



Likkutei Sichos

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Thought speech and action of labor on Shabbos.

It is a Biblical prohibition to engage in an action of *Melacha* (prohibited labor) on Shabbos; speaking about *Melacha* is a Rabbinic prohibition, and there is a *Midas Chasidus* ("custom of piety") to also cease from the thought of *Melacha*.

To explain: Hashem's speech creates; human speech, by contrast, does not create. The Torah therefore only prohibits human action of *Melacha*, but does not prohibit human speech. The Sages, however, prohibited human speech, because (as the verse states: "the King's word is the rule") a person's verbal command can influence action, therefore, there is a similarity between human speech to Hashem speech, thus the Sages prohibited human speech of *Melacha*.

Thought, however, is completely detached and separated from action, and is therefore not a prohibition. The *Chosid* however, in order to cleave to Hashem, ceases from thinking about *Melacha* just as Hashem ceased from the thought of *Melacha*.

We find the distinction between speech and thought in halacha as well. The opinion of Tosafos is that (in a case of verbally restricting an animal while threshing) since speech is physical (close to action) therefore when speech causes action the speaker is

considered having done an action (and liable to receive lashes). By contrast, thought is spiritual (distant from action), therefore even when thought causes action it is not considered as the thinker having done an action (and therefore conspiring witnesses are not considered having done an action, because testimony is primarily through seeing and thinking,).

This is the intention of the emphasis of the Alter Rebbe at the conclusion of Tanya: “rest from physical speech just as Hashem rested from the ten utterances through which the physical heaven and earth were created”, the words “physical speech” emphasize that because speech is physical it is similar to action, and is therefore a rabbinic prohibition because it is similar to Hashem’s speech which creates in actuality.

In Chasidic terminology: the faculty of action is separated from the person doing the action, because action affects the world outside the person. Speech, by contrast, is connected to the person. The Rabbinic enactments represent that Jewish people are connected to Hashem to the extent that they are doing beyond what has been commanded.

Yet, while speech is within the person himself, the purpose of speech is to communicate to another person, thus, in the world of speech, there exists an independent significant identity (the person who is in the domain of speech, retains some of his own independent existence.) The *Chasid*, however, who has no independent existence, is in the level of thought where there is no other person. Thus the *Chasid*, who is on the level of thought, ceases all thought of Melacha as well.