

Lashon Hara in the Tanakh

By Yochanan Zaquantov

When we look up Lashon Hara we see that Lashon is Tongue literally and figuratively language. Ra with the Ha prefix is "the Evil". So Lashon Hara is literally the Evil Tongue or figuratively the Evil language. So where does this concept come from and is it found in the Tanakh. Today Lashon Hara is used to describe any talk that is bad about a person or group. Is this the meaning in the Tanakh?

For a understanding of Evil please reference my other paper on

http://www.karaitejudaism.org/talks/What_is_Evil.htm

First lets look at what the Rabbanite say that Lashon Hara is.

"Evil-speaking; a sin regarded with intense aversion both in the Bible and in rabbinical literature. The technical term for it in the latter is לשון הרע (leshon **hara**', "the evil tongue"). In the Bible the equivalent words are: רבה, meaning "talk" in a sinister sense; רביל, the "merchandise" of gossip with which the talebearer goes about; and רגל, a verb, denoting the "peddling" of slander. As these words indicate, that which is condemned as "leshon **hara**" denotes all the deliberate, malicious, untruthful accusations which have the purpose of injuring one's neighbor, that is, calumny proper, and also the idle but mischievous chatter which is equally forbidden, though it is not slander.

Biblical Prohibition.

In the Pentateuch evil-speaking of both kinds is expressly forbidden (Lev. xix. 16): "Thou shalt not go about as a talebearer among thy people," and (Ex. xxiii. 1), "Thou shalt not raise a false report; put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness." Upon this the Rabbis comment (Mek. Ex. 20), "It is a warning not to receive or listen to evil reports." Of course, the most comprehensive commandment in connection with this is the ninth of the Decalogue: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." In descriptions of corrupt society, calumny is always emphasized as a prominent feature. Jer. ix. 2, 3 speaks of those "that bend their tongues like bows for lies, every neighbor walketh with slanders"; and Ezek. xxii. 9, "In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood." The Psalms and books of the Wisdom literature abound in descriptions of the terrible workings of this sin. Ps. l. 20: "Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother, thou slanderest thine own mother's son." Prov. x. 18: "He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool"; and Ps. ci. 5: "Him that slandereth his neighbor in secret I will cut off." Prov. xxx. 10: "Calumniate not a servant unto his master lest he

curse thee and thou be found guilty." Eccl. x. 11: "Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment, and the man of the [evil] tongue is no better." And Ecclus. xxviii. 12–26 contains an eloquent denunciation of the evil tongue, the gist of which (v. 18) is: "Many have fallen by the edge of the sword, but not so many as have fallen by the tongue." Specially characteristic is the repeated complaint of the pious because of slanderous persecutors. Ps. xxxi. 13: "For I have heard the slander of many, fear was on every side; while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life" (compare Ps. xxxv. 11; Jer. xx. 10)."

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=65&letter=C&search=lashon%20Ohara>

Here we see that they consider harmful slander and mischievous chatter which is not slander. So what does the Tanakh indicate?

Let us look first at Lashon. Lashon is reference number 3956 and found in the NEHC on page 651-652 and in the 546 in the BDB. It is Lamed-Shin-Vav-Final Nun. It is literally tongue as a physical object. It is a masculine noun.

Lashon as a language (figurative sense of tongue)

Bereshit/Genesis 10:5, 20, 31

5 From these the maritime nations branched out. [These are the descendants of Japheth] by their lands—each **with its language (lil'shono לְלִשְׁוֹנוֹ)**—their clans and their nations.

Here we see that Lashon is used for language. The following two verses are the same.

20 These are the descendants of Ham, according **to their** clans and **languages (lil'shonotam לְלִשְׁנוֹתָם)**, by their lands and nations.

31 These are the descendants of Shem according **to their** clans and **languages (lil'shonotam לְלִשְׁנוֹתָם)**, by their lands, according to their nations.

Exodus 4:10

10 But Moses said to Yehovah, "Please, Yehovah, I have never been a man of words, either in times past or now that You have spoken to Your servant; I am **slow of speech (kavad-peh heavy mouth) and slow of tongue. (ukhavad-lishon and heavy tongue וְכִבְדֵי לְשׁוֹן)**"

Here Moshe is telling Yehovah that he does not speak well. Whether this kavad means stuttering in a metaphoric way I don't know.

