

# The Weekly *Farbrengens*



למען ישמעו • שמיני תשע"ח • 457  
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

## 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*, "Since he has a clean mouth".

(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, *Umeyasaymim 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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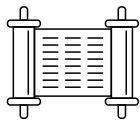


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## YASHAN: WHAT'S THE DEAL?

What is *yashan* and should I be particular about it?

The Torah says that one may not eat the new crop of grain (*chadash*, "new") until the *karban haomer* is brought on the sixteenth of Nissan. Any grain of the five types which took root before then is permissible (now *yashan*, "old"); otherwise, it must wait for the next *karban haomer*. Nowadays, when there is no *karban* being brought, one must wait until the end of the day when it would have been brought (now the seventeenth, due to *sfeika d'yoma* and the subsequent custom).<sup>1</sup>

Throughout hundreds of years, the prevailing custom in Europe was to eat from the new grain before Pesach.<sup>2</sup> Various explanations have been offered to justify this custom:

The majority of grains in the market were planted before Pesach. (This only applies if this is indeed the case in that locale.)

Due to the necessitating circumstances, we rely on the minority opinions that the prohibition only applies to grain grown in Eretz Yisroel (*min haTorah*), and in the surrounding countries, such as Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Iraq (*midrabanan*).

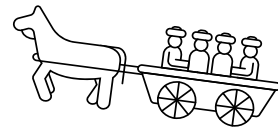
The prohibition only applies to grain belonging to a Jew at the time of harvest.<sup>3</sup>

The Alter Rebbe quotes these leniencies, but writes that a *baal nefesh* should not rely on them and act stringently when possible. The Tzemach Tzedek writes similarly, and the Rebbe Rashab was known to be careful regarding *chadash*.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, many Chassidic dynasties in Poland were entirely lenient with *chadash*.<sup>5</sup>

In a *sicha*, the Rebbe once pointed out that while there is no clear ruling to permit *chadash*, the Alter Rebbe quotes the common custom to eat it and current custom (5740/1980) is lenient based on the Alter Rebbe's justifications.<sup>6</sup> While the simple understanding of the *sicha* is that *lechatchila* one may eat *chadash*,<sup>7</sup> others contend that Rebbe was merely making an observation in passing but not taking a stance, and in recent years when *yashan* products are more available, there is room to be *mehader*.<sup>8</sup>

In practice, though some have adopted a personal stringency for themselves (especially where *yashan* is easily accessible), the widespread ruling among *chassidim* is to permit *chadash* in *chutz laaretz*.<sup>9</sup> (Those who do wish to be stringent must take extra precaution for infestation which may be present in grains that have been stored for longer periods.)

1. שיעורי הלכה למעשה להרה"ג שד"ב לוי שליט"א סי' ס"ב. וראה גם מאמרו של הרה"ג גדלי אבנר לאנדער שליט"א בהיכל הבעש"ט ח"ז ע' סו ואילך.  
2. כל הגולה על הש"ר שם.  
3. כל הג' טעמים מופיעים בשו"ע"ר שם.  
4. ראה מאמרו של הרה"ג חיים ראפאפרט שליט"א בפרדס חב"ד 13. וראה 'על מנהגים ומקורותיהם' לר"ט בלוי שליט"א עמ' 10 (מקור ב').  
5. בתבואה הגדילה בא"י לכו"ע נוהג איסור חדש מה"ת אף בזה"ז. אמנם אין מצוי בד"כ לפי זמני הוריעה וקצירה. בתבואה או קמח מחולל המובא לא"י יש חילוקי דעות - ראה פסקי תשובות סי' תפ"ט אות ל (והנהוג להחמיר).  
6. ראה רמ"א יו"ד סי' רצ"ג וכן הג"ח (ב"ח) ט"ז.  
7. באר הגולה על הש"ר שם.  
8. כל הג' טעמים מופיעים בשו"ע"ר שם.  
9. שו"ת צ"צ יו"ד סי' ר"ח. רשימת הריב"ש עמ' צ"ו.  
10. ראה אוצר מנהגי חב"ד עמ' ר"ס והלאה. וב'אוצר החיים' להרה"ק מקאמורנא (פ' אמור) האריך בזה ע"פ נגלה ומסיק שגם ע"פ סוד אין איסור חדש בתבואה של גוים.  
11. שיחת אחש"פ תש"מ (בלתי מוגה) - שיחות קודש תשמ"ח ע' 750-749.



## R. MONYEH MONESZHON

R. Menachem Monish ("Monyeh") Moneszhon was a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe Maharash, and the Rebbe Rashab. He was a diamond merchant, and used his wealth to fund the Rebbeim's projects.

(1893), the esteemed guest R. Monyeh Moneszhon requested of my father to say a *ma'amer chassidus*, my father acquiesced and said the *ma'amer* entitled "*Chayav adam levorech meah brochos bechol yom*" in the presence of some of the senior Chassidim.

R. Monyeh was once standing outside the Rebbe Maharash's room while the Rebbe Maharash was *davening mincha*, when he started envisioning all the thoughts that he had throughout his lifetime, including thoughts that were below his level at the time that this happened. He was so alarmed by these thoughts that he started saying "*Fe, fe*"...

Afterwards R. Monyeh sat down with several chassidim and discussed *darkei hachassidim - chassidische* manner of conduct. They spoke about the quality of connection to the Rebbe, "That true *chassidim* are those who are dedicated to the Rebbe with their whole heart and soul, and with all of their possessions".

(אגרות קודש אדהרי"צ עמ' ק"פ)

It later emerged that at that time the Rebbe Maharash had been saying the *posuk* "*zecher rav tuvecha*" -the remembrance of your great goodness, with special intentions, and that had affected R. Monyeh to start remembering all the thoughts of his lifetime, and do *teshuva* for them.

The Rebbe Maharash once instructed R. Monyeh in *yechidus* to learn a certain *maamar* four hundred times, and only stop for basic needs.

Thus the Rebbe Maharash used special means to assist R. Monyeh in his *avodas Hashem*.

Knowing that he would not be able to focus properly on such a project at home, R. Monyeh rented a hotel room where he fulfilled the Rebbe's directive. R. Monyeh retold how when he exited that hotel room, all he saw was the *maamar* he had learned; the world was not of substance to him.

(ספה"ש תרצ"א עמ' 235, שיחת ש"פ בראשית תשכ"ד)

The Friediker Rebbe wrote in his diary: On the first night of Chanuka of 5653

(ליקוטי סיפורים עמ' ק"ג)

## A Moment with The Rebbe



### A SURPRISE FARBRENGEN

At 8:35pm, Rosh Chodesh Iyar 5735 (1975), a surprise *farbrengen* was announced. The Rebbe came down fifteen minutes later and washed his hands for bread, a rarity during the weekdays.

o'clock the Rebbe abruptly cut the *niggun* short and began reciting the *maamar*.

As soon as the Rebbe entered, he looked at the watch on the table, then at the clock on the wall.

After the *farbrengen*, some made note that President Gerald Ford had delivered an important foreign policy speech at 9pm, with *shleimus ho'oretz* ramifications. Curiously, the televised broadcast had severe technical mishaps.

After two lively *niggunim*, the Rebbe gave the instruction for the crowd to begin singing the preparatory *niggun* for a *maamar*. The Rebbe continued to check the clock, and at exactly nine

(As heard from Reb Yosef Yitzchock Gurevitch; the abrupt stop in the *niggun* could be heard in the audio recording of the *maamar*)