

The Fire that Inspired

Special thanks to revach.net for the story

From the time the Chiddushei HaRashba was printed no sefer was as great as the Pnei Yehoshua." This was quoted by the Avnei Tzedek in the name of the Chasam Sofer whose every word was measured and precise without exaggeration. Revered in the Yeshiva world, the Sefer Pnei Yehoshua has earned itself a special place on the Shtender as a symbol of excellence.

This sefer came to be when there was a terrible catastrophe in the town of Rav Yaakov Yehoshua Falk, the author of the Pnei Yehoshua, who was then 22 years old. A fire ignited a barrel of gun powder which caused a tremendous explosion. The Pnei Yehoshua was caught in the wreckage and made a promise to learn the depths of Torah day and night if he managed to survive. Survive he did and shortly thereafter he began writing his famed work. Rav Menachem Mendel MiKotzk testified that the Pnei Yehoshua finished Shas 36 times before he began writing his sefer.

His learning was so intense that he would sit in the cold without noticing. One bitter cold day the talmidim could not leave their homes until the sun came out in the afternoon. There they found the Pnei Yehoshua still wrapped in Talis and Tefilin learning with icicles hanging from his beard.

The Pnei Yehoshua was born in 5441/1681 the town of Reisha. He was named after his illustrious grandfather who authored Shu"t Pnei Yehoshua and the classic Maginei Shlomo which defended Rashi from the attacks of Tosfos. The Pnei Yehoshua served as Rav in a number of cities including Lvov, Berlin, Metz, and Frankfurt. He lived in the same era as the Vilna Gaon, Noda BiYehuda, The Chacham Tzvi, Rav Yaakov Emden, and the Pri Megadim, and was respected by all. Along with Rav Yaakov Emden he was a great antagonist of Rav Yehonason Eibushitz.

Although he was less successful as Rav due to his unwillingness to bow to the whims of the local wealthy Baalei Batim, among the Torah giants he was an icon. His word was regarded as law by his peers. He was made famous by the Chacham Tzvi who eventually suggested him as his replacement in Lvov. He was visited by the Chida when the latter traveled through Europe. In his sefer Shem HaGedolim the Chida writes about his visit, "I was zocheh to be Mikabel Pnei Hashechina for a number of days. His appearance is like that of a Malach Elokim".



Halacha Challenge

"And these are the words..." [Devorim 1:1]

Idle Conversations

by Shlomo Epshteyn

reviewed by Rav Chaim Malinowitz



Naftoli is back from his overnight camp. On Shabbos, the younger brothers and sisters were begging him to tell them "camp stories". Naftoli told one story; then another one; then a third one. When he was about to start the next story, he

suddenly recalled learning a halacha which states that on Shabbos one should limit his mundane speech. As such, he was hesitant to tell the next story.

Question: Can Naftoli tell the next story?

Answer: It is true, on Shabbos one is required to reduce his idle conversations. However, Naftoli is not required to limit his stories if telling them to his siblings gives him pleasure. This is provided that it will not come at the expense of his Torah learning.

Explanation: Chazal learn several laws of Shabbos from a verse in *sefer Yeshaya* (58:3) – the verse which teaches us to refrain from certain activities in order give honor to Shabbos. One of those activities is "dabeir davar" – lit. discussing a matter. The Gemorah¹ explains that your speech on Shabbos should not be the same as on a weekday. The Gemorah, though, does not specify in which way the speech on Shabbos should be different. Consequently, there is a disagreement between the Rishonim on this point. Some Rishonim² learn that we need to exclude certain types of talks from our dialogues on Shabbos. More specifically, we are not permitted to talk on Shabbos about *melachos* or *shevusim* (Rabbinically prohibited activities) that we are planning to do after Shabbos. This interpretation is reflected in the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch³.



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Halacha Challenge

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Other Rishomin⁴, on the other hand, learn that our speech on Shabbos should not be the same in quantity – i.e., talk less on Shabbos than you do on a weekday. The source for this interpretation is the Gemorah Yerushalmi⁹. There, Chazal bring a *drasha* on the verse, "...but the 7th day is Shabbos to Hashem" – you should rest like Hashem – just like Hashem rested from speaking (since the world was created through Hashem's words), so too, you should rest from speaking. However, based on the story that the Gemorah quotes, where someone was corrected when that person was talking a lot on Shabbos, the requirement is to merely reduce idle conversation on Shabbos (i.e., we are not required to completely eliminate such conversations).