Shemu'el Bet/2 Samuel 23:2

2 The spirit of Yehovah has spoken through me, His message is **on my tongue (al-lashoniy לְשׁוֹנִי)**;

Here Melekh David tell the people that Yehovah's message is on his tongue, which is like saying that what he speaks is Yehovah's words.

Nehemyah/Nehemiah 13:24

24 a good number of their children spoke the language of Ashdod **and the language (vakil'shon וְכַלְשׁוֹן)** of those various peoples, and did not know how to speak Judean.

The children speak another Language.

Ester/Esther 1:22

22 Dispatches were sent to all the provinces of the king, to every province in its own script and to every nation in **its own language (kil'shono כְּלִשׁוֹנָו)**, that every man should wield authority in his home and speak the **language (kil'shon כְּלִשׁוֹן)** of his own people.

The people are communicated in each of their own languages. It is the same for the next two verses from Esther.

Ester/Esther 3:12

12 On the thirteenth day of the first month, the king's scribes were summoned and a decree was issued, as Haman directed, to the king's satraps, to the governors of every province, and to the officials of every people, to every province in its own script and to every people **in its own language (kil'shono כְּלִשׁוֹנָו)**. The orders were issued in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet.

Ester/Esther 8:9

9 So the king's scribes were summoned at that time, on the twenty-third day of the third month, that is, the month of Sivan; and letters were written, at Mordecai's dictation, to the Jews and to the satraps, the governors and the officials of the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces from India to Ethiopia: to every province in its own script and to

every people **in its own language** (kil'shono בְּלִשְׁוֹנוֹ), and to the Jews in their own script **and language** (v'kil'shonam וְכִלְשֹׁנָם).

So we see that one way that Lashon is used other than tongue is the reference to what one speaks or language.

Lashon as literally Tongue

Shofetim/Judges 7:5

5 So he took the troops down to the water. Then the Yehovah said to Gideon, “Set apart all those who lap up the water **with their tongues** (bil'shono בְּלִשְׁוֹנוֹ) like dogs from all those who get down on their knees to drink.”

Here we see that they lap the water with their tongue. It is the same usage as in Esther.

Iyov /Job 40:25

25 Can you draw out Leviathan by a fishhook? Can you press down **his tongue** (lashono לְשֹׁנוֹ) by a rope?

It is the tongue of a creature, which is held down.

In what ways is Lashon /Tongue used in a negative way in the Tanakh?

Tehillim/Psalms 5:10

10 For there is no sincerity on their lips; their heart is [filled with] malice; their throat is an open grave; **their tongue** (lashonam לְשֹׁנָם) slippery (flatter).

Here we see the tongue used in a flattering way. This is not saying good things but saying good things, which are not meant.

Tehillim/Psalms 10:7

7 His mouth is full of oaths, deceit, and fraud; mischief and evil (aven sorrow/trouble) are under **his tongue** (lashono לְשֹׁנוֹ).

So here the word is not ra or ra'ah but aven which is sorrow or trouble.

Tehillim/Psalms 12:3-5

3 Men speak lies to one another; their speech is smooth; they talk with duplicity.

4 May the Yehovah cut off all flattering lips, every **tongue (Lashon לשון)** that speaks **arrogance (gadlot great things גדלות)**. They say, “**By our tongues (lil’shonenu לְלִשְׁוֹנֵנוּ)** we shall prevail; **with lips (shafateynu שְׁפַתֵּינוּ)** such as **ours**, who can be our master?”

Again this is a kind of flattering tongue, by speaking great things. They think they can succeed in getting their way by speaking in a way that gains them favor but not meaning it. Here we see lips used also. We will also examine this word safah

Tehillim/Psalms 15

1 A psalm of David. Yehovah, who may sojourn in Your tent, who may dwell on Your holy mountain? 2 He who lives without blame, who does what is right, and in his heart acknowledges the truth; 3 **whose tongue (lishono לִשְׁוֹנוֹ)** is not given to **evil (ragal רָגַל backbite/slander)** ; who has never done harm (ra’ah רָעָה) to his fellow, or borne reproach for [his acts toward] his neighbor (reproach not lifts up against his neighbor) ; 4 for whom a contemptible man is abhorrent, but who honors those who fear Yehovah; who stands by his oath even **to his hurt (la hara to the hurt or evil לְהַרְעֵ)**; 5 who has never lent money at interest, or accepted a bribe against the innocent. The man who acts thus shall never be shaken.

