

In addition to this, the Torah does not recommend socialism as a form of lifting one out of debt. One must work for their keep, to earn money and get out of debt. History bears out how men who have a lust for power have afflicted many people due to their godless philosophies of communism, socialism, and fascism. These ideologies have led to the deaths of more people in the last 100 years than in all the religious conflicts in the history of the world combined. The 20th century was the bloodiest in human history, with over 260 million people murdered by political movements. These ideologies also suppress the truth of the Scriptures, and regard people as nothing but animals to be exploited. Some people have even made the claim that the early Christian community described in **Acts 2-5** when it states “all things in common” was a description of socialism. Socialism is a system under which the government owns the means of production and through coercive taxation and wealth redistribution allocates resources and makes decisions over property, prices, and production. The economic system of socialism abolishes the right to private property and gives to individuals based on their need. The Scripture that is laid claim to these things is in **Acts 2:44-45** which states, “all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as any might have need.” The text goes on to say in **Acts 4:32-35**, “not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own; but all things were common property to them ... For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales, lay them at the apostles’ feet; and they would be distributed to each as any had need.” These Scriptures sound like some of the language of socialism is here, but this is only a superficial reading until we think a little more about the context of the verses. Something to note, the early believers did not sell “all” of their possessions! The phrases of “selling their property” and “all things were common property” have different meanings. Note how the believers continued to meet in their own homes, so they did not sell their homes, or all of their property. The text also says “from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them and brought the money from the sales” (**Acts 4:34**) Notice how this is a voluntary thing. Under socialism system of redistribution, one would be obligated and not voluntary. Another example is taken from Barnabus (**Acts 4**) as a positive example and the negative example of Ananias and Sapphira (**Acts 5**). In Barnabus’ case, this was not the giving of “all” his possessions, and it was not controlled by the state. Barnabus saw the need, and he was led by the spirit to give. In Ananias and Sapphira’s case, they lied in order to give the perception of giving a lot of money, and pretended to give more than they actually did. Peter explicitly says that “when it was unsold it was your own” and after it was sold, it was “under your control” (**Acts 5:4**). The problem, as Peter points out, was that Ananias had “lied to the Holy Spirit” (**Acts 5:3**). He had “lied to God” and not “to men” (**Acts 5:5**). The descriptions given in **Acts 2-5** are drastically different than socialism.

The idea of freedoms and liberty enter into the picture when discussion of socialism and communism occurs. People want freedom of speech, a constitutional right, but do not want the responsibly of speaking truthfully. This is illustrated by the false news narratives that are occurring today across the internet, and in the news media on television. The Torah however states that we are accountable for every word we speak and no license is given to harm someone by the words we say (abuse of others by our words, **Matthew 12:36-37**) **Bamidbar / Numbers 30:2** states, “If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not break his word (לֹא יִחַל דְּבָרוֹ), but he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.” We are told here how important our words are, we are not permitted to break the sanctity of our words. The word יִחַל is from the word חל meaning to regard something as common, insignificant, or profane. The phrase “Dibbur emet” (דִּבְרוֹ אֱמֶת) is the Torah’s way of saying that we have a duty to speak the truth as the people of God. Only truthful words are powerful and significant and have real meaning and strength. Untrue words may be consigned to hell. Our

modern culture devalues the significance of our words, and use language as a power political, social, and societal tool for control in order to manipulate appearances. True speech is holy (kadosh) and sacred, which draws us back to holiness in thought, and action. Take for example from the Torah on the creation account from the Targum Onkelos.

Targum Onkelos Bereshit / Genesis 2:7

ז וברא יי אלהים ית אדם עפרא מן אדמתא ונפח באפוהי נשמתא דחיי והות באדם לרוח ממללא

And the Lord God created Adam from dust of the ground, and breathed upon his face the breath of lives, and it became in Adam a Discoursing Spirit.

Notice how God gave Adam the ability to think, to speak, and to reason according to Targum Onkelos. The way this is written, the breath of life that has been given by God is directly linked to our speech. Considering Lashon Hara (לשון הרע) this tarnishes the image of God in which we were created. The reason being, one who uses Lashon Hara uses his word to hurt others. This is why metzora (the affliction of Tzaraat) was regarded as one who has this affliction is considered as dead, and there is a need for a direct miracle of God to restore one to life (rebirth, and resurrection). The words we say affect both the physical and spiritual realm. When we consider our words, they are derived from the thoughts or our heart, and lead to the course of life (lead us in the direction we choose to go). All of these things are related back to the Torah portion on slavery. The commands given in the Torah are to be kind and respectful to a man who had the need to cause himself to enter into slavery in order to pay off his debt. Socialism was not the way out. There is always the need to work hard and to do so as if we were doing so for the Lord God in heaven. It is very sobering to realize these truths come directly out of the Torah to illustrate how our attitude is to be, to work, to take care of family, to have forgiveness and mercy towards others no matter where they are in life! These are powerful spiritual truths, and we need to be mindful of the power and sanctity of not just our words, but of our actions, and even of our giving to help others, because our lives are meant for the building up and helping one another! (**Ephesians 4:29**) May the Lord God of Israel help us take every thought "captive" to the obedience of the Messiah, thereby enabling us to always behold and express the truth of God's unfailing love.