



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

The Power of Speech

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

The beginning of this week's *Parsha* teaches us about the laws of vows and through them the immense power of human speech. As we see, the simple act of uttering certain words can literally change the *Halachic* status of objects or impose new obligations upon ourselves. In essence, through speech, we are able to create a new reality.

The power of our speech is especially relevant as we enter the period of the nine days leading up to *Tisha B'Av*. Our Rabbis teach us that the second *Bais Hamikdash* was destroyed, on *Tisha B'Av*, as a result of the sin of *Lashon Hara*, negative speech about another person. As we know all too well, the temptation to speak negatively about another is strong and prevails to this day.

Perhaps *Lashon Hara* remains so prevalent because of the feeling that it is "just words", and no one is actually being hurt. We see from our *Parsha*, however, that words are powerful and have a real effect. Let us take the opportunity during this period to contemplate the power of speech, and may we use this immense power to accomplish truly positive things.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

They approached him and said, "Pens for the flock we shall build here and cities for our children." (32, 16)

Their response revealed a shortcoming in their priorities. They said they would build pens for their animals and cities for their children, which implies that their sheep were more important to them than their children. (Rashi)

Yaakov was left alone and a man wrestled with him... (Vayishlach 32, 25)

He forgot small jugs and returned to retrieve them. From here we derive that righteous people value their monetary possessions more than their bodies. (Rashi)

Why was Yaakov's focus on his possessions considered a righteous attitude, while in regard to these Tribes it was considered a shortcoming?

Parsha Riddle

What was the name of Levi's wife?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

What was the name of Levi's wife?

Answer: Osah (Daas Zekanim Pinchas 26:59)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In Parshas Masei, the Torah repeatedly declares that intentional murder is subject to the death penalty. The obvious rationale for this is deterrence; as the Sefer Hachinuch (#47) puts it: "Through justice a king establishes a land' (Proverbs 29:4) - were it not for the fear of justice, men would kill each other, and Hashem therefore commands us to execute the murderer." This idea was already articulated by the Tanna R. Simeon b. Gamliel (II), who rejected what he considered the excessive reluctance of R. Tarfon and R. Akiva to ever apply the death penalty, on the grounds that this reluctance would "increase the spillers of blood in Israel" (Makos 7a), since murderers would not fear the court (Rashi; Tiferes Yisrael). R. Moshe Feinstein, on the other hand, denies that deterrence is the rationale for the penalty, since culling villains is Hashem's domain. Its purpose is rather educational and denunciative, to express the Torah's abhorrence of the sin (Shut. Igros Moshe CM 2:68).

Even mainstream Talmudic law which rejects R. Tarfon and R. Akiva's utter unwillingness to ever apply the penalty, nevertheless maintains that a properly functioning court will very rarely apply it (Makos ibid.). On the other hand, the Talmud grants courts remarkably broad and unfettered extralegal powers: "[T]he court may smite and punish not in accordance with the Torah, not to violate the words of the Torah, but in order to fashion a fence for the Torah." (ibid. 46a) Halachic authorities understand this to mean that courts may impose draconian penalties, including the death penalty, in particular situations that call for them, even where the normal procedural requirements are not satisfied, and even for offenses for which the halachah does not normally prescribe such penalties. Accordingly, our tradition records a number of cases in the medieval and early modern periods in which Rabbinic courts and communal authorities imposed the death penalty upon murderers and other criminals, despite the fact that the Talmud itself declares that formal capital jurisprudence has been suspended since before the destruction of the Second Temple (Sanhedrin 41b - Shut. Harosh 17:8; Shut. Zichron Yehudah #58,79; Shut. Rivash #234,251; Shut. Maharam Lublin #138).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

All children 13 and under who answer a "Who Am I?" correctly will be entered into a raffle to

WIN a Boxer Interactive Robot!



#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am travelling sticks.
2. I include vows and inheritance.
3. I am double.
4. I end with strength.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. No barber.
2. I stop "to this time."
3. I banned the band.
4. I am referred to by my time.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Covenant of Peace (Bris Shalom)

(My opposite caused me, I am for peace, I am not for day eight, I am for Pinchas.

#2 Rosh Chodesh (I come monthly, I am special for women, I am not a head, I can be 17, 18, 19, 20, or 21 times per year.

Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers.
Answer as many as you can.
Each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning!

THE NEXT
RAFFLE WILL BE
Sept 24.

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

GWCK invites men and women of the community to join for an inspiring trip to the

13th Global Siyum Hashas of Daf Yomi

at Met Life Stadium in East Rutherford, NJ Jan 1, 2020 - 1:00pm.

GWCK will be arranging bus transportation to and from the Siyum Hashas.

To be seated with other members of the Greater Washington community at the Siyum Hashas, make your reservation by Aug 12 using the Greater Washington Group Code. For more information, to reserve your seat on the bus, and to receive the Greater Washington Group Code go to www.gwckollel.org/siyumhashas.

