

THE THREE SPEECHES – DO I HAVE TO LISTEN TO THEM?

by Community Contributor

"It will be because you listen to these laws, through keeping and performing them; Hashem, your G-d, will safeguard you..."

The Ramban quotes Rashi, who explains this *posuk* to mean the following:

"If you will listen even to the lighter mitzvos that a person often neglectfully tramples with his heels – i.e. treats with less regard – G-d will safeguard His promise for you."

Dovid said to Hashem: "You gave us 613 minor and major mitzvos. I wasn't just meticulous to fulfill only the major mitzvos, but even more so, the minor mitzvos, which were given to man..."

Which mitzvos does one need to work on?

The Gemara says, *"There are things that stand in heights of the universe, but which people treat lightly."* An example of this is *tefillah* which rises up to Heaven. A few pages later, the Gemara says that *tefillah* is one of the four activities which require strengthening. Rashi explains, *"A person should strengthen himself in this **constantly** with all his energy."*

Is it just *tefillah*? What's the Gemara really trying to tell us? Anything that's a *spiritual matter*, people tend to throw to the side. For example: **Ginzei Hakodesh: The Laws of Respect and Reverence for Religious Books and Articles** by Rabbi Yechezkel Feinhandler, **The Brochos Handbook: A quick reference guide to the proper blessings and after blessings for over 700 foods** by Rabbi Yisroel Pinchos Bodner and **The Practical Guide To Shmiras Ha'Einayim** by Rabbi Shaul Wagschal, z"l.

Therefore, let's start off with *tefillah*. The following story was said over by Rabbi Moshe Stern:

During the Holocaust in the winter of 1944, I was with a group of people near the train station in the city Rechov. All of sudden out of nowhere, an old lady approaches us and says, "Jews, Jews, you know why you're suffering so much? Because you are talking about mundane things in the middle of tefillah and organize all of your business in the shul!" After she finished saying this, she disappeared within seconds. No one knew who she was, where she had come from or where she had gone.

Secondly, is *v'dabeir davar* which means *not speaking of your weekday occupations on Shabbos*. This includes restrictions upon verbally expressing one's *intentions* to perform a *melechah* after Shabbos - even if the discussion does not help achieve one's plans in any way. One may **not** state his intention to *repair an appliance, send an email, drive a car* or similar *melechah* activities after Shabbos. In addition, one may not negotiate *business deals* or *plan strategies*, etc. on Shabbos.

What type of speech is permitted? Speech that doesn't comprise any *melechah* intentions is permissible if the conversation is enjoyable to the participants.

Lastly, is *Loshon Hora*, which means a derogatory statement that is true.

The Noam Elimelech identifies *loshon hora* as one of the *mitzvos* which people do not take seriously, causally trampling with their heels. As the Chofeitz Chayim says, *"People have become used to saying whatever happens to come out of their mouth, without first considering that perhaps what they say is considered rechilus or loshon hora."*

Napoleon Hill gives us beneficial advice, *"Think twice before you speak because your words and influence will plant the seed of either success or failure in the mind of another."*

Chaim Yosef David Azulai commonly known as the Chidah says, *"Whoever wants to get a portion in the World to Come cheaply, guard your tongue from evil."* Conversely, *"When we speak loshon hora about someone else, we take his aveiros upon ourselves and he takes our mitzvos!"*

Elsewhere, the Chidah says that the only way a person will be saved from his *yeitzer hara* is through learning *halacha*. In this case, it's learning the *halachos* of *tefillah*, *v'dabeir davar* and *hilchos loshon hora*.

If a small or big piece of food goes down one's air pipe it can cause him to choke or worse, G-d forbid. So too, *"Be careful with a minor mitzvah, (as you would be) with a major one, because you do not know the reward for mitzvos."* In other words of Richard Carlson: *"Don't Sweat the Small Stuff"*.
Correction: *"Sweat the small stuff and the big stuff."*

Dedicated:

- In memory of Rivka bas Rav Eliyahu, Shlomo Avraham Moshe ben Yechezkeil Yosef, Rochel bas Menachem Mendel Boruch, Eliyahu ben Mordechai, Mashah Tzivyah bas R' Shlomo Zalman, Altah Soshah Devorah bas Aryeh Leibush, Chaim ben Shmuel Efraim Zalman, Tuvyah Shlomo ben Naftali Tzvi HaKohein; Yisroel ben Yeshayah, Elisheva Basyah bas Yechiel Ephraim, Leah bas Leib Yehudah, Dovid Pinchas ben Moshe Aharon, Malka Devora Sima bas Meir Nosson, Esther Perel bas R' Shlomo, Miriam bas Zelig Shaul, Menachem ben Shimon, Menachem ben Zev, Sarah bas HaRav Yisroel, Avraham Yosef ben Meir Dovid, Zushe Yosef ben Shmuel Tzvi, Dovid Tzvi ben Yosef Yochanan, Kayla Rus bas Bunim Tuvia, Dovid ben Uri HaLevi, Dovid Avraham ben Chiya Kehos, Yosef ben Moshe HaLevi and all the other departed souls of our nation.

- For the complete recovery of Chayah Malka bas Bas-Sheva and among the other sick ones of

our nation.

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