

Stories, Biographies & Wonders

**Mikva Repair**

Special thanks to Revach L’Neshama for the story

There was a town near Radin whose *mikva* fell into disrepair and could no longer function as a *kosher mikva*. The Chofetz Chaim, then at a very advanced age, wrote a letter to the community leader urging them to raise money for the important cause. His words fell on deaf ears as the townspeople cried poverty.

After a number of appeals failed, the Chofetz Chaim, despite his frail health, personally traveled to the town and called a meeting in the *shul*. He told the people that he is very old and does not know how many more years he has left on earth. But when it comes to an end, he will stand before the *Beis Din Shel Ma'ala* and need to account for all his actions. They will ask him, "Yisroel Meir, what did you do about the town near Radin that did not have a functioning mikva? How did you let a Jewish community be without such an important and central need?"

"To this I will respond" said the Chofetz Chaim "that I appealed to them many times, but my words fell on deaf ears. What more could I have done?" "Therefore," said the aged *tzaddik*, "I am passing around a form for everyone to sign that attests to the truth of my words. I need to take this with me to show to the *Beis Din Shel Ma'ala*." Needless to say the speech had its intended effect and the *mikva* was repaired. (Rav Pam on Chumash)

Special thanks to our supporters!



Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

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דברים

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Halacha Challenge

**Speaking to Yourself**

*In one of the recent issues we began exploring the laws of one may and may not say on Shabbos. We saw that a person cannot talk to others about a melacha that he is planning to do after Shabbos. As we begin Sefer Devorim, let's explore another halacha of speech on Shabbos - if one may tell to himself about a melacha that he is planning to do after Shabbos.*



Mordechai was taking a pleasant Shabbos walk with his family. Although he was trying really hard to focus his heart on Shabbos, he could not stop thinking about the fun activities that his camp will be doing next week: "On Monday we are going on a trip to the Kotel, on Tuesday we'll have a color war, on Wednesday..."

At some point, Mordechai noticed that he is thinking his thoughts out loud. "Wow! I did not realize that I am so excited about camp that I am actually thinking my thoughts out loud," said Mordechai as he smiled to himself. "I wonder, though, if while thinking out loud,

I need to be careful not to say any *melacha* that I will do in these camp activities."

**Q.** While thinking out loud to himself, can Mordechai mention an activity that he will be doing in camp, if by Shabbos, this activity is classified as *melacha*?

DEDICATIONS

- by Shlomo Epshteyn in gratitude to הקב"ה for the help with publishing a translation of the *kuntres Ahavas Yisrael* by the Chafetz Chaim

Special thanks to kehillas *Beis Tefillah Yonah Avraham*



**Help:** Let's review what we've learned a previous issue about this topic: Several laws of Shabbos are learned from a verse in the *navi* Yeshaya that speaks about our need to honor Shabbos properly<sup>1</sup>. The verse mentions that we should honor Shabbos by not 'speaking about a matter' - דְּבַר דְּבַר.

From this part of the verse, Chazal learned the following rule (Shabbos 113b): שלא יהא דבורך של שבת כדבורך של חול - *Your speech on Shabbos should not be the same as on a weekday.* Which type of weekday speech is the *navi* referring to through the words דְּבַר דְּבַר? It cannot be referring to a speech where it is benefiting someone to achieve some *melacha* after Shabbos, since that prohibition is derived from a different part of that verse (i.e., from מְמַצֵּא תַּפְצֵד [see Tosafos ibid.]). If so, what is דְּבַר דְּבַר referring to?

As we saw in a previous issue, in the commentaries of the Rishonim, there are two different interpretations of דְּבַר דְּבַר. In this article as well, we will focus on Rashi's interpretation, since it is relevant to our challenge. Rashi comments that the "weekday speech" in this context is כגון מקה וממכר והשבונות - lit. 'such as buying and selling, and calculations'. Rashi's interpretation of דְּבַר דְּבַר is reflected in the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch (OC 307:1). The *poskim* explain Rashi's interpretation as follows: We are not permitted to talk on Shabbos about *melachos* or Rabbinically prohibited activities that we are planning to do after Shabbos – even if it is not benefiting the speaker or others in achieving that *melacha* (see Tur OC 307, Bach ibid, Mishna Berura ibid., §1).

*To solve our challenge, think if דְּבַר דְּבַר applies only when one is speaking to others, or does it apply also when a person speaking to himself?*

**Menucha's Answer\*:** Mordechai may not talk about *melacha* that he is planning to do after Shabbos—even if he is merely talking to himself.

**Explanation:** The *halacha* of this unique case is taught by Eliya Rabba (one of the major commentaries of the Shulchan Aruch). He rules that דְּבַר דְּבַר applies even if one is merely talking to himself (Eliya Rabba OC 307:2).

*Based on this, can you see which interesting nuances you can understand about דיבור (speech) and the mitzva of honoring for Shabbos?*

[1] אִם-תִּשָּׂא לְשִׁבְתֵּךְ רִגְלֶךָ עֲשׂוֹת תַּפְצִיד בְּיוֹם קִדְשִׁי; וְקִרְאתָ לְשִׁבְתֵּךְ עֲנֵג לְקֹדֶשׁ ה' מְכַבֵּד; וְכִבְדְתוּ מַעֲשׂוֹת דְּרִכֶּיךָ מְמַצֵּא תַּפְצֵד וְדְבַר דְּבַר. (ישעיהו נח"ג)

\* Note: Menucha's answer is for Torah learning purposes only and not as a *halachic* ruling.

*Kids Ask, Zeidy Answers*



Zeidy, why is Shacharis so much longer than Mincha and Maariv?



Great question, kids.

the war with the *yeitzer hora*. Similarly, explains Shem MiShmuel, a Ben Yisroel needs be in a very close bond with Hashem in the morning, through *tefilla* and Torah, before he can begin his day, so that he can be successful in escaping the traps that the *yeitzer hora* will be putting in front of him throughout the day.

*\*Shem MiShmuel, parshas Masei*

**Riddles**



In almost every shul, there is always one person who sits at some point during Shacharis of Tisha B'Av.

*Who is that person and when does he sit?*

**Last week's Riddle:** Ben-Tzion was enjoying eating his favorite snack. Since Ben-Tzion is not a big fan of *mezonos*, the snack did not contain even a gram of any wheat, rye, spelt, oat, or barely kernels, or their flour. After he was done eating, he said: "I need thank Hashem for this snack." So he said Birkas HaMazon. His father said: "You should not have said Birkas HaMazon. But now that you said it, you don't need to make any other after-bracha for your snack." *What snack did Ben-Tzion eat?*

**Answer:** Ben-Tzion was eating dates. *Bedieved*, if a person said Bircas Hamazon after eating dates, he is *yoitze* (i.e., he does not need to say any other after *brachos*).