Well in this verse the components are here for Lashon Hara. Lashon is here as it Hara. But we see that the tongue is not given to slandering or as we will see lying with the idea to hurt some one. It is not negative speech but hurtful speech that is not the truth.

Tehillim/Psalms 31:19-21

19 let **lying lips (saf’tiy shaqer false lips שְׁפַתֵּי שָׁקֵר)** be stilled that speak haughtily against the righteous with arrogance and contempt. 20 How abundant is the good that You have in store for those who fear You, that You do in the full view of men for those who take refuge in You. 21 You grant them the protection of Your presence against scheming men; You shelter them in Your pavilion **from contentious tongues (meriyv lashonot striving tongues מִרִּיב לְשׁוֹנוֹת)**.

These are Tongues that work against someone. Here we see also another word we will be looking at which is safah or lips.

Tehillim/Psalms 34:14-15

14 Guard your tongue from evil (lashon'kha mera לְשׁוֹנְךָ מֵרָע), your lips from deceitful speech (safateykha midavar mir'mah וּשְׂפָתֶיךָ מִדְּבַר מְרָמָה).

15 Shun (depart) evil (mera from evil) and do good, seek amity (peace) and pursue it.

Here we see that this is the closest we get to Lashon Hara in the Tanakh. We see we are to guard our tongue from bad/harm in connection with mir'mah or deceitful/falseness of speech. We are then admonished to depart from doing bad/harm and do good. We are to seek peace.

Tehillim/Psalms 50:19-20

19 you devote your mouth to evil (piykha shalach'ta bara'ah Your mouth you send in harm/bad פִּיְךָ שְׁלַחְתָּ בְּרָעָה), and yoke your tongue to deceit

(ulashonkha tatz'miyd mir'mah וּלְשׁוֹנְךָ תַצְמִיד מְרָמָה and your tongue

joins you deceit); 20 you are busy maligning your brother, defaming the son of your mother.

Here we see that mouth does harm. How? In maligning your brother and defaming the son of your mother, you send bad/harm to your brother. The tongue is another way of saying it except it links mir'mah deceit/falseness as something it does.

Tehillim/Psalms 52: 3-6

3 Why do you boast of your evil, brave fellow? God's faithfulness never ceases.

4 Your tongue (lashonekha לְשׁוֹנְךָ) devises mischief (calamity/destruction), like a sharpened razor that works treacherously. 5 You prefer evil to good, the lie (shaqer שֶׁקֶר), to speaking truthfully (middaver tzedeq righteousness מִדְּבַר צְדָק).

Selah. 6 You love all pernicious (swallow up) words, treacherous speech (Lashon mir'mah tongue of deceit לְשׁוֹן מְרָמָה).

This is speech that tears down someone unjustly not truthfully. The Lie we see here is shaqer that means false. Like in false witness, or falsely attributing something to someone is where one makes something up not when someone actually witnesses something.

Tehillim/Psalms 109:2-5

2 for the wicked and the deceitful open their mouth against me; they speak to me with lying tongue. (Lashon shaqer לְשׁוֹן שֶׁקֶר) 3 They encircle me with words of hate; they attack me without cause. 4 They answer my love with accusation and I must stand

judgment. 5 They repay me with evil (ra'ah) for good (tovah), with hatred (sin'ah 8130) for my love ('ahavatiy).

The false Tongue is an accusing tongue without cause to do what it does. It hurts the just person who has not wronged the individual.

Tehillim/Psalms 120:2-3

2 Yehovah, save me **from treacherous lips** (mis'fat shaqer מְשַׁפֵּת־שֶׁקֶר), **from a deceitful tongue!** (Lashon ramiyah deceitful/false מְלִשׁוֹן רָמְיָה) 3 What can you profit, what can you gain, **O deceitful tongue?** (Lashon ramiyah מְלִשׁוֹן רָמְיָה)

From the same root (7411) as mir'mah, ramiyah also denotes deceit or false.

Tehillim/Psalms 140:12

12 Let slanderers (ish Lashon man of tongue) have no place in the land; let the evil (ra'ah) of the lawless man (ish chamas man of violence) drive him into corrals.

This is very interesting in that this appears to be play on word in saying that the man of tongue is a slanderer. I have not seen this a lot in the Tanakh.

