



Lashon Hara & A Voice from Behind Bars -- Encouragement from SAM

June, 2007

Shalom everyone,

Our apologies for the delay. We continue to have technical problems with our newsletter program and especially in this introductory opening.

The June Women's Teleconference has already happened. It was a wonderful discussion with Shirley Rees of the Peregrinatti and Theresa Bates of Adonai Dance Ministries. You can hear the discussion on our [home page](#). As well as discussing opportunities to speak the Torah message, we came into discussion of the prophetic sense of His Presence as we worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.

We are honored to present a voice from behind bars as we include a letter written by two Messianic believers who speak about their struggle and prayer requests for support as they try to honor Him right in the midst of it all.

Our thanks go to Dean and Susan Wheelock of Hebrew Roots as they support us through the announcement of our Leadership Teleconferences. They have been meeting an abundance of stressings of late and we ask you to join us in prayer for them.

Marilyn and I have also used Dean's article about what Messianic believers call ourselves as the outline for a teleconference presentation. That is available at our [home page](#), too. Both of these audio offerings will be found in our What's New! section.

I will attempt once again to finish the series on Dealing with *Lashon hara* within a close community, and hope that the technical problems are at an end!



Serving Yahweh in Prison

by Marty H. and Patrick G., Texas

There is a prevailing spirit of blindness, perversion and shallowness in prison. Much of this is brought on by a false persona of holiness. Many

We will be on vacation and in the duplication process of our Maturity in Prayer Life CDs during July and August and will return with our next newsletter in September. (I am also nearing release of my e book dealing with Christians and Depression during this time.)

Our community continues to pray for leading and resources as to our desire for intentional community living arrangements. Your prayer and support is greatly appreciated.

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FOR WOMEN ONLY

Our next monthly teleconference will be held on July 29 at 9:00 am CST. Watch for the announcement in your email box for speaker and

subject. It is yet to be confirmed as I write.

Our August teleconference will again feature Theresa Bates of Adonai Dance Ministries to continue and expand on her first visit with us about the use of banners and dance in spiritual warfare and praise.

If you don't yet receive teleconference announcements, please contact us at: info@setapartmingb.org and ask to be included!

MESSIANIC FELLOWSHIP LEADERS TELECONFERENCES

These conferences are available now for Fellowship leaders who could benefit from the opportunity to consult on how to handle difficult interpersonal concerns.

inmates here are so ashamed of who they are, or who they have become they need to put on a mask to hide behind--this mask is Christianity. With this mask to hide behind they can "appear" to be good people or are at least trying to be good. But, like the Pharisees, Yahshua was scolding, they are whitewashed tombs full of dead men's bones.

There are some people here who really would like to be obedient but there are a number of reasons why they are not. I will cover some of them here. One reason is the lying words of those who call themselves preachers. They have deceived many. One such preacher wrote a book which many inmates read and believed. In the book the preacher said homosexuality is not a sin. He said that Sodom's sin was in not being hospitable to the guests and being a temple prostitute is the sin, not loving another man. His message was taken hook-line-and-sinker by many, especially those in bondage to homosexuality. I Corinthians 6:9 says, *Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of Yahweh? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of Yahweh.*

In this verse, "effeminate" means "catamites," those submitting to homosexuals. In I Corinthians 5:11, Paul says, *But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother who is sexually immoral...*

Group consultations take place over the phone at an agreed upon time by each group that is formed.

[Click here for more information.](#)

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- Dealing with Lashon Hara in Community: Elder to "adult" & "parent" maturity



Now we come to some of the more difficult areas of appropriately dealing with *lashon hara* within a community. As stated in our first article on this subject:

When relationship problems such as false reports or accusations arise we find that if we try to apply the same response across the board of all types of relationships, we will find ourselves stymied too often, and may contribute to further harm; equally

through action and inaction.

Things done and things left undone can be equally destructive, thus our need for frequent prayer for wisdom and discernment, both by leaders themselves *for themselves* as well as by fellowship members on behalf of their leadership.

We find that it is important to consider the "nearness or distance" of the relationship as well as the roles and maturity levels of those involved. If we consider our relationships on a concentric circle, we would put those with whom we have just a distant, nodding relationship on the outer ring... As the quality of the relationship and the amount of mutual information shared grows, an individual moves from the most outer ring toward the center; from acquaintances on the larger rings, toward mutual friendships, closer relationships with family and friends, down to the smaller rings which include fewer people at each level, perhaps ending in the intimacy of a spouse or a friend "who sticks closer than a brother."

As we deal with the issue of *lashon hara* with people closer on that set of concentric circles, the vulnerability of both the leader and the person increases.

Generally speaking, greater intimacy comes with greater maturity; thus the pain caused by *lashon hara* seems to deepen as the maturity level and the shared

Now whether this lie told in this book was so easily accepted out of true ignorance and trust in the "man of God" or simply to justify sin, only Yahweh knows.

Another reason for the rampant ungodliness among many prison "Christians" is due to a misunderstanding of the Brit Qadasha's message. As most readers know, many in Christianity believe the "law" was given only to show we could not keep it so that when Jesus came and "took it to the cross" we wouldn't try any longer to keep it. Deuteronomy 30:11 says, *For this commandment which I command you this day, it is not too hard for you neither is it far off.*" In Matthew 5:17, Yahshua said, *Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets...* Again many preachers and Bible studies provided to inmates teach this fallacy. Most Christians believe the only "law" they are obligated to obey is to love God and their fellow man. Whether their acceptance of this lie is through true ignorance or for a desire to justify sin, only Yahweh knows.

