appreciation, give encouragement, call people to lift their spirits, learn Torah, pray intently, etc. The list really goes on and on; when a person channels his gift of speech for positivity, he brings out so much light and *berachah* into the world. The Torah isn't putting a leash on one's mouth; to the contrary, we set the chirping bird free because Hashem wants us to "chirp away" in the realm of using this talent for the right purposes. And when we do so, we really do soar higher and higher...

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida Shalom Ben Roza Mazal Chaim Avraham Ben Shifra Zisel
Frida Bat Yaffa Rahamim Ben Shifra Chana Bat Malka Miriam Bat Bakol
Yitzchak Ben Naama Meir Tzvi Ben Sara Heleni Orna Bat Chen Chana
Zohar Shimon Ben Ruchama Yisrael Meir Ben Daphne Bruria Tinok Ben Sara
Noah Yisrael Ben Victoria Yaffa Shmuel Henech Ben Baila Fruma

"The same boiling water that softens the potato, hardens the egg. It is not the circumstances; it is what you're made of." (Meaningful Minute)