Mishlei/Proverbs 6:16-19

16 Six things Yehovah hates;
Seven are an abomination (hateful) to Him:

17 A haughty bearing (eyes high),

A lying tongue (Lashon shaqer - false tongue מְלִשׁוֹן שֶׁקֶר),

Hands that shed innocent blood ,

18 A mind (heart) that hatches evil (aven trouble) plots,

Feet quick to run to evil (lara'ah),

19 A false witness testifying lies (Yofi'ach katavim ed shaqer - he breathes lies a witness false מְלִשׁוֹן שֶׁקֶר עֵד כְּזָבִים יֹפֵיחַ),

And one who incites brothers to quarrel.

Here we see that Lashon shaqer is the false tongue. Again, if Lashon hara were to be defined we would see it here. It is also tied to hand that shed blood which is a clear reference to the shedding of blood through false witnessing. Verse 19 also states this in that every breath he takes false things are let out.

Yeshiyahu/Isaiah 59:3

3 For your hands are defiled with crime And your fingers with iniquity. **Your lips speak falsehood** (saftoteykha davaru shaqer שִׁפְתֹתַיְכֶם דְּבַרְוֹ-שֶׁקֶר), **Your tongue utters treachery** (lashon'khem'av'lah the'gah לְשׁוֹנְכֶם עֲוֹלָה תִּהְגָּה **your tongue iniquity utters**).

Here again we see the false speaking lips and that the tongue is uttering iniquity. In falsely testifying are you breaking one of the 10 words spoken by Yehovah? Exodus 20:16 uses the words 'ed shaqer for witness false.

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 9:4

4 One man cheats the other, They will not speak truth; They have trained **their tongues** (Lashonam לְשׁוֹנָם) **to speak falsely** (davar shaqer דְּבַר-שֶׁקֶר); They wear themselves out working iniquity.

Their tongues speak falsely; here it is dealing with how we deal with our fellow man in that we lie to cheat them.

Micah 6:12

12 Whose rich men are full of lawlessness (violence), And whose inhabitants speak treachery (shaqer), With **tongues** (lashonam וְלִשְׁוֹנָם) **of deceit** (ramiyah רַמְיָה) in their mouths (bapiyhem בְּפִיהֶם).

The inhabitants speak falsely and have tongues of falseness in their mouths. We can see that this introduces the mouth as another form of way one speaks.

Zephaniah/Tzafan'yah 3:13

13 The remnant of Israel Shall do no wrong **And speak no falsehood** (ve lo davaru kazav and not their word lies וְלֹא-יִדְבְּרוּ כָזָב); **A deceitful tongue** (Lashon tar'miyah **tongue of falseness** לְשׁוֹן תַּרְמִיית) Shall not be in their mouths. Only such as these shall graze and lie down, With none to trouble them.

Based upon these we see a pattern of how the tongue is used in these verses. Lashon is shown most in the use of it as an instrument to spread falseness as in testifying falsely or dealing falsely. The Harm (Hara or Hara'ah) is the result of the Lashon shaqer (false tongue).

Lashon is from Lashan, which is the verb. It is reference number 3960 and found in the BDB on page 546 and in the NEHC on page 652. It is lamed-shin-nun.

Tehillim/Psalms 101:5

5 **He who slanders** (**malash'niy מְלַשְׁנִי**) his friend in secret I will destroy; I cannot endure the haughty and proud man.

Mishlei/Proverbs 30:10

10 Do not **inform** (**talashen slander/tell on תַּלְשֵׁן**) on a slave to his master, Lest he curse you and you incur guilt.

In both of these verses, we see that lashan is used as a form of telling on someone. In these cases it appears that it is speech that is not good. In Mishlei 30, it appears that it is testifying falsely. If he would curse you and you incur guilt then it implies that what was said was not true. As indicated from what we have seen of the word Lashon.

Another related word is Lishan. It is reference number 3961 and found in the BDB on page 549 and in the NEHC on page 652. All of these references are specific to language.

Daniel 3:4,7,29

4 The herald proclaimed in a loud voice, “You are commanded, O peoples and nations of every **language** (**valishanaya וְלִשְׁנָא**), 5 when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, zither, lyre, psaltery, bagpipe, and all other types of instruments, to fall down and worship the statue of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.

7 And so, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, zither, lyre, psaltery, and all other types of instruments, all peoples and nations of every **language** (**valishanaya וְלִשְׁנָא**) fell down and worshiped the statue of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

28 Nebuchadnezzar spoke up and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who sent His angel to save His servants who, trusting in Him, flouted the king’s decree at the risk of their lives rather than serve or worship any god but their own God. 29 I hereby give an order that [anyone of] any people or nation of whatever **language** (**valishan וְלִשְׁנָא**) who blasphemes the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb, and his house confiscated, for there is no other God who is able to save in this way.”