Along these same lines, since these people don't understand the need to obey the law and are taught that obeying it equates to trying to earn salvation, they don't even try. Then those who do try find that their sin has them bound with very strong fetters, more commonly known as addictions. For many of us, letting go totally of our past behavior and taking on a new personality can be very difficult, if not impossible for some.

For some, it may seem easy but

intimacy of the relationship progresses.

We cannot assume that one who is an adult chronologically is also emotionally mature. Although it may seem it shouldn't be so, it is often surprising to find that one's own self or the other may not be so consistently "mature" as we had believed. If there is a vulnerability and fear due to past trauma for instance, it will show itself most clearly in a confrontive situation, even when the confrontation is done in the most considerate way.

Additionally, when the *lashon hara* issue is with a chronological age child or teen, they usually have less influence in the community at large. An adult, despite their actual lack of emotional maturity, can often be **very** influential to other adults. Others feel compelled to "take sides" and defend one they perceive to have been wronged. Unfortunately, this happens despite lack of knowledge of the actual facts.

I recently found a quote that seems a bit harsh but speaks a truth. Paraphrased here for our purposes:
"Never argue with {immaturity}. {It} will drag you down to their level and then beat you with experience."
 Anonymous

Are you surprised to learn that some people have had a lifetime of being confronted about their behavior and have developed a powerful way of coming out as a victim, rather than learning? This situation can be extremely divisive and dangerous to a fellowship; and is one reason we find it so important to train and encourage members in maturity. We believe that maturity brings with it a dignity and grace as from our Abba. That dignity is helpful to recognize what some have called "a professional victim", not fall into the snare, and be a stabilizing influence for the remainder of the community.

As in any issue of dealing with inappropriate behavior, we believe the matter needs to be addressed in prayer first; examining what issues may be in play for all involved. It is seldom as clear cut as it may first appear.

A leader/elder, prayerfully prepared, then approaches the one speaking, or known to have spoken.

even Paul /Shaul said he found it difficult. Totally yielding our whole lives to Yahweh is probably the single most difficult act we can commit, but not impossible.

Another reason why many don't serve Yahweh is because not many of their peers do. As anyone who has ever read anything about psychology or human behavior knows, one of a human's basic needs is to feel like they belong to a peer group. On our unit of 2000+ inmates, there are around ten that I know of who are attending Messianic Services or are trying to keep Torah and they are spread out all over the unit, so they do not have any fellowship with fellow believers except twice per month for a couple of hours. Therefore, the sometimes find friends who may not be positive motivators. Most of them are scared of what their "home-boy" may think of them.

The last reason is that there is no where we can go besides our Messianic Services to escape the filth in this prison. Everyday, all day long, the televisions are on full blast blaring their trash into our ears. Ear plugs don't even drown out this filth nor do they drown out the nonstop putridity spewing out of other inmates' mouths. It is easy for those who used to be a major part of homosexuality to get caught up in the drama, but they want to separate themselves.

So now that you can better see the world of prison from our point-of-view, I hope it will help you know how to better pray for us.

- It is *easier* to come from an injured position, and accost the person, demanding to know what they have done and what could they have been thinking?
- This is *not* the most productive stance to take! If there wasn't already a sense of shame or embarrassment present, it will rise up now. On the other hand, if there is no awareness, the first response is often belligerent.

More challenging and more productively, the leader may remain calm and objective, speaking the facts as known to learn how the individual may see things.

- **Even adults struggle with the whole idea of accountability to another.**

Despite what you may have agreed upon ahead of time should a problem arise, don't be caught short when their first response is more volatile than you had expected. As you have taken time to think and pray through your own reaction, allow time for them to process as well.

If the person is so emotionally volatile, that they cannot communicate well, it is often best to just be certain the facts are understood and then prayerfully adjourn to an **agreed upon time** to meet again. We call this "**reactivity**" and it is about as productive to try to talk while this response is present as it would be to argue with which way lava wants to flow from a volcano.

If there are accusations that the leader is not acting appropriately it is best to have another in leadership present. Yes, we know the Matthew 18 principle and honor this, however there are times when a witness is wise to have: they do not participate in the matter directly but are there as prayer cover and protection for all. This is especially true if it is a male female combination but equally important if same sex when there is any degree of reactivity anticipated.

Cognitive distortions, or the inability to correctly hear and interpret interpersonal communications, often go with emotional reactivity. It can also be a personality trait.

These comments have addressed the preparation of the leader and the community for functional, healthy, YHWH pleasing attempts to address reported *lashon hara*.

There is much more to say but every situation brings its own nuances.

Marilyn Zierhart Guffey and I are available to talk over these variables and prayerfully stand with you and your community as you work through these difficult events.

May Yeshua be powerfully present in your fellowship as similar problems come to light.
(B.K.)

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Well, that's our offerings for your thought and prayer this month. *Your* thoughts and comments are always appreciated, too.

Blessings of strength and peace to you all!

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