



THE POWER OF WORDS (1)

Working Wonders

Chazal say that even the *bracha* of an ordinary person should not be considered insignificant, for Dovid HaMelech and Daniel, no less, were *bensched* by ordinary people and the *bracha* bore fruit. When Dovid HaMelech bought the land for the Beis HaMikdosh from a *goyishe* farmer, the farmer *bensched* him that the plague inflicting the Yidden should stop, and his *bracha* was fulfilled. Similarly, Daniel was *bensched* by King Daryavesh (Darius) that *HaShem* should protect him from the lions in the den, and so it came to be.

(מגילה טו ע"א)

Chassidim of the *tzaddik* Reb Mendel Horodoker, among them the Alter Rebbe, once sat together and *chazered* the Torah that they had recently heard from their Rebbe. After reviewing it numerous times, they discussed related matters in *kedusha*, and one of them brought out some *masheke*.

A chossid present, who had been suffering from a sickness for which the doctors had not found a cure, wept and asked those present to *bensch* him with a *refua shleima*. Some of the others queried: "Do we have the power to give a *bracha*?" Some even rebuked him for believing in simple chassidim like themselves, for *brachos*, they held, are only in the power of *tzaddikim*. Without relenting, the chossid continued to plead from the depths of his heart. Thinking there was nothing they could do, his friends began singing *niggunim*, in the hope that this would calm him.

"Sha!" the Alter Rebbe called out. The *niggunim* stopped abruptly, and the chossid too fell silent. "My brothers and friends, have you forgotten the message that came down from *Shamayim* to the *Chevraya Kaddisha*? (That is, the Holy Brotherhood, as the *talmidim* of the *Maggid* were known.) That which a *farbrengen* can accomplish, even Malach Michael cannot accomplish."

The Alter Rebbe explained that when *HaShem* sees Yidden *bensching* each other lovingly, He fulfills their requests immediately. The chassidim were aroused, and with brotherly love they *bensched* their fellow chossid with a *refua shleima*.

(אג"ק מהוריי"צ ח"ג ע' תי"ב)

In Lieve there lived a well-to-do chossid of the *Tzemach Tzedek*, who would learn Chassidus in depth, *daven* at great length and would be among the first attendants at all *chassidishe farbrengens*. At one point, however, he reconsidered the hours

he spent at *farbrengens*. "They don't allow me to learn Chassidus in depth," he mused to himself. He decided to continue contributing towards the expenses of the *farbrengens*, but rather than attend, to stay home and learn Chassidus.

As time passed, one misfortune after another befell him. His business declined, his *shalom bayis* was disturbed, and members of his family fell ill with various illnesses. He realized that these were not mere coincidences, and went to seek the counsel of the *Tzemach Tzedek*. Pouring out his troubled heart to the Rebbe, he wondered why he was encountering so much hardship. "Tell me about your daily conduct," the Rebbe said.

The chossid described his everyday routine, mentioning also his decision to forgo the *farbrengens* in order to use the time more efficiently for learning.

"That is the reason for all your difficulties," said the Rebbe. "Participating in a *chassidishe farbrengen* is very beneficial. When chassidim gather together, say *LeChayim*, and wish one another *Lechayim tovim uleshalom*, they are infact showering vital *brachos* upon each other. *Lechayim*, life, contains the *bracha* for physical health; *tovim*, goodness, implies wealth, and *uleshalom*, peace, indicates harmony in the home. By avoiding the *farbrengen*, you are forgoing these *brachos*."

(רשימות דברים ח"א ע' ק"ה, וע"ש להנוסה לחיים ולברכה)

The Misfortune of Negativity

Chazal say that "a covenant has been made with the lips" – the speech of a person has the power to make things happen. A person should not predict something bad, for then he is giving power to Satan.

The Torah forbids cursing another Yid. One reason is that speech has such a lofty source that it has the power to affect even outside occurrences. This power is heightened by the level of the person speaking.

