

The Weekly Farbrengens

MERKAZ ANASH
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SPEAKING WITH CARE (II)

PROPER SPEECH

Chazal say that one should speak in a 'clean' language, using positive expressions instead of negative ones. Thus, when HaShem told Noach to bring the animals into the *teivah*, He told him to include pairs of animals 'that are not pure,' instead of simply saying, 'the animals that are *tamei*.'

Two *talmidim* were once grappling with a difficult subject in the presence of the *amora*, Rav. One *talmid* later commented, "This learning has left me feeling like a tired *davar acher* ("pig"). The other used the term, "a tired goat." Rav did not speak to the first *talmid* any more.

Similarly, a certain *kohen* in the *Beis HaMikdash* once described his modest portion of the *lechem hapanim* as "the size of a lizard's tail." They investigated and found out that this *kohen* was of tainted lineage.

(פסחים ג ע"א וע"ב)

As he was walking, a great *rov* passed a dead dog which produced a horrible stench. One of his *talmidim* commented, "How bad is its smell!" The *rov* replied, "How white are its teeth!" and his *talmidim* felt embarrassed for having spoken negatively. He had taught them a lesson: one should not speak negatively, even about a dead dog, and certainly not about a living person.

(חובות הלבבות שער הכניעה פ"ו)

The Rebbe was especially careful with his words, using phrases such as 'opposite of good', 'opposite of life' etc. When the Rebbe quoted words of Chazal which were of a negative nature, he would only hint at them, not wanting to spell them out. In this spirit, the Rebbe suggested that in *lashon hakodesh*, a hospital should not be referred to as a home of the sick but rather as a home of healing, emphasizing its positive aspect. The exception to this, is when a lesson is being taught, for then things must be spelled out clearly, leaving no room for doubt.

(תו"מ תשמ"ז ח"ב ע' 37, לקו"ש ח"י ע' 26)

At a *yechidus* with the supporters of Tomchei Temimim, one of those present mentioned the deficiencies of a certain city, to which the Rebbe responded, "In discussing a deficiency, there are two approaches: one can either specify the problem, or highlight the positive, and the problem will be understood on its own. For example, if a person is

missing his left hand (*chas veshalom*), one can either state that this person's hand is missing, or one can speak about how much he accomplishes with his right hand, from which it is understood that his other hand is missing. This is the way one should speak".

(תו"מ חכ"ד ע' 198)

CONSIDER

Is positive speech a means to promote positive thoughts or is it also an end in itself?

What is wrong with mentioning the negative elements of life? Are we denying their existence?

CLEAN SPEECH

Chazal caution that one should speak in a clean manner, and warn that unclean speech can bring many tragedies upon the Yidden, and *tefillos* may go unanswered.

(שבת לג ע"א)

Chazal compare a worthy person who speaks coarsely to a palace with a dirty and foul-smelling tannery in it, causing all passersby to exclaim, "How gorgeous is this palace! How unfortunate it is that a tannery has been set up in it." If one gains respect by the "bad smell," how much more respect would he gain if he would emit a beautiful perfume, so to speak.

(מס' דרך ארץ בן עזאי פ"א ה"ג)

For many years, the *chossid* and *shadar* (traveling *shliach* of the Rebbe) Reb Leib Hoffman lived in Vitebsk. At *yechidus*, a certain *chossid* once told the Rebbe Maharash that he did not go to hear Reb Leib *chazzering chassidus*. The Rebbe advised him to go and listen to Reb Leib,

(רשימו"ד חדש ע' 260)

One summer day in תשל"א (1971), a few *bochurim* were conversing near the Rebbe's room, and one of them used inappropriate language. The Rebbe overheard it and his face paled.

At the next *farbrengens*, the Rebbe raised the subject

and spoke about it with pain in his voice. The Rebbe appeared very serious and he looked intently at the *bochurim*, pleading that he should never have to mention the subject again.

"Though in general these matters are not discussed, but once in a while, they must be mentioned. The negative effects of unclean speech are far-reaching and an objection must be made. Though it is not my job, since I heard it, I must say something. Future *farbrengens* will no doubt be reserved for matters of Torah and *yiras Shamayim*".

