



THE POWER OF WORDS (2)

Spiritual Effects

The Alter Rebbe records how his teacher, the Maggid, would speak out any spiritual revelation that came to his mind, even when his listeners were unable to understand it. When a concept is spoken it is drawn down to the world, enabling anyone to reach that concept on his own.

(מאמר אד"ה" הקצרים עמוד ע' תסד)

Once, while in the Baal Shem Tov's shul in Mezhibuzh, someone had an argument with another fellow and shouted that he would tear him to pieces like a fish. The Baal Shem Tov told his *talmidim* to hold hands, and to stand near him with their eyes closed. Then, he placed his holy hands on the shoulders of the two *talmidim* standing next to him. Suddenly, the *talmidim* began to scream in terror, for they saw this fellow actually tearing apart the other man.

(היום יום כ"ט תשרי)

It is *psakened* in *Shulchan Aruch* that one should not tell a child that a dog or cat "will come to take them," for this can *ch"v* bring upon the child evil forces with those names, which can harm their body or their *neshama*.

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

Powerful Words

In the city of Posen, Reb Boruch Batlan, the Alter Rebbe's great-grandfather, lived as a tenant of the goldsmith Avigdor Tuvia and his wife Gittel. Though this couple *gavtzedaka* generously to many people, they were not refined people; he played cards, drank heavily and used bad language, and his wife also spoke in an unrefined way and cursed when she was angered. People would tremble from her curses, for they were known to materialize.

In the year תמ"ב (1682), when Avigdor Tuvia and his wife passed away, without children, their neighbors began to hear wild screams and drunken laughter coming out of their vacant apartment. Jumping and dancing feet shook the floorboards. Reb Boruch and his family moved to another area, because they were unable to fall asleep at night.

On his next visit to his Rebbe, Reb Yoel, the Baal Shem of Zamostch, Reb Boruch told him about the haunted house in Posen and about its past residents. Reb Yoel Baal Shem advised him that

the only way to drive the *sheidim* from the house was to turn it into a *beis midrash*." He then gave detailed directives: Ten of his *talmidim* should fast the following Sunday, *lein Vayechal*, and spend the following night learning Torah. The next morning, five *sifrei Torah* wrapped in *talleisim* should be carried, each by two *talmidim*, and they should walk from the *shul* to the goldsmith's house. At the door, they should call out to the *sheidim*, telling them to leave the house and make way for the Torah. They should then go inside and say certain *kapitlach Tehillim*. *Minyanim* should be held there three times a day, and *shiurim* for young and old should be organized. "Then everything will be in order," concluded Reb Yoel Baal Shem.

Meanwhile, the mayor of Posen came one evening to see the situation for himself. When he heard the sounds of screaming, yelling, and clapping of hands, he hurried to ask the local bishop for a special prayer to remove the *sheidim* from the town. The bishop called together his priests, and they walked in a procession, carrying their *tzlamim*, until they reached the house where they sprinkled water on the walls and closed their eyes, mumbling a prayer. The apartment was on the first floor and had four windows facing the street, where the priests were standing. Suddenly, the windows were flung open and terrible faces popped out, so frightening that some priests fainted and many of the onlookers fled in terror.

That Sunday, the *talmidim* did as the Baal Shem had instructed. Hundreds of men and women, both *Yidden* and *goyim*, crowded outside, waiting to see what would happen. Unafraid, the *talmidim* called out three times for the *sheidim* to leave, and when the noises from the house did not stop, they broke down the door and entered. At that moment, every window pane was shattered, as the weirdest collection of creatures flew out, escaping for their lives.

For six weeks, everything went smoothly, but then sounds were heard once again, this time coming from the cellar. The neighbors, who had been enjoying the relief, were horrified to once again hear loud barks and noises, giving them no peace by day or night. One tenant, a dealer in furs, was a *misnaged* to the Baal Shem, and denied the miracle, so when the *sheidim* returned, he was delighted. When the neighbors suggested inviting the Baal Shem himself to resolve the matter, this man was furious and declared he would fight to prevent this from happening. One day, a customer came to see some fur skins, so the dealer sent his

son down to cellar with the customer. As soon as they moved to open the cellar door, it flew open on its own, and out jumped the most frightening creature they had ever seen. The customer went white, the son became crazy, and they both ran screaming into the street, eventually fainting from fright. When they came to, the son had to be tied with rope to be kept under control. Now, even the *misnaged* did not object to have the Baal Shem come and rid them of the *sheidim*.