The Shulchan Aruch⁵ rules according to these Rishonim as well, but specifies that the requirement to reduce speech on Shabbos applies only to idle (i.e., mundane / unnecessary) conversations. Furthermore, the Beis Yosef⁶ brings the ruling of T'rumas Hadeshen who states that this limitation does not apply to a case where the speaker receives pleasure from the conversation. This ruling of Terumas Hadeshen is brought by the Rema⁷ as halacha. It is important to mention that based on this Terumas Hadeshen, the Aruch Hashulchan¹⁰ learns that the requirement to reduce mundane speech on Shabbos is only Midas Chasidus. As such, *oneg* is a factor here. The Mishna Berura⁸ points out that one should be careful not to get carried away even with a conversation from which the speaker receives pleasure, so as not to neglect Torah learning. As a reminder, the Mishna Berura mentions that for those people who work during the week to earn a living, the main purpose of Shabbos is for Torah study.⁸ ♦

1. שבת קיג: 2. עיין רש"י שבת קיג: ד"ה שלא יהא ועיין בב"ח על הטור ראש סימן שז 3. שו"ע סימן שז סא"ף א 4. תס' שבת קיג: ד"ה שלא יהא, רמב"ם, ר"ן, רא"ש 5. שו"ע שם 6. ב"י א"ח סימן שז (א) 7. רמ"א סימן שז סא"ף א ועיין בספר ל"ט מלאכות דף 103 8. מ"ב סימן שז ס"ק ג 9. ירושלמי פרק טו ה"ג 10. ערה"ש סימן שז אות ב

Wonders of Creation

The Great Hammerhead Shark

By Alex Isaacson



The Great Hammerhead Shark is the largest species of hammerhead shark, belonging to the family Sphyrnidae, attaining a maximum length of 20ft. It is found in tropical and warm temperate waters worldwide, inhabiting coastal areas and the continental shelf. This shark can be distinguished from other hammerheads by the shape of its "hammer" (called the "cephalofoil"), which is wide with an almost straight front

margin, and by its tall, sickle-shaped first dorsal fin.

A solitary, strong-swimming apex predator, the great hammerhead feeds on a wide variety of prey ranging from crustaceans and cephalopods, to bony fishes, to smaller sharks. Observations of this species in the wild suggest that the cephalofoil functions to immobilize stingrays, a favored prey. This species is also known for its great litters, reaching up to 55 pups born every two years.

Hammerhead sharks are known to eat a large range of prey including fish, squid, octopus, crustaceans, and other sharks. Stingrays are a particular favorite. These sharks are often found swimming along the bottom of the ocean, stalking their prey. Their unique head is used as a weapon when hunting down prey. The hammerhead shark uses its head to pin down stingrays and eats the ray when the ray is weak and in shock. Like all sharks, hammerheads have electroreceptory sensory pores called ampullae of Lorenzini. By distributing the receptors over a wider area, hammerheads can sweep for prey more effectively. ♦



Riddles

Riddle

In what situation will two people in the same place be obligated to make Kiddush on different nights? That is, the night the first one is obligated, the second one is not, and the night the second one is obligated, the first one is not.

Answer to last issue's riddle:

(Riddle: How is Sarah Immeinu remembered in this week's parsha?)

ANSWER: One of the stops in the journeys of Bnei Yisroel was Alush. The root of that word is "losh" – kneading. Ba'al Haturim explains that the name of this place is teaching us that *mann* was given to Bnei Yisroel in the merit of the words that Avraham said to Sarah when they were hosting the guests: "lushi va'asi ugos" - knead and make pies.

Kids Ask, Zeidy Answers



Zeidy, we learn in this week's parsha that Moshe Rabbeinu explained the Torah in 70 languages. Why did he need to do that? Didn't everybody speak loshon haKodesh?



That's true, kids - they spoke loshon hakodesh. Some *meforshim* explain that Moshe Rabbeinu had to translate Torah into every single language in order to bring *kedusha* into other languages as well, so that when a Jew learns Torah in a foreign language, his learning will have the *kedusha* of Torah.