

Bring Out The Best In People

By: Rabbi Yosef Vogel

Words can be dangerous. They can be used to destroy relationships, reputations, they can even kill people.

Well you may ask, surely that's an exaggeration. Perhaps it is a harsh remark; however this word is used in the Talmud to describe the impact of a derogatory remark one may make about a colleague.

When the biblical narrative relates the story of Noach, it begins with a complimentary observation about him. To the extent, that the verse interrupts the narrative to inject these words of praise.

Rashi, the most prominent biblical commentator explains, that in this first verse, G-d is teaching us a profound lesson.

Human suffering for the most part is caused by man's behaviour towards his fellow man. However in the first instance it begins with words. A negative comment regarding a colleague, a cynical remark about a group of people or a subtle observation that undermines a friend.

Words are powerful. They expose what lies beneath the surface. They pronounce and crystallise what exists within each and every one of us.

Like everything else in life, we have options. The question we have to ask ourselves is what business are we in. To use a metaphor, what commodities are we mining. The earth beneath us is full of various matter, some of which is extremely valuable, whilst some of it could even be toxic or harmful.

So too in human life each person has a rich and complex persona made up of both positive and negative traits. We Jews are in the mining business, our job is to bring out the best qualities inherent in our fellow man. Sure our friends have weaknesses, they are not perfect. The truth is, no human being is perfect.

28 October | 30 Tishrei

Noach

Shabbat Begins: 5:26 pm

Shabbat Ends: 6:27 pm

The lesson we derive from this week's Torah reading, is the great imperative we have as Jews. We are in the Precious Stones business. Our mission in life is to uncover, not the bad but the good that exists inside our fellow man. It is only through positive words and dialogue, about people, that we can transform a world of suffering and hate into a world of peace and harmony.

Speak only good about people, bring out the best in them.

28 October | 30 Tishrei

Noach

Shabbat Begins: 5:26 pm

Shabbat Ends: 6:27 pm