(מועד קטן יח ע"א, ס' החינוך מצוה רלא, ראשית חכמה שעה"ק פי"ג)

Once, the *amora* Shmuel went to console his brother Pinchas who had lost a child. Seeing that his fingernails had grown long, Shmuel encouraged him to trim them. Pinchas responded, "If you would lose a family member, would you still belittle this act of mourning?"

Soon after, Shmuel lost a family member, and when Pinchas came to visit, Shmuel said with frustration, "Do you not realize the power of words?!"

(מועד קטן יח ע"א)

Yehuda, the son of Rabbi Chiya and son-in-law of Rabbi Yannai, would learn all week in *yeshiva*, returning home on Friday night. As he approached his home, a pillar of fire could be seen leading the way. One week he was so engrossed in his learning that he stayed longer than usual, so his father-in-law said in jest, "Who knows if he is still alive?"

His words had an effect and the son-in-law passed away.

(כתובות סב ע"ב)

It is *paskened* in the *Shulchan Aruch* that one must be very careful with what he says. One should not jokingly comment about a living person, "If he would be alive, he surely would be here already," for this can *ch"v* harm that person.

(שו"ע אדה"ז הל' שמירת הגוף והנפש סי"ב)

One should not say to someone behaving inappropriately, "You are acting like a *galach*," for this may cause this to actualize in this person or one of his descendants.

(ס' חסידים ס' תעט)

Even when reciting a *possuk* or *mishna* which includes a negative statement, one should change the wording so that it will not imply a curse.

Thus we learn that Rav Kahana sat before Rav Yehuda and repeated the words of the *mishna*, "May *HaShem* smite you." Rav Yehuda instructed him, "Say 'smite him' instead, and do not curse me."

(שבועות לו ע"א)

ומסיימים בטוב

CONSIDER THIS!

- What is so powerful about a *bracha*: the words themselves or the good intentions behind them?
- How can an unintended negative comment have such repercussions?

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A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Moshe Gourarie

Gezel Sheina

One person in an apartment building began a nightly shiur in his home which attracts many visitors. Can his neighbors protest this on the basis that the flow of traffic disturbs their sleep?

- Despite the common belief that there is a prohibition called 'gezel sheina,' a prohibition of stealing sleep, no such prohibition exists, since sleep cannot be taken. Waking a sleeping person is however *ossur* for a different reason, the prohibition of causing another discomfort (*ona'as devarim*). This prohibition includes making unbearable noise in one's home or outside that disturbs neighbors from sleeping. In addition, it is appropriate that one go out of his way to accommodate neighbors who are trying to sleep by refraining from making even normal amounts of noise (i.e. walking around with slippers to benefit the neighbors downstairs)¹.
- A craftsman whose working generates noise (i.e. a carpenter) is the subject of a dispute amongst *Poskim*.² Some hold that this is prohibited, while others contend that we have no right to protest against someone carrying out a necessary activity (i.e. a livelihood) in his own home. All opinions agree that neighbors cannot suddenly protest after the craftsman has been making the noise for a while with no objection. By contrast, an ill person may protest even if the noise has continued for some time, and any neighbor may protest about noise caused by visiting customers (since this noise is created by others who have no such right³).
- Concerning teaching Torah and performing *mitzvos* (i.e. having a *minyan* in ones home⁴), neighbors cannot protest⁵ since it is the responsibility of all Yidden to see to it that Torah is learned and *mitzvos* are fulfilled. *Poskim*⁶ point out that the right to teach Torah if it makes excessive noise only applies to a *neighbor*; however if one lives together with another person in one house, it is *ossur* to teach other's Torah if that will disturb the sleeping of others who live in the house, since it is unbearable to live in such circumstances.
- The Chasam Sofer⁷ raises an interesting question: If it permissible to create traffic, despite the noise, for the sake of a *mitzvah*, why is the craftsman not allowed to bring customers, despite the noise, for the sake of the *mitzvah* of supporting himself and his family? He explains that there is a difference between teaching Torah (or arranging a *minyan*) which is everyone's responsibility, and supporting one's family which is that individual's *mitzvah*. Since teaching Torah (or ensuring that everyone has the ability to *daven* with a *minyan*) is essentially their responsibility as well, they cannot protest the noise disturbance.

