

# LASHON HARAH: SQUANDERING OUR OLAM HABBAH

## Background

It seems that Moshe Rabbeinu was plagued by a question. Out of the seventy nations, why was the Jewish people singled out to be afflicted by slavery? What was their sin?

Now that these two men threatened to tell Pharaoh about him, he knew the answer. Since there were tale-bearers amongst them, they deserved to be punished.

## Questions

1. What is so horrific about tale-bearing that it merits such a severe punishment?
2. We only see two people speaking *lashon harah* here. Moshe Rabbeinu's question was on the entire nation. How does the *lashon hara* of two individuals answer that question?
3. Didn't the Japanese, the Chinese, the Ancient Babylonians, and every other culture and nation in the world also speak *lashon hara*? Yet Moshe Rabbeinu's question was on the Jews. How does the fact that the Jews also spoke *lashon hara* answer the question?

### ספר שמות פרק ב

יג וַיֵּצֵא בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁנִי וְהָיָה שְׁנֵי אַנְשִׁים עִבְרִים נֹצִים וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְרָשָׁע לְמָה תִּכָּה רַעְךָ: (יד) וַיֹּאמֶר מִי שְׂמוֹךְ לְאִישׁ שֶׁר וְשִׁפְט עָלֵינוּ הַלְהַרְגְּנִי אַתָּה אִמְרוּ בְּאִשֶׁר הִרְגַתְּ אֶת הַמִּצְרִי וַיִּירָא מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲכֹן נֹדַע הַדָּבָר:

### רש"י על שמות פרק ב פסוק יד

ויירא משה - כפשוטו. ומדרשו דאג לו על שראה בישראל רשעים דלטורין אמר מעתה שמא אינם ראויין להגאל

אכן נודע הדבר - כמשמעו ומדרשו נודע לי הדבר שהייתי תמה עליו מה חטאו ישראל מכל ע' אומות להיות נרדים בעבודת פרך אבל רואה אני שהם ראויים לכך

*[After killing the Egyptian man who was afflicting the Jew,] Moshe went out the next day and saw two Jewish men fighting. He said: "Wicked man, why are you hitting your friend?"*

*The man answered, "Who appointed you as a judge and lord over us? Do you mean to kill us as you did the Egyptian?" And Moshe was afraid, and he said, "Now I know the matter."*

#### Rashi:

**And Moshe was afraid:** *He was afraid when he saw wicked men bearing tales and thought, "Maybe the Jewish people are unfit to be redeemed."*

**Now I know the matter:** *Moshe said, "I wondered what sin Yisroel committed that out of all of the seventy nations, they should be forced into hard labor. But now I see that they deserve it."*