Daniel 5:19

19 And because of the grandeur that He bestowed upon him, all the peoples and nations of every **language (valishanaya וְלִשְׁנָיָא)** trembled in fear of him. He put to death whom he wished, and whom he wished he let live; he raised high whom he wished and whom he wished he brought low.

Daniel 6:26

26 Then King Darius wrote to all peoples and nations of every **language (valishanaya וְלִשְׁנָיָא)** that inhabit the earth, “May your well-being abound!

Here we see that lishan was used for spoken languages of all people.

Some other words you might also want to consider when looking at this topic are Peh (mouth) and safah (lips) both these are also used figuratively for speech.

The Transliterated Hebrew word Peh, which is reference number 6310 and a masculine noun. It is found in the BDB starting on page 804 in the NEHC and on pages 1011-1014. In Hebrew it is Pey-Hey. The specific verses that point to our study today are found in Tehillim/Psalms.

Tehillim/Psalms 51:17

17 Yehovah, open **my lips (shifatay שִׁפְתַי)**, and let my mouth (**upiy וּפִי**) declare Your praise.

Here we see the mouth used for speaking in that words come out of it. In this case the words are positive.

Tehillim/Psalms 50:16, 19

16 And to the wicked, Elohim said: “Who are you to recite My laws, and mouth (**pikha פִּיךָ**) the terms of My covenant,

Here the wicked/guilty ones are asked by Elohim why they recite is torah and the words from their mouths come out of the covenant. They know and are familiar with it but don't practice it.

19 you devote your mouth to evil (**piykha shalach'ta bara'ah Your mouth you send in harm/bad פִּיךָ שִׁלַּחַת בְּרָעָה**), and yoke your tongue to deceit (**ulashonkha tatz'miyd mir'mah מְרַמֶּה וְלִשׁוֹנְךָ תִצְמִיד** and your tongue joins you deceit);

Here we see they devote themselves to doing that which ought not to be done. They send out harm or bad and their mouth is known for their deceit/falseness.

Tehillim/Psalms 63:12

12 But the king shall rejoice in God; all who swear by Him shall exult, when **the mouth of liars** (piy dov'rey shaqer פִּי דוֹבְרֵי־שָׁקֶר - **mouth speaks falsely**) is stopped.

The mouth which speaks falsely is stopped.

The Transliterated Hebrew word Safah, which is reference number 8193 and a feminine noun. It is found in the BDB starting on page 973 in the NEHC and on pages 1213-1214. In Hebrew it is Sin-Fey-Hey. It is used for lips. The specific verses for today's study are:

Bereshit/Genesis 11:1,6,7,9

1 Everyone on earth had **the same language** (safah 'echat שְׂפָה אֶחָת) **and the same words** (udabarim 'acharim וְדַבְרִים אֶחָדִים).

6 and Yehovah said, "If, as one people with **one language** (safah 'echat שְׂפָה אֶחָת) for all, this is how they have begun to act, then nothing that they may propose to do will be out of their reach. 7 Let us, then, go down and confound **their speech** (safatam שְׂפָתָם) there, so that they shall not understand one another's **speech** (safat שְׂפַת)."

9 That is why it was called Babel, because there Yehovah confounded the **speech** (safat שְׂפַת) of the whole earth; and from there Yehovah scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

Here we see the word used for lips also being used to denote a language. They started out as one lip (safah) and became many lips (safat)

Vayiqra/Leviticus 5:4

4 Or when a person utters (**bash'fatayim with lips** בְּשִׂפְתָיִם) an oath to bad or good purpose—whatever a man may utter in an oath—and, though he has known it, the fact has escaped him, but later he realizes his guilt in any of these matters

Here again the word for “with lips” is absent from the English translation. In the Hebrew it is there.

Bamidbar/Numbers 30:7,9,13

7 If she should marry while her vow or the commitment (**safateyta her lips שְׁפִתֶיהָ**) to which she bound herself is still in force,

9 But if her husband restrains her on the day that he learns of it, he thereby annuls her vow which was in force or the commitment (**safateyta her lips שְׁפִתֶיהָ**) to which she bound herself; and Yehovah will forgive her.

13 But if her husband does annul them on the day he finds out, then nothing that has crossed **her lips (safateyta her lips שְׁפִתֶיהָ)** shall stand, whether vows or self-imposed obligations. Her husband has annulled them, and Yehovah will forgive her.

