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Home for the wondering Jew.

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Home for the
Wondering Jew.™

Hang in there - Shabbos is coming!

TORAH PORTION: SHELACH (NUMBERS 8:1 - 12:16)

This week's CTN Shabbat Fax
is sponsored by Todd Chroman,
in loving memory of his sister Sheila.

1. And they spread an evil report about the Land (13:32)

The Story of the Spies. The Jews leave Egypt. They're on the way to the Land of Israel. They send spies to check it out. And the spies come back and say forget it. It's a bad place. There's no way we can live there ...

- Jewish tradition considers the spies guilty of *lashon hara* - gossip and slander.

Which is something to think about.

Because we can understand the value of not speaking *lashon hara* about another *person*.

With all the damage it can cause.

But a land? A land has no feelings.

What does this have to do with lashon hara?

... It's a powerful insight. Into the root of *lashon hara*.

And what we should work on if we want to improve.

Because *lashon hara* is not only about *saying* the wrong thing.

It's about an attitude. About how we look at things.

Because unfortunately, it's human nature.

We tend to overlook a person's good qualities.

And focus on their shortcomings.

... The Torah wants us to train ourselves to see the good.

In every person. And in every thing.

- ♦ *An inmate had smuggled a Siddur (prayer book) into the concentration camp.*

Simon Wiesenthal, who was a fellow inmate, admired the man's courage.

But his feelings soon changed.

When he saw that the man was bartering a few minutes use of the Siddur - for food rations.

The inmates were emaciated, but many made the exchange.

Following the war, in the Displaced Person's Camp, a Rabbi organized prayer services.

Wiesenthal did not attend.

The Rabbi approached him: 'They tell me you are angry with G-d.'

Wiesenthal said: 'Not with G-d. But with one of His servants.'

And he told him what happened.

The Rabbi gently answered:

'Why do you only look at the one who took?

What about the greatness of all the others?

Willing to trade away so much - for a few minutes of prayer.

... Think about them instead.'

Wiesenthal writes: 'I went to services the next day.

And ever since, I try to remember that there are always two sides to everything.'

INSIGHT OF THE WEEK

A CTN participant once described what got him more involved in Torah study.

"In high school and college I had loved American History.

I remember feeling special that even though I was a young modern American, I was part of something bigger.

A two hundred year-old American history.

Values. Spirit. And accomplishments.

It meant a lot to me.

One summer, I visited Israel. And volunteered to work on an archeological dig.

And before we started, the lead archaeologist spoke to us. Gave us the 'ground rules.'

"If we find things that are a few hundred years old – forget it.

Just leave them.

We've got more of those than we know what to do with.

What we're looking for are the things that go back one or two thousand years."

... And it really got me thinking.

Sure, I'm part of America's two hundred year old history.

But I'm also part of a 3,500 year old history!

Which I don't really know too much about.

So I decided to find out more.

... And I'm still finding out."



Shabbat Shalom and have a wonderful week!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Moshe'.

Rabbi Moshe Katz

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Doni'.

Rabbi Doni Deutsch

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