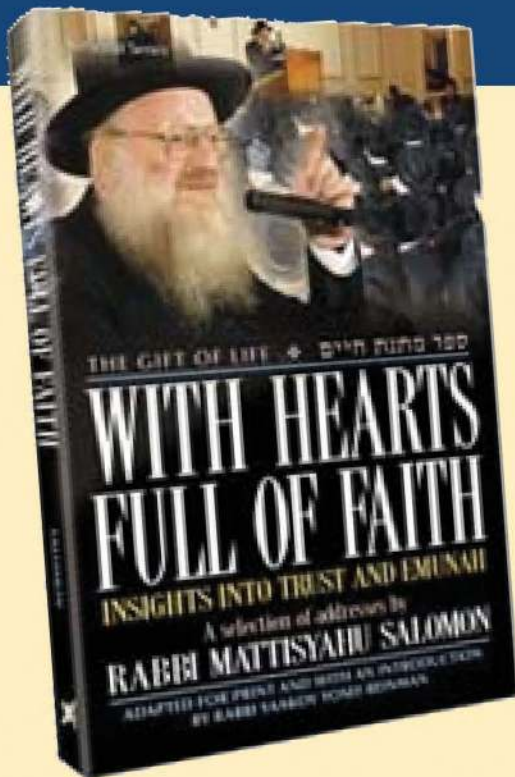


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Stop the Talking in Shul!

**Drasha
 Rav
 Solomon**



tainly a serious sin, but there are sins that are considerably more serious. The problem is something else entirely.

What do you think happened when the Cossack massacres began? What do you think the people of a town or village did when they saw Cossacks thundering towards them on their big horses? They ran to the synagogues and prayed desperately to God. They prayed “complete prayers” with faith and confidence in the power of their prayers to save them. And they prayed without arrogance and complacency like “beggars standing at the door.” But it was to no avail. Their prayers were not “immediately accepted.” Why? Because God said, “When you came to the synagogue during the good times, you sat there talking with your friends and neighbors during *chazaras hashatz*, as if this were not a holy place. You made a mockery of the prayers directed to Me. Now you come to pray? Now you come to say *Avinu Malkeinu*, Our Father, Our King? If I am a Father, where is My honor? If I am a King, where is My reverence? (*Shemos Rabbah* 46:4) Did you consider me your Father and your King when you sat and chatted in My Presence during the good times? It is too late. Your prayers are not accepted.”

That is why talking in the synagogue during *chazaras hashatz* is a “sin too great to bear.” It is the height of negligence. Talking in the synagogue neutralizes the most potent defensive weapon in the Jewish armory, which is prayer. And then when calamities loom, Heaven forbid, when we suddenly realize we are in a crisis situation and we turn to God with faith and sincerity, it is too late. The power of prayer has been forfeited, and we are left defenseless.