﻿שמעון בנו אומר כל ימי גדלתי בין החכמים. ולא מצאתי לגוף טוב אלא שתיקה.

Shimon [the son of Rabbi Gamliel] taught: Throughout my life, I was raised among the scholars, and I discovered that there is nothing more becoming a person than silence.

פרקי אבות א:יז

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| 1 | The craft of a person in this world is to behave as if mute! The craft is not to be a babbler. This is something one has to learn: since the baby knows to talk, he babbles as it pleases him. Silence needs to be learned, because silence is a great skill, and by it you recognize the person of intelligence. The nature of a person is his solitude. Only in that does the soul and spirit develop their strength.   * Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, *Alei Shur* |
| 2 | ﻿שְׁמַע יִשְֹרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' | אֶחָד:  Hear O’ Israel the Lord is our God, the Lord is one. |
| 3 | ﻿א בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ: ב וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחשֶׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם: ג וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי-אוֹר וַיְהִי-אוֹר: ד וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאוֹר כִּי-טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ: ה וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים | לָאוֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לָיְלָה וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד:  1. In the beginning of God’s creating heaven and earth – 2. the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water – 3. God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. 4. God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. 5. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, a first day. |
| 4 | Four main types of negative speech are identified for us. The first is degrading or negative comments about a person that are actually true. The second is degrading or negative comments about a person that are false. The third is gossip – passing on to a person the negative things someone else had said. The fourth is statements that don’t come right out with negativity but only imply it.   * Paraphrased from Chafetz Chaim, *Shmirat Halashon* |
| 5 | ﻿אמרו חכמים שלש עבירות נפרעין מן האדם בעולם הזה ואין לו חלק לעולם הבא, עבודת כוכבים וגילוי עריות ושפיכות דמים ולשון הרע כנגד כולם, ועוד אמרו חכמים כל המספר בלשון הרע כאילו כופר בעיקר, שנאמר אשר אמרו ללשוננו נגביר שפתינו אתנו מי אדון לנו, ועוד אמרו חכמים שלשה לשון הרע הורגת: האומרו, והמקבלו, וזה שאומר עליו, והמקבלו יותר מן האומרו.  Our Sages said: “There are three sins for which retribution is exacted from a person in this world and, [for which] he is [nonetheless,] denied a portion in the world to come: idol worship, forbidden sexual relations, and murder. *Lashon harah* is equivalent to all of them.” Our Sages also said: “Anyone who speaks *lashon harah* is like one who denies God as [implied by Psalms 12:5]: “Those who said: With our tongues we will prevail; our lips are our own. Who is Lord over us?’” In addition, they said: “*Lashon harah* kills three [people], the one who speaks it, the one who listens to it, and the one about whom it is spoken. The one who listens to it [suffers] more than the one who speaks it.”   * Rambam, *Hilchot De’ot 7:3* |
| 6 | ﻿אין עומדין להתפלל אלא מתוך כובד ראש. חסידים הראשונים היו שוהים שעה אחת ומתפללים. כדי שיכונו את לבם למקום.  Someone should not stand to recite the Tefilah unless he is in a reverent state of mind. The pious men of old used to wait an entire hour before praying so that they could better concentrate their minds on their Father in heaven.   * Mishna Brachot 5:1 |
| 7 | ﻿יא וַיֹּאמֶר צֵא וְעָמַדְתָּ בָהָר לִפְנֵי ה’ וְהִנֵּה ה’ עֹבֵר וְרוּחַ גְּדוֹלָה וְחָזָק מְפָרֵק הָרִים וּמְשַׁבֵּר סְלָעִים לִפְנֵי ה’ לֹא בָרוּחַ ה’ וְאַחַר הָרוּחַ רַעַשׁ לֹא בָרַעַשׁ ה’: יב וְאַחַר הָרַעַשׁ אֵשׁ לֹא בָאֵשׁ ה’ וְאַחַר הָאֵשׁ קוֹל דְּמָמָה דַקָּה:  [Elijah the Prophet had a vision.] 11. “Come out,” He called, “and stand on the mountain before the Lord.” And lo, the Lord passed by. There was a great and mighty wind, splitting mountains and shattering rocks by the power of the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind – an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake. 12. After the earthquake – fire; but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire – a soft murmuring sound.  1 Kings 19:11-12 |

1. Difficult to learn not to talk
2. Silence allows us to hear
3. Speech has great power
4. Very easy to misspeak
5. Why is lashon hara so bad?
6. Silence allows one to think
7. Only possible to hear in silence