Please note that the above may not be applicable for your situation. Consult your Rov for a final psak.

1. לכל הקטע דלעיל ראה ספר פתחי חושן - לקול הנכנסים, בערוך השלחן ס"ב ע"ש.
2. ראה שו"ע חו"מ סי' קנ"ו ס"ב (והרמ"א לא סיים "וכן עיקר" וכה"ג לגבי דעת הי"א, ומבואר בכללי הפוסקים דבה"ג אין להקל כן לכתחילה ואכמ"ל).
3. כן ביאר בחילוק בין עבודת האומן עצמה גניבה והונאה, ע' תכז.
4. עי' ט"ז סק"א שם שהזכיר מנין לתפילה בהדיא.
5. שו"ע שם ס"ג.
6. פתח"ת על ס"ג שם בשם הלבוש.
7. חו"מ סי' צב, וראה חידושי על ב"ב כא ע"ב.

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

לזכות לאה בת רבקה מאטל
ליום הולדתה י' תמוז

מזל טוב!
לידידנו המסור להצלחת מרכו אנ"ש
הר"ר מנחם מענדל ברונשטיין ומשפחתו שי'
בהולדת הבת הנגה שתחי'
יה"ר שיגדלוה לתורה, לחופה ולמעשים טובים מתוך הרחבה.
מרכו אנ"ש

OUR HEROES

Rashi

Rabbeinu Shlomo Yitzchaki, commonly known as Rashi, wrote the first complete commentary on the entire Tanach and Shas. Living in Troyes in France, Rashi learned in the *yeshivos* of Mainz and Worms under the tutelage of Reb Yaakov ben Yakar and the R"l Halevi. He had three daughters who were exceedingly great and are the matriarchs of the "Baalei Hatosfos." Rashi passed away on the 15th of Tamuz, ד'תתס"ה (1105).



Looking through the many *teshuvos* of Rashi, the great *ahavas* Yisroel of Rashi presents itself very readily. He lived during the days of the crusades and witnessed tremendous Yiddishe suffering. Rashi composed a *piyut* mourning these horrifying times, which we read on Yom Kippur at *Musaf* (beginning with the words "Umishecharav beis Hamikdash").

In his time, many Yidden faced the ultimatum of converting to Christianity or death, many choosing the latter. Of those who saved themselves by outwardly accepting the Christian faith, many remained faithful to Hashem in their hearts and behind closed doors. When these Yidden, known as *anusim*, eventually returned to openly practicing Yiddishkeit, they faced hostility from within the Yiddishe community, seen as traitors to their nation.

For these unfortunate people, Rashi interceded, penning many letters in their defense. Though they had done wrong in not sacrificing their life, nevertheless they are not to be ostracized for this.

In one particular *halachic* responsa, he wrote, "Heaven forbid to ban their wine or to humiliate them. They sinned only because of the fear of the sword and returned as soon as they were able."

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

Saved the Ma'amorim

When the Rebbe would visit the Friediker Rebbe in Otvtzk, Poland, the Friediker Rebbe would lend the Rebbe the key to his private library. There, the Rebbe discovered original manuscripts of the Rebbe Rashab, and surreptitiously made copies of these treasured documents. The Rebbe made these copies at great personal expense, sometimes having to borrow money to cover his traveling expenses.



The original manuscripts were lost during the war. The Rebbe Rashab's *ma'amorim* currently in print are the produce of the Rebbe's foresight.

Reb Leibel Groner relates the following story that he heard from the Rebbe himself.

"Once, my father-in-law, the Rebbe, asked me if I have in my possession a certain *ma'amer* of his father, the Rebbe Rashab. I did not know what to answer, since I could not lie, but I was afraid the Rebbe would find out that I had done this without his permission. Eventually, I gave the *ma'amer* to the Rebbe, and I received a hearty *Yasher koach*! I felt like a stone had rolled off my heart."

לזכות השליח שלום דובער בן לובה



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