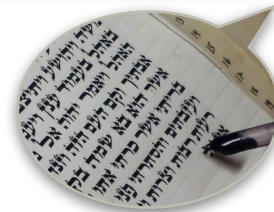




The Collective Conversation

Weekly Torah Essays from the
Young Israel of Scarsdale Community



Sefer Vayikra

Parshat Tazria-Metzora

Iyar 5783 / April 2023

The Power of Our Words

By Rachel Tratt

This week, as we celebrate *Yom Ha'atzmaut*, we read the Torah portion of *Tazria-Metzora*. This parsha focuses on the laws of purity and impurity. One big topic is *lashon hara*. *Lashon hara*, or evil talk, makes one impure.

We learn that one who speaks *lashon hara* gets *tzaraat*, a serious plague. If the kohen then declares this person as impure, they are exiled from the community for seven days and sent into a temporary quarantine. The plague can not only affect the body, but personal belongings as well. In fact, if one gets *tzaraat* twice, they are obligated to destroy their home.

If anything can show us how far our words can get us, it's this. They can dig us deep into situations we cannot get out of. But just as much as they can hurt us, they can save us as well.

As we are celebrating *Yom Ha'atzmaut*, Israel's independence day, we need to think more about utilizing our words. With false information and hate targeting Israel from multiple fronts, it is our job as proud Jews to stand up. *Parshat Tazria-Metzora* teaches us just how strong our words are. We need to defend ourselves and Israel wholeheartedly, with our words, something that can never be taken away from us.

Now more than ever, I hope we can all reflect on how we have been using our words, and use them for better, for ourselves and the Jewish community as a whole.

Rachel is a ninth grader at Ramaz Upper School and has lived in Scarsdale for seven years. She is excited to have her article included in the Collective Conversation and would like to see more High Schoolers write as well.

Building on the theme of Rachel's dvar Torah honoring Yom Ha'atzmaut and anticipating a special Shabbat at YIS featuring Chazon Shulem Lemmer and author Matti Friedman, we present the lyrics of two popular and defining songs from Israel.

אֵין לִי אֶרֶץ אֲחֵרָה, *I Have No Other Country*, was voted the Unofficial Song of the State in honor of Israel's 75th in a recent poll conducted by Yediot Achronot. Composed by Corinne Allal with lyrics by Ehud Manor, the song was first performed by Gali Atari in 1986, following the Lebanon War. ([First performance](#))

הַלֵּלִי-הָ, *Hallelujah*, the winner of the 1979 Eurovision Song Contest, was Israel's second win — Israel won again in 1998 and in 2018, making it one of only seven countries to win more than once. The song was composed by Kobi Oshrat and was sung by Gali Atari with three male backup singers. Oshrat's Hallelujah was inspired by tefilot, a tune made famous by Leonard Cohen and a whole lot more. ([Eurovision performance](#))

אין לי ארץ אחרת

גם אם אדמתי בוערת אין לי ארץ אחרת
רק מילה בעברית חודרת
אל עורקיי, אל נשמתי
בגוף כואב, בלב רעב
כאן הוא ביתי

לא אשתוק, כי ארצי
שינתה את פניה
לא אוותר לה,
אזכיר לה,
ואשיר כאן באוזניה
עד שתפקח את עיניה

אין לי ארץ אחרת
גם אם אדמתי בוערת
רק מילה בעברית חודרת

אל עורקיי, אל נשמתי
בגוף כואב, בלב רעב
כאן הוא ביתי

אין לי ארץ אחרת
עד שתחדש ימיה
עד שתפקח את עיניה
בגוף כואב, בלב רעב
כאן הוא ביתי

I Have No Other Country

Though she's burning, torn asunder.
Just a word in my native tongue delves
In my veins, and in my soul...
Half torn apart, with a hungry heart
Here is my home.

Can't keep silent in light of
How my country's changed her guise.
Won't stop trying to
Remind her
In her ears I'll sing my cries,
Until she opens her eyes.

I have no country other,
Though she's burning, torn asunder.
Just a word in my native tongue delves
In my veins, and in my soul...
Half torn apart, with a hungry heart
Here is my home.

I have no country other
'Til her olden days reprise,
Until she opens her eyes.

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הללויה

הללויה לעולם,
הללויה ישירו כולם
במילה אחת בודה
הלב מלא בהמון תודה
והולם גם הוא - איזה עולם נפלא.

הללויה עם השיר,
הללויה על יום שמאיר,
הללויה על מה שהיה,
ומה שעוד לא היה - הללויה

הללויה לעולם
הללויה ישירו כולם
והענבלים הגדולים
יהדהדו בהמון צלילים
ואתנו הם יאמרו - הללויה

הללויה עם השיר...

הללויה על הכל
הללו על מחר ואתמול
הללויה, ותנו יד ביד
ושירו מלב אחד - הללויה

הללויה עם השיר...

Hallelujah

Hallelujah to the world,
Everybody will sing hallelujah.
With one single word,
The heart is full with a lot of thanks,
and beats itself as well - what a wonderful world.

Hallelujah with the song,
Hallelujah for a day that shines.
Hallelujah for what has already happened,
And on what has yet to happen, Hallelujah.

Hallelujah to the world,
Everybody will sing hallelujah.
And the big clappers
will echo in many sounds,
and they'll say, with us, Hallelujah.

Hallelujah with the song,
Hallelujah for a day that shines.
Hallelujah for what has already happened,
And on what has yet to happen, Hallelujah.
Hallelujah for everything,
Hallelujah for tomorrow and yesterday,
and sing from one heart, Hallelujah.



The Collective Conversation is a project of the
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