The Baal Shem traveled to Posen and arranged for the *Beis Din* to hold a *din Torah* with the *sheidim*. The newly-established *beis midrash* in the apartment was prepared, with a special area sectioned off by *mechitzos*, and the Baal Shem called out for the *sheidim* to appear, warning them not to hurt anyone. As soon as the *sheidim* made their presence felt, the Baal Shem began, "I have called you to a *Din Torah*, for you have exceeded the limits *HaShem* has set, by coming among mortals." Strange incomprehensible sounds were heard. At the instructions of the Baal Shem, the head of the *Beis Din* stood up and decreed that one of the *sheidim* be able to speak clearly. "We have every right to come here," the *sheid* countered. "We were created by the curses of Avigdor Tuvia and his wife, Gittel, so we are the lawful heirs, and their house rightfully belongs to us. We left the apartment only because the light of the *sifrei Torah* was too much for us to handle." The *sheidim* crowed and squeaked loudly, terrifying all those present. The Baal Shem called out: "I command you, in the name of *HaShem*, to be silent immediately and to remain hidden from human eyes. You must obey the *psak* of the *Beis Din*!"

The *shul* became perfectly silent and they disappeared. The *Beis Din* immediately *psakened* that they had no right to the inheritance, and they were never heard of again.

(ספר הזכרונות לאדריי"צ ח"ב ע' 106)

CONSIDER THIS!

- How did the Baal Shem Tov's *talmidim* perceive the man's threat before their vision? How did they understand it afterwards?
- Are forces created through speech or are they the energy of the speech itself?

A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Moshe Gourarie

Thank You for a Loan

Is one allowed to say 'Thank You' to his lender for the loan?

The Torah prohibits lending another *yid* with interest. This *issur* applies to both the lender and the borrower, and is forbidden even if the borrower wants to pay to interest¹. Chazal say harsh things about one who transgresses this prohibition, considering him to be denying Hashem and that he will lose all his possessions. Thus, we are extra careful in this area².

Mideoraisa, *ribis* only applies in two cases: (a) If one lends someone money on condition that he be paid back more ("*ribis ktzutz*")³. (b) If one pays money to extend the due date on his loan⁴ ("*agar natar*").

Midrabonon, *ribis* applies in many other forms, including cases where nothing substantial was given ("*ribis devorim*"). These are prohibited whether the lender demands them or not. Some examples include:

(1) The borrower may not perform a favor for the lender that he otherwise would not have performed⁵. This includes even a minimal favor requiring no effort, which, as result of the loan, the lender now felt comfortable enough to ask for it (e.g. asking for some information).

(2) One who usually charges to teach others is prohibited to teach his lender for free (since he is essentially giving him money)⁶. Some *poskim* add that even if he usually teaches others for free, he may still not teach the lender⁷. Nevertheless, if before starting the loan the borrower already was learning with the lender for free, (regardless of whether he teaches others for a price), he may continue even after he borrows, since it is clear that he is not teaching him as a result of the loan⁸.

(3) The borrower cannot lend the lender his property (e.g. his car) unless he usually allows the lender to use that item (as one does with good friends or relatives). Allowing the lender stay in his property for free has further restrictions, since staying in his home is usually public knowledge, and others may not know that he *would have* let him stay in his home even without the loan⁹. Thus, allowing the lender to stay in his property is only permitted if the lender was *already staying* there before the loan.

(4) The borrower may not honor the lender with an *aliya* in shul even if his intention is not to thank him for the loan. Again, if he would normally honor the lender and it is therefore clear to all that the honor is not a result of the loan then the act is permitted¹⁰.

(5) Kind words can also be considered interest. For example, the borrower may not thank the lender or praise him for lending him money¹¹. In addition, if the borrower is not usually accustomed to greeting the lender, he may not do so when he owes the lender money¹².

