

Rebbetzen's Corner

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child, and talk about the positive aspects of that child's personality, then the child likewise will focus on the good behavior and tend to repeat it. We've all heard of a "self-fulfilling prophecy" — when a person says something so often that soon they begin to believe it, and ultimately that event happens.

Words, once out, can never really be taken back. One can be forgiven for saying something to hurt another, but the memory of what was said can last a very, very long time. Sometimes we can forgive intellectually, but our emotional side holds onto the pain for much longer than most of us would care to. I suppose it's a sort of self-defense mechanism. If I don't forget about the hurt, I'll be on my guard to not let it happen again...

I recently read a story written by a grown woman who was remembering back to her childhood. She very vividly recalls being teased by the children in the playground about her red hair. She stood crying while the other children danced around her singing: "Carrot Top, Carrot Top, Red Head peed the bed..." Suddenly out of nowhere came a "giant of a fifth grade teacher" who said for all to hear: "You have the most beautiful hair I think I have ever seen, you must be very proud and happy to have such lovely hair, I know that I would be. You are blessed to have such hair..." The children never teased her again about her hair, and in fact, she became the envy of her class! To this day, over 40 years later, the little girl inside of that woman remembers the kind words of a teacher and loves her red hair (and feels good about herself...).

Many times when we have been hurt by the words of another, it is a natural inclination to strike back with words meant to cause pain to the offender. We do it to make ourselves feel better, but all it usually does is make everyone concerned feel terrible. Like a feather lost in a windstorm, unkind words, once spoken are impossible to bring back. I try my very best to never say something in a moment of pain or anger that I will regret the next

Kahane Barred From Campus Speech, Charges USC Caved In To Arab Money

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — Rabbi Meir Kahane has threatened to sue the University of Southern California after officials barred him from speaking at the university's Bovard Auditorium.

As it was, the former Knesset member and leader of the Kach Party tried to deliver a six-minute talk on Nov. 1 in a public area outside the auditorium, which quickly degenerated into a shouting match between Kahane and 50 students, most of them Jewish.

Kahane assailed the USC administration for renegeing on its earlier permission allowing him to speak in the auditorium. He charged that campus

officials had caved in to "Arab money on campus."

According to Dr. James Dennis, a USC vice president, the university cancelled the talk on security grounds. "For the safety of the students, spectators and the rabbi himself, we had to do it," Dennis said. He added that the university's diverse population, including 4,000 foreign students, created an unsafe atmosphere for Kahane.

During the audible part of his talk, Kahane said that Southern California's Arab population will increase because "we will take them out of Israel."

As he left the campus surrounded by plainclothes Los Angeles police officers, Kahane declared himself satisfied with his appearance, even if no one heard him, because of the publicity and commotion the event generated.

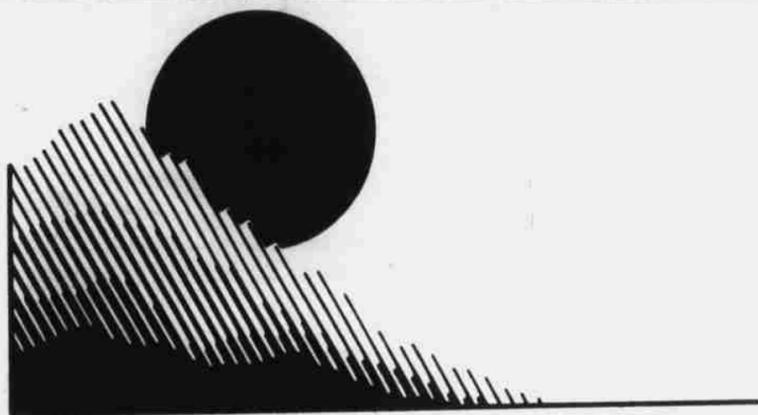
"Anytime I get Arabs upset, it's a success," he said.

day. It's tempting sometimes to "lash out," but once you've done it and seen the pain that it can cause, it makes you never want to do it again! Many of us who would never think of physically striking another human being think nothing of inflicting damaging blows with our tongue. Our gift of speech is the main thing that distinguishes us from the animals — "THAT we can speak makes us human; HOW we speak reveals the kind of human beings we are."

In "Much Ado About Nothing" Shakespeare speaks about an innocent victim "done to death by slanderous tongues." Gossip is one of the most destructive ways that words can be used, because the victim has absolutely no control over what is being said, and usually has no clue that anything is being said at all! Remember: "If the person who is gossiping is guilty of stealing another's reputation; then the person listening is guilty of receiving stolen goods..." If nobody would listen, then nobody could gossip. I'd like to share a poem with you (author unknown):

"My name is Gossip.
I have no respect for Justice.

I maim without killing.
I break hearts and ruin lives.
I am cunning and malicious and gather strength with age.
The more I am quoted, the more I am believed.
I flourish at every level of society.
My victims are helpless. They cannot protect themselves against me because I have no name and no face.
To track me down is impossible. The harder you try, the more elusive I become.
I am nobody's friend.
Once I tarnish a reputation it is never quite the same.
My name is Gossip."
Each of us has the "power of the word" inside. We can attract evil by our thoughts and words; or we can attract peace, harmony and all things good. The power belongs to you, my friend, take a moment to think before you use the gift of speech, and may you be guided to use it wisely.
Shalom,
Micki D. Hecht
Rebbetzen, Temple Beth Am



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