

Stories, Biographies & Wonders

"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. The Pnei Yehoshua is authored by R' Yaakov Yehoshua Falk. The *sefer* came to be when there was a terrible catastrophe in R' Yaakov Yehoshua's town when he was 22 years old. A fire ignited a barrel of gun powder which caused a tremendous explosion and subsequent large fire. R' Yaakov Yehoshua was caught in the wreckage and his life was in extreme danger. At that moment he made a promise to learn the depths of Torah day and night if he managed to survive. He survived. Rav Menachem Mendel from Kotzk testified that R' Yaakov finished Shas 36 times before he began writing Pnei Yehoshua.

Biographical note: R' Yaakov Yehoshua Falk was born in the year 1681 in the town of Reisha, Poland. He was named after his illustrious grandfather who authored Shu"t Pnei Yehoshua and the classic Maginei Shlomo which defended Rashi from the arguments of Tosfos against Rashi. 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. His word was regarded as law by his peers. He was made famous by the Chacham Tzvi who eventually suggested him as his successor in Lvov. He was visited by the Chid"ra during his travels, and in his *sefer* Shem HaGedolim, the Chid"ra writes about his visit, "I merited to be *mekabel pnei hashechina* for a number of days (referring to the Pnei Yehoshua). His appearance is like that of a *Malach Elokim*." Special thanks to Revach L'Neshama for the story

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Menucha

A Shabbos table companion
for the whole family

בס"ד

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מטות

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Halacha Challenge

Melacha Talk



As the Silverman family was taking their Shabbos walk, the kids related about the fun things that they did in camp that week. When Alexander got his turn, he told about his camp's trip to the Golan. Everyone enjoyed hearing about the adventures that his camp had there. "And then, when it was getting dark," continued Alexander, "we pitched tents on top of a hill, overlooking the beautiful mountains of the Golan."

Then, Alexander wanted to tell how he and his friend Kalman made a bonfire. But he was hesitant to tell about it. "I know that there is a prohibition of '*daber davar*'. Perhaps, I am not supposed to talk now about melacha that I did," thought Alexander.

Q. Can Alexander tell how he made the bonfire?

DEDICATIONS

- By **Moshe Linder** in memory of his father **R' Yitzchak Dov ben R' Yosef**.
- By the Epshteyn family in memory of **Michael ben Ella**

Special thanks to kehillas **Beis Tefillah Yonah Avraham**



Help: Several laws of Shabbos are learned from a verse in the *navi* Yeshaya* that speaks about our need to honor Shabbos properly. The verse mentions that we should honor Shabbos by not ‘speaking about a matter’ - וְדַבֵּר דָּבָר.

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.”

The Gemorah, though, does not specify in which way the speech on Shabbos should be different from a weekday speech.

What type of weekday speech do you think Chazal were referring to? Based on your answer, try to solve the challenge.

Menucha’s Answer*: Yes – Alexander may tell everyone how he made the bonfire.

Explanation: Which type of weekday speech is the *navi* referring to through the words וְדַבֵּר דָּבָר? 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 מִמְצוֹא הַפֶּצֶחַ [see Tosafos ibid.]. If so, what is וְדַבֵּר דָּבָר referring to?

In the commentaries of the Rishonim, there are two different interpretations of וְדַבֵּר דָּבָר. In this article we will focus on Rashi’s interpretation, as this interpretation is relevant to our challenge. Rashi comments that the “weekday speech” in this context is כגון מקח וממכר וחשבונות - lit. ‘such as buying and selling, and calculations’. Rashi’s interpretation of וְדַבֵּר דָּבָר 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 *shevusim* (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 apply this to our challenge – since Alexander is speaking about *melacha* that he already did and not what he is planning to do, he may tell how he made the bonfire.

* אם תשיב משבת רגלך עשות הפציה ביום קדשי; וקראת לשבת ענג לקדוש ה' מכבד; וכבדתו מעשות דרכיך ממצוא הפציה ודבר דבר. (ישעיהו נח:יג)

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

In this week’s parsha, on the words לֹא יִחַל דְּבָרוֹ Rashi comments: “he should not profane his word; [that is,] he should not make his words mundane.” The *meforshim* ask why doesn’t the verse simply say ‘he should not transgress his word’? With Rashi’s interpretation, however, the meaning of the verse is much deeper. A person’s words are sanctified and thus, he cannot make them mundane. From where did the words receive their *kedusha*? The answer is: from the person’s mouth. It is taught based on the teachings of Rabbeinu Yona that a mouth of Ben/Bas Yisroel takes a status of a כלי שרת (a dedicated vessel used for *avodas Hashem*) when he/she uses in an upstanding way. Why out of all parts of the body, the mouth is the part that can have a status of a כלי שרת? The *navi* Yeshaya says (43:21): עַם-יִשְׂרָאֵל יִצְרָתִי לִי תִהְיֶה יִסְפְּרוּ In other words, the purpose of creation was for Bnei Yisroel to give praises to Hashem with their lips. Since that is the purpose of creation, the mouth is unique and has a potential to become a כלי that’s dedicated for the sanctified work. Hence, the words לֹא יִחַל דְּבָרוֹ of our parsha is a concept that needs to be a guiding force in a life of a Ben/Bas Yisroel. This concept has levels upon levels which a person can reach in sanctifying his mouth. It is relevant on weekdays and, certainly, attains a special level on Shabbos Kodesh.

[based on Nesivos Shalom, Mattos, “Lo Yachel Devaro”]

Riddles



Miriam and Shulamit came home from school and sat down at the table for a snack. Their mother put a plate of grapes in front of each girl. Each plate had the same amount of grapes. Each girl ate only from her plate. They ate all of the grapes in 2 minutes. After that, their mother added more fruits to each girl’s plate, with the same amount of fruits (in volume) on each plate. Each girl ate only from her plate. They ate all of the fruits in 2 minutes. Their mother turned to Miriam and said: “You need to say one bracha for this snack.” Then, she turned to Shulamit and said: “You need to say two brachos for this snack.” *Why does Miriam need to say only one bracha, while Shulamit needs to say two brachos?*

Last week’s Riddle: Levi and Yehuda are twins. They ate a small meal on a Friday night. Levi said to Yehuda: “That’s funny; we ate absolutely the same amount of food. We’re twins even here!” Their father gave each one a bencher and said: “Now it is time to thank Hashem for the food.” When they were finished, their father asked them: “Did you mention Shabbos?” “Oops, we forgot,” they said. Their father turned to Levi and said: “You need to repeat.” Then, he turned to Yehuda and said: “You don’t need to repeat.” Levi and Yehuda are equally healthy and strong (physically and mentally). *Why did the father tell to Levi to repeat and to Yehuda he said not to repeat?* **Answer:** Levi ate challah, while Yehuda ate a *mezonos* roll. If one forgets to mention Shabbos in the *al hamichya* blessing, he does not need to repeat the blessing. (see OC 208, MB ibid.)