

"You shall not take the Name of Hashem, your G-d, in vain." (20:7)

The *Torah* admonishes us not to swear falsely or in vain. *Horav Reuven Katz, z.l.*, interprets this *pasuk* homiletically. Do not "raise up/attach Hashem's Name to that which is false. Do not misguide people by placing Hashem's endorsement on your illicit behavior.

Regrettably, some individuals resort to the most cruel forms of character assassination in order to undermine, and even destroy, communal *Torah*-oriented endeavors. They present their deeds under the guise of *l'shem shomayim*, in the Name of Heaven. Their negative propaganda thinly veils an apparent disdain for the individual or organization they seek to defame. These individuals publicly proclaim that they are performing a *mitzvah*, while they are actually committing the gravest of sins. They feel that by using Hashem's Name they are granted license to speak *lashon hara*, slander people and organizations, even destroy lives, all in the Name of Heaven. Hashem is the essence of truth and can never be linked with falsity.

Perhaps this is the meaning of *raise up*. Hashem's Name will emanate from any endeavor which is *Torah*-oriented and truly *l'shem shomayim* -- It is readily apparent that the imprimatur of *Torah* is on it. At times, an endeavor may be nothing more than false piety in which people pretend to be righteous and decent. They have but one goal--to force others to accede to their line of thinking. They veil their lust for power by "raising up" Hashem's Name. These individuals are constantly invoking Hashem's Name in order to validate their negative deeds. Such proclamations should evoke "red flags" within us to determine if these individuals are actually dedicated to building or to destroying. Such charlatans would do well to read the sequel to the *pasuk*, "*For Hashem will not hold guiltless he that takes His Name in vain.*"