



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

*It is an honor to present this week's Torah Minute from our archives.
The following was penned by our founder, Rabbi Kalman Winter ZT"L, in 2011.*

In last week's Torah reading of Kedoshim and this week's reading of Emor, the Torah outlines many laws pertaining to personal interactions that both distinguish and elevate us in a way that is unique to Jews. Of particular prominence are the commandments and concepts of proper and appropriate speech. We do not refer to grammar and vocabulary in this context but, rather, to matters of much greater gravity and significance. These laws and principles form the foundation stone of a civil, orderly, and productive society. We are speaking specifically of the admonishment and prohibition against speaking *loshon hora* - speaking derogatorily of another, be it even in truth.

The Torah is very specific in this regard: "You shall not be a gossipmonger among your people." Describing the personality of one who speaks *loshon hora* as a "gossipmonger," the Torah concludes the verse: "...you shall not stand aside while your fellow's blood is shed; I am G-d" (19:16). Maimonides comments that the Hebrew word that the Torah uses for gossipmonger, *rochil*, has great subtlety. The *rochil* is, in truth, literally a peddler: a peddler not of wares but of unflattering, derogatory words. He hears bits and pieces of information in one location and transports them to another. He is not a liar or a fabricator; he is absolutely accurate in the information he transmits. Yet he has violated one of the most grievous of all Torah precepts. He casts his fellow man in a negative light and, consequently, his behavior is apt to cause bloodshed among people.

This prohibition is not exclusive to the one who speaks but extends itself, as well, to the one who gives an ear and audience to the gossip. Our Rabbis are more critical of the one who listens than of the one who speaks, for, without an ear to listen, one would not talk to the wall.

The scope of the many laws, cases, and applications of *loshon hora* is far wider than can be detailed in even a year's worth of Torah Minutes. In his book, Positive Word Power: Building a Better World With the Words You Speak (ArtScroll, 2009), Rabbi Zelig Pliskin outlines, in a daily lesson format, the Jewish laws of proper speech and conduct. All could avail themselves to this accessible work in English, which would lead us to a greater awareness of the sanctity of speech, illustrate our lofty capacity to reach glorious heights and, above all, save so much grief and pain from the words we inflict on others, which can never be retrieved.

*Have a wonderful Shabbos,
Rabbi Menachem Winter*

TABLE TALK

POINTS TO PONDER

Say to the Kohanim the sons of Aaron... they shall not marry a woman who has been divorced from her husband (21:1 & 7).

The gemara (Nedarim 32b) says that Hashem made Avraham a Kohen. How was Avraham allowed to marry Ketura (Hagar) after he had divorced her?

Why does the pasuk write "Kohanim the sons of Aaron?" Aren't all Kohanim the sons of Aaron?

PARSHA RIDDLE

V'hu / And he shall marry a woman... (21:13)

Which halacha is hinted to in this pasuk?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

You shall not eat over the blood... (19:26)

Besides the prohibition to eat meat while there is blood in it, what other prohibitions are derived from this pasuk?

Answer: The prohibition to eat before davening

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parshas Emor* (23:14), we are commanded to abstain from bread and certain forms of grain until the offering of the *Omer* sacrifice on the second day of Passover. This is termed the prohibition of *chadash* ("new"). All grain starts out being prohibited as *chadash*. Upon the offering of the *Omer*, any grain that has already taken root becomes permitted as *yashan* ("old"), while all grain that subsequently takes root is termed *chadash* and is prohibited until next year's offering. When the *Omer* is not offered, as in contemporary times, *chadash* becomes permitted after the sixteenth of Nissan (or the seventeenth, in the Diaspora).

For nearly a millennium, however, the practice of much of Ashkenazic Jewry in the Diaspora has been to disregard this prohibition, and *halachic* authorities have struggled greatly to justify this. Some argue that the Biblical prohibition may only apply in the Land of Israel, whereas in the Diaspora, the prohibition is merely Rabbinic. Insofar as it is Rabbinic, we may be lenient where the *chadash / yashan* status of grain is unknown (*safek de'rabanam le'kula - Or Zarua Hilchos Orlah Ve'Chadash #328*). Alternatively, we may follow the opinion that maintains that this Rabbinic extension to the Diaspora only applies to areas of geographical proximity to the Land of Israel (*Magen Avraham end of siman #489*). Some argue that the prohibition of *chadash* does not apply to grain grown by non-Jews (*Bach Yoreh De'ah #293*). Others argue that there are generally two separate uncertainties (*sfek sfeka*) about the *chadash* status of any particular instance of grain. Perhaps it is from last year's crop, in which case it is certainly *yashan*, and even if it is from this year's, it may have taken root before the *Omer* (see Rema 293:3).

Many of the same authorities who propose these justifications, however, concede that they are merely intended to justify a problematic custom, or that they are of dubious validity, and may be relied upon only due to the difficulty of obtaining *yashan*. Many authorities therefore encourage personal strictness where possible (*Magen Avraham ibid., Shulchan Aruch Harav Orach Chaim 489:30, Mishneh Berurah siman 489 s.k. 45*).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. You must honor me.
2. I cannot bury you.
3. You give me but not a tenth.
4. I atone for you.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. Defect-free
2. I make peace.
3. With my mother for a week
4. I am not a cold son.

Last Week's Answers:

#1 The mitzvah to fear one's parents (I am right before Shabbos; I am like sending the mother; I usually flip from honor; I am for sitting not standing.)

#2 Orla (I am for a boy; I am for a tree; I am for eight days; I am for three years.)

Congratulations to
Naphtali Tzvi Graham and others
for answering last week's questions correctly!

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



The next raffle is June 21st.

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.

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