(דעם רבינס קינדער ע' קצט)

The Rebbe also said that improper speech can have negative effects on one's *avodas Hashem*, and added that improving it will help one overcome certain internal struggles.

(תו"מ ח"י ע' 68, אג"ק ח"ט ע' רעג)

POSITIVE SPEECH

Chazal say that even when one must mention something negative, he should at least begin with a positive remark. When the Torah discusses the non-kosher animals it begins with those which have one kosher sign.

Dovid HaMelech began *Tehillim* with praise for those who refrain from following bad ways, as opposed to starting with a negative comment about those who do.

(ב"ר פל"ב, ירושלמי מגילה פ"ג ה"ז, ילקוט שמעוני תהלים א)

One should also conclude on a good note. In those *seforim* of *Nach* which end with something negative, the second to last *posuk* is repeated in order that our reading should end on a positive note. When the Rebbe spoke of something negative, he would always conclude with something good, or at least add the words, *Umessaymim b'tov* - "and let us conclude on a positive note."

(ברכות לא ע"א, התוועדות תשד"מ ח"ב ע' 632)

In תשל"ב (1972) the Rebbe's *Haggadah* was expanded to include his *sichos* and letters relating to Pesach. When the printed volume was presented to the Rebbe, he noticed that the final words of the concluding note were "the pain of the child." On the Rebbe's instructions, a rubber stamp was promptly made with the words, *LeShana habaa biYerushalayim*. All the copies were duly stamped and were thus enabled to end on a positive note.

(מפי הרב יהודה לייב שי' שפירא)

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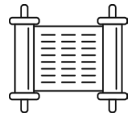
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REFUGEE OPENING SHOP

May a refugee escaping Ukraine open a shop here to support himself until the war is over?

Generally, a resident of the city may open completion with an existing store as long as it won't shut down the other one (see issue 544).¹ But when it comes to a non-local, the Gemara teaches that the city residents may prevent him from competing with them and infringing on their livelihood, and so is the general halacha.² There are, however, several exceptions.

Firstly, if the seller pays local taxes — e.g. property tax on a storefront — he could be considered a local. Similarly, if he forms a partnership with a local, it is permitted since a local is also benefiting.³

Torah scholars are afforded with special dispensations to open competition, even if they aren't local residents. Peddling women's cosmetics is specifically permitted due to an enactment of Ezra to ensure that perfume is available for Jewish women.⁴

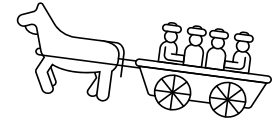
If the new store will cause prices to be lowered or better quality products to be available, thus benefitting the consumers, it is permitted as long as he doesn't compete unfairly, such as by selling below cost. Selling similar lower-quality products is also not considered direct competition.⁵ Selling bulk or wholesale is permitted to continue global economy.⁶ Market days when non-locals come to shop also have different laws, and in contemporary terms, this may apply to malls and large shopping centers that attract non-locals as well.

In today's society when the government isn't particular that business owners be local, many poskim allow non-locals to open competition, and it would be difficult to prevent them in beis din from doing so.⁷

In the case of a refugee, poskim rule that he has special dispensation to sustain himself during his stay, even if he doesn't plan to move permanently. While some imply that he can only sell the amount he needs to survive, in practice there is no limit.⁸

1. שו"ע חו"מ סי' קנ"ו ופת"ש שם
2. גמ' ב"ב דף כ"א ע"ב. שו"ע חו"מ סי' קנ"ז ס"ה.
3. שו"ת נחלת שבועה ח"ב סי' ב'.
4. שו"ע חו"מ סי' קנ"ז ס"ז.
5. רמ"א שם סמ"ע סי' כ"ג, פת"ש סק"ח וסק"א. וראה ערך שי סי' רכ"ח סח"י.
6. ב"י סי' קנ"ו.
7. ראה שו"ת הרשב"א ח"א סי' תרס"ד, שו"ת מהרש"ד"ם סי' תמ"א וסי' ת"ז. בית אפרים סי' כ"ז. ושו"ת דברי חיים חו"מ ח"א סי' י"ח.
8. ראה שו"ע שם וסמ"ע סי' כ"א וכ"ב.