Again, here the word for “with lips” is absent from the English translation except for the last verse. In the Hebrew it is there. This shows us that the lips are another way conveyed in Hebrew to denote something spoken.

Shemu’el Aleph/I Samuel 1:13

13 Now Hannah was praying in her heart; only **her lips (safateyta her lips שְׁפִתֶיהָ)** moved, but her voice could not be heard. So Eli thought she was drunk.

Hannah was speaking to herself and no words were uttered yet she was still seen as praying here.

Tehillim/Psalms 17:1,4

1 A prayer of David. Hear, Yehovah, what is just; heed my cry, give ear to my prayer, **uttered without guile (balo sif’tey mir’mah בְּלֹא שְׁפִתֵי מְרָמָה – in no lips of deceit/falseness).**

David prays with out speaking deceptively or falsely.

4 As for man’s dealings, in accord with the command of **Your lips (safateykha שְׁפִתֶיךָ)**, I have kept in view the fate of the lawless.

Yehovah’s lips spoke his commands. We know that Yehovah’s lips are not literal but his speaking.

Tehillim/Psalms 31:19

19 let **lying lips** (**sif'tay shaqer** שִׁפְתֵי שֶׁקֶר) be stilled that speak haughtily against the righteous with arrogance and contempt.

The false lips are to be silenced. Here we see again the word Shaqer that was used for Lashon (tongue) and Piy (mouth), which is the focus of the Tanakh in reference to speech. It is the False witness or speaking falsely which the focus of the words spoken. Not the evil tongue but the harm it does when one says false things about his brother.

Tehillim/Psalms 34:14

14 Guard **your tongue from evil** (**lashon'kha mera** לְשׁוֹנְךָ מֵרָע), **your lips from deceitful speech** (**safateykha midavar mir'mah** וּשְׁפָתֶיךָ מִדְבַר מְרָמָה).

As we saw earlier the evil, which is done when one, testifies falsely whether it be in the court or whether it be to another person.

Tehillim/Psalms 120:2

2 Yehovah, save me **from treacherous lips** (**mis'fat shaqer** מִשְׁפַּת־שֶׁקֶר), **from a deceitful tongue!** (**Lashon ramiyah** deceitful/false מִלְשׁוֹן רָמְיָה)

The lying/false lips are the focus throughout the Tanakh. Shaqer is the false thing which is spoken.

Tehillim/Psalms 140:4

4 They sharpen their tongues like serpents; spiders' poison is on **their lips** (**safateymo** שִׁפְתֵימוֹ). *Selah.*

The poison is under/beneath their lips is how the Hebrew would render it. The word spider is also questionable since it is the only Hebrew reference for it. In the BDB there is not other reference for it but lists spider as 'akavish whereas this word is 'akh'shuv. The letter vet is not in this word so it appears they are not the same Hebrew word.

Mishlei/Proverbs 4:24

24 Put crooked **speech** (**peh** פֶּה) away from you;

Keep **devious talk** (**ulazot shafatim departing lips** וּלְזוֹת שִׁפְתַיִם) far from you.

Lazot is the plural form of the lazah is from the verb luz. This has the meaning of departs or turns aside. In this case it is lips that turn aside or departs from the knowledge taught them.

Mishlei/Proverbs 12:13,22

13 Sinful speech (bafasha safatayim In rebellious lips בַּפֶּשַׁע שִׁפְתַּיִם) is a trap for the evil [man], But the righteous escapes from trouble.

The rebellious lips are ones, which depart from that which is taught by the knowledge of Yehovah. They are a trap in that what they speak will be recognized as rebellious talk against Yehovah. Just as false lips are testifying falsely.

22 Lying speech (sif'tey shaqer שִׁפְתַּיִם-שֶׁקֶר) is an abomination to Yehovah, But those who act faithfully please Him.

The lips that are false Yehovah hates.

Mishlei/Proverbs 16:30

30 He closes his eyes while meditating deception; He purses **his lips (safatayv)** while deciding upon evil.

One planning to do Harm or Bad to someone is quiet and waits to act upon his plans.

Mishlei/Proverbs 17:4,7

4 An evildoer listens to mischievous talk (mera maq'shiyv al safat aven - From bad/harm hears for lips of trouble) ; A liar gives ear to malicious words (shaqer mezin al lashon havot – False one from gives ear to tongue of calamity).

The one casing bad or harm listens to lips that cause problems and the false ones give ears (listens to a tongue speaking of the destruction of others. One who is like the person they are listening to.

7 Lofty words (safat yeter - lips of excellency) are not fitting for a villain (fool); Much less **lying words (safat shaqer)** for a great man.

Good words are not good coming from a fool just as false words from a great man.

Yeshiyahu/Isaiah 59:3

3 For your hands are defiled with crime And your fingers with iniquity. **Your lips speak falsehood (saftoteykha davaru shaqer), Your tongue utters treachery (lashon'khem'av'lah the'gah your tongue iniquity utters).**

Your lips speak lies/falseness. In that you have told something untrue in your dealing or about your brother.

Ecclesiastes/Kohelet 10:12

12 A wise man's talk (word of a mouth wise) brings him favor, but a **fool's lips (sif'tot basiyl lips of a fool)** are his undoing (swallow him). **13 His talk (piyhu his mouth)** begins as silliness and ends (his mouth) as disastrous madness (holelut ra'ah bad/harmful madness).

Hosea 14:3

3 Take words with you And return to the YEHOVAH. Say to Him: "Forgive all guilt And accept what is good; Instead of bulls we will pay [The offering of] **our lips (safateynu)**).

When we pray we are substituting for the calves, which were brought for sacrifices. Our lips as Hannah did speak our prayers.

Zephaniah/Tzafan'yah 3:9

9 For then I will make the peoples pure of speech (safah barurah lip clear), So that they all invoke the YEHOVAH by name And serve Him with one accord.

When you read this verse many people use it to say one day there will be a pure language given again. Yet when reading the verse and in looking at all we have seen in this study we see that the people of Yisrael are going to again not speak falsely as their leaders and they did in the past. (verses 1-5) We see in verse 9 that a lip clear is what will be made. but what lip is this. The next verse tell us who.

10 From beyond the rivers of Cush, My suppliants (**bat putzay daughter of scattered ones**) shall bring offerings to Me in Fair Puzai.

The daughters of the scattered ones is all of Yisrael (from both houses). Thus this clear lip is theirs and not all the people of the earth. SO it can't one pure language for all. So it must be one lip that does not speak falsely. We see this in verses 13-14.

13 The remnant of Israel Shall do no wrong And speak no falsehood; A deceitful tongue Shall not be in their mouths. Only such as these shall graze and lie down, With none to trouble them. **14** Shout for joy, Fair Zion (daughter of tziyon), Cry aloud, O Israel! Rejoice and be glad with all your heart, Fair Jerusalem (daughter of Yerusalam)!

Malakhi/Malachi 2:6-7

6 Proper rulings (torat emet teachings of truth) were in his mouth (bipiyhu), And nothing perverse (iniquity) was **on his lips (bisafatayv);** He served Me with complete loyalty And held the many back from iniquity. **7 For the lips (sif' tey) of a priest guard knowledge, And men seek rulings from his mouth (vatorah yebaq'sha mipiyhu – and teaching they [the priests] should seek from his mouth) ;** For he is a messenger of the YEHOVAH of Hosts.

This messenger in Malakhi is from Yehovah and he comes with teachings of truth in his speech. The priests who were to guard knowledge have not and they should seek this messenger's knowledge.

We can see that lip (safah) mouth (peh) and tongue (Lashon) can cause ra or ra'ah also translated as evil but mean bad or harm. These are all in the way we speak about each other but specifically in how we say things which are not true. Whether it is testifying against them or speaking to another about them we need to be certain what we say is true before we speak something, which could cause them harm. Does this mean any negative thing spoken is covered by what he is seen here? No, it deals specifically with falseness. This generally is also falseness on purpose. Because as we saw this was planned, or thought out from the examples shown. Can a true negative thing be spoken, Yes. If they have done something wrong and you were to testify about it that is a true thing not a shaqer (false thing). What is being covered here in the Tanakh is where someone states something that is clearly false portraying it as something true. That is when one is Lashon shaqer (lying or false tongue).

What about the concept of Lying? What is it in the Tanakh?

The word used here for lying is the verb kazav (Kaf-Zayin-Bet) or reference number 3576 on page 594 NEHC and page 507 in the BDB.

In the Kal form we find it in Tehillim.

Tehillim/Psalms 116:11

10 I trust [in the LORD]; out of great suffering I spoke 11 and said rashly, “All men are false (kozav כִּזְב).”

All men lie is what the person said rashly.

In the Nihil form we find it in Mishlei

Mishlei/Proverbs 30:6

5 Every word of Elo'ah is pure, A shield to those who take refuge in Him. 6 Do not add to His words, Lest He indict you and you be proved a liar (venikh'zav'ta וְנִכְזַבְתָּ).

This is a verse in which one who says something is in Torah and not then they would be shown to be a liar by not finding it contained in there.

In the Piel form we find it in many places.

Micah 2:11

11 If a man were to go about uttering Windy, **baseless falsehoods (vashaqer kizev וְשָׁקַר כְּזֵב)**: “I’ll preach to you in favor of wine and liquor”— He would be a preacher [acceptable] to that people.

Here we see that this man using a metaphor for false lie. Thus, one who tells you false lies is like one who teaches for indulgence or over indulgence of wine and strong drink.

Yehez’qel/Ezekiel 13:19

19 You have profaned My name among My people in return for handfuls of barley and morsels of bread; you have announced the death of persons who will not die and the survival of persons who will not live—lying (bakhazev’khem **בְּכַזְבֵּיכֶם**) to My people, who listen to your **lies (kazav – 3577)**.

Here it accuses the prophets of Israel in Yehez’qel’s time for prophesying lies.

Bamidbar/Numbers 23:19

19 God is not man to be capricious (lo ish el viykaazzev **לֹא אִישׁ אֵל וְיִכְזֵב**), Or mortal to change His mind. Would He speak and not act, Promise and not fulfill?

Here Baalam is stating that El is not a man who needs to lie or the son of mankind that needs to repent.

Melekhim Bet/2 Kings 4:16

16 And Elisha said, “At this season next year, you will be embracing a son.” She replied, “Please, my lord, man of God, **do not delude (t’khazev תִּכְזֵב)** your maidservant.”

Here the woman is telling Elisha not to lie to her.

Mishlei/Proverbs 14:5

5 An honest witness will not lie (lo yekazev **לֹא יִכְזֹב**); A false witness testifies lies (veyafi'ach kazavim ed shaqer **וַיַּפִּיחַ כְּזָבִים עֵד שֶׁקֶר**).

And breathes lies a witness false is what the Hebrew literally says. The ed shaqer has lies coming out as easy as they breathe.

From this verb form we have the masculine noun Kazav (Kaf-Zayin-Bet) or reference number 3577 found on page 594 in the NEHC and on page 469 in the BDB. I would then be understood to be lying one.

Shofetim/Judges 16:10, 13

10 Then Delilah said to Samson, “Oh, you deceived me; **you lied (khazavim כְּזָבִים)** to me! Do tell me now how you could be tied up.”

13 Then Delilah said to Samson, “You have been deceiving me all along; you have **been lying (kazavim כְּזָבִים)** to me! Tell me, how could you be tied up?” He answered her, “If you weave seven locks of my head into the web.”

In both cases Samson told Delilah a lie about how to remove his power.

Tehillim/Psalms 58:3-4

3 In your minds you devise wrongdoing in the land; with your hands you deal out lawlessness. 4 The wicked are defiant from birth; **the liars (dov'rei khazar דֹּבְרֵי כְזָב)** go astray from the womb.

Those who are guilty and speak words of lies go astray.

Mishlei/Proverbs 6:19

19 A false witness testifying lies (**kazavim כְּזָבִים**), And one who incites brothers to quarrel.

This is the same in Hebrew as before in Mishlei 14:5 yafi'ach kazavim ed shaqer.

Mishlei/Proverbs 14: 25

25 A truthful witness saves lives; He who testifies lies (**kazavim כְּזָבִים**) reads deceit.

Breathes lies the deceitful, yafi'ach kazavim mir'mah.

Mishlei/Proverbs 19:5, 9, 22

5 A false witness will not go unpunished; He who testifies lies (**kazavim כְּזָבִים**) will not escape.

yafi'ach kazavim A breather of lies.

9 A false witness will not go unpunished; He who testifies falsely (**kazavim כְּזָבִים**) is doomed.

yafi'ach kazavim A breather of lies.

22 Greed is a reproach to a man; Better be poor than a liar (kazav **כְּזָב**).

Better to lack or be poor than to be a man of lies.

Here we see another word for lying. You will notice that in all the Torah it is used only one and that is for El and was not a command not to lie but simply showing that El is not like a man. Most of what we see is that lying is not desirable and is tied to shaqer in some places showing that False witnesses breathe lies.