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

1. שו"ע אדה"ז הל' רבית ס"א.
2. ראה שם ס"ב.
3. ב"מ סא ע"ב.
4. שם סג ע"ב, וראה שו"ע אדה"ז ס"ד.
5. שם ס"ה.
6. שו"ע יו"ד סי' קס ס"י, וראה שו"ע אדה"ז שם ס"א.
7. כ"כ הגד"ת (ח"ב שער מו ח"ג ס"ב).
8. שם ס"ט, ואף שיש מהפוסקים האחרונים שרוצים להתיר לומר תודה או יי"ש כ' הנהוג מדרכי הנימוס, ראה שו"ת מנחת שלמה ח"ב ס"י סח ס"ב שלדעת אדה"ז אין זה כן.
9. שם.
10. שם.
11. שם.
12. שם.

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

ליכות הת' בצלאל בראו וב"ג דבורה גוטע מינסקי שיחיו
לרגל בואם בקשרי שידוכין בשעתומ"צ

ליכות הילד אברהם דוב פוטאש שי' שיגדלוהו ווריו לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט

OUR HEROES

Rashba

The Rashba, Reb Shlomo ben Aderes, was a famous *rishon*, who learned from the Ramban and Rabbeinu Yonah. He wrote the famous work called "Teshuvos Harashba," where many *halachic* rulings are determined, "Toras Habayis," and *chidushim* on many *masechtos* in Shas. The Rashba is also known for his vehement opposition to the widespread learning of philosophy. Among his *talmidim* were the Ran and Rabbeinu Bechayei. He passed away in the year ה'ע (1310).



The Rashba writes:

Donning *tefillin* demonstrates our love of Hashem and His Unity. We wrap the *tefillin* around our arm, like a person who wears something dear to him on his arm, and we place it near our heart, expressing that just as the heart is the life source of the body, so too Hashem is the life source for all the worlds. Donning the *tefillin* on our head shows that just as the mind is the beauty of the person, so too Hashem is our crown and beauty.

During the generation of the Rashba, Yidden living in Provence (southern France) became enthralled with the study of Aristotelian Philosophy, and began interpreting miraculous stories in the Torah as being merely allegorical. A local rabbinic figure, Abba Mari HaYarchi, saw the impending danger and wrote to the Rashba in Barcelona Spain to forbid the study of philosophy.

The Rashba then signed a letter with 35 *rabbonim* placing in *cherem* (excommunication) anyone interpreting the Torah according to philosophy. He also decreed that for the next fifty years no one under twenty five is allowed to learn philosophy. The letter was read on Shabbos Chazon ה'סח, and made a strong impact among the Yidden of Provence.

The Rebbe often repeated what the Friediker Rebbe would say: The Rashba had three major occupations: doctoring, writing responsa, and giving several *shiurim* a day, and nevertheless, he was still able to take a calm daily walk. The Friediker Rebbe explained that when the Rashba was involved in something, he involved his entire *pnimiyus*. As such, one responsibility did not take away from the other, and every necessary activity had its time, during which nothing else could cause distraction.

ליכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

"A Hole in My Heart!"

The *tefillin* campaign, the first of the *mitvzoyim*, blazed the way for many people to return to their roots. The Rebbe explained that in addition to the infinite value of a *mitzvah*, the *mitzvah* of *tefillin* in particular has the ability to ignite the *neshomo* and lead a person to a life of Torah and *mitzvos*.

During a *yechidus*, the Rebbe asked a *chossid*, who happened to be one of the first *baalei teshuvah* in Eretz Yisroel, to convince a particular member of the *chossid's* family to begin laying *tefillin*. After several unsuccessful attempts, the *chossid* regrettably informed the Rebbe of the static progress.

The Rebbe's face clouded, and his eyes saddened. After a moment of silence, the Rebbe quietly said to himself, "Whenever I hear of a *Yid* that does not lay *tefillin* - it makes a hole in my heart!"

(As heard from Reb Yaakov Laufer, Bnei Brak)

ליכות השליח שלום דובער בן לובה

ליכות יעקב יהודה בן מלכה איידא שי' לשנת הצלחה בג"ר