Our Heroes



R. YEHOSHUA NEMOYTIN

Born in Kublich, R. Yehoshua Nemoytin (5620-5702) was a chossid of the Rebbe Maharash, Rebbe Rashab, and Frieddiker Rebbe. He was a shadar of the Rebbe Maharash, and served as rov in a number of cities, including Beshenkovitch and Vitebsk. R. Yehoshua was a famous talmid chacham, and some of his correspondence with the Rogatchover Gaon has been published, while other chidushim of his remain in manuscript.

R. Yehoshua's father, R. Yosef Dovid, was a poor melamed, and he would visit Lubavitch once a year by foot. When a few years passed since his marriage and he had not yet been blessed with children, he made a special trip to ask the Tzemach Tzedek for a bracha.

After his yechidus, he joined the customary "yechidus tantz," a treasured chassidic practice in which those who entered yechidus would dance together, as the other chassidim stood around them. In the circle, he met an old friend who he hadn't seen in years. When he inquired what brought him to the Rebbe on an ordinary weekday, the friend replied that he had come to get a bracha for children.

Hearing that, R. Yosef Dovid noted the hashgacha pratis that they both received brachos for children. He concluded that certainly one would have a son and the other a daughter, and they should decide a shidduch between them. There and then, they shook hands on it. Indeed, R. Yosef Dovid had a son Yehoshua, who later married Rochel, that fellow chossid's daughter.

(הצפנת פענח במשנת הרבי ע' 115)

Shortly after the Rebbe Maharash's histalkus, R.

Yehoshua was summoned for army service. At that time, the Sdei Chemed, who was a rov in Crimea, was about to move to Eretz Yisroel. R. Yehoshua reckoned to take his post, and thus avoid the draft.

Visiting Lubavitch, he first consulted with the Raza, the older brother, who said that the idea was sound and straight ("gleich"). He then consulted with the Rebbe Rashab who told him, "Krim iz nisht gleich," crooked (or Crimea, as it was called locally) isn't straight...

R. Yehoshua was at a loss, and he went back to the Raza, telling him that his brother differed. The Raza was unperturbed, "That's what we made up: whatever I say, he'll say the opposite."

"But how did he know what you said?" R. Yehoshua asked. "Nu," replied the Raza, "That will the moifes..."

(אלה תולדות פרץ ע' 645)

In the town of Beshenkovitch, there was a heated fight between two groups of Yiddishe wagon drivers, and no rov wanted to assume leadership in that town out of fear of retaliation by the whichever side would lose the din Torah.

When R. Yehoshua took up the rabbonus, he immediately called for both groups to hear their arguments. Having decided the halacha, he called for the leader of the losing side. When the man entered, he grabbed him by the head and told him firmly, "Will you accept the psak or not?"

Afterwards, the man left the rov's home and returned shortly with a bottle of mashke. He placed the bottle on the table and said, "This is the kind of rov we were waiting for!"

(כתר מלכות ע' 224)

A Moment with The Rebbe



ADDRESSING THE EGYPTIAN ANGEL

As the Geneva Convention was in session to settle the disputes following the Yom Kippur war, the Rebbe addressed it at the 19 Kislev 5734 (1973) farbrengen, stating the Torah view on the proposition of returning land.

In the midst of the sicha the Rebbe said, "Halevai (if only) the discussions will conclude soon, to save soldiers from falling on both sides, the Yidden and the Egyptian."

The following Shabbos, the Rebbe said that he had received an urgent phone call the day before, from some who didn't understand the farbrengen: "I thought that they had a problem with the siyum on the masechta or on the maamar; but no, they

had an issue with the Geneva Convention! After six hours of divrei Torah, the Convention was the only issue. Without settling it, they couldn't enter Shabbos peacefully..."

Then the Rebbe dealt with one issue after another. Among the questions that came in was why the Rebbe wished the Egyptians well, by saying that they will also save themselves from fallen soldiers. They are our sworn enemies!

The Rebbe explained, "Every nation has a sar, a ministering angel, in heaven, and they all present their case.

"And so, I said to the Egyptian minister, [here the Rebbe raised his voice]: 'It's worth it for you too!'"

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה