

The Weekly Farbrengens



לחמן ישמעו • נציבים-וילך תשפ"ו • 895
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SPEAKING TRUTH (II)

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES

The wife of the *amora* Rav caused him much distress. Whenever he asked for lentils, she would serve him beans, and when he asked for beans, she would serve him lentils. When his son Chiya grew older, he began to switch his father's messages, so that his father now received what he had requested. At first Rav thought that his wife had mended her ways, but then the boy told him what he had been doing. Rav was pleased with his son's resourcefulness, but he told him not to continue with it, for he would become accustomed to speaking falsely.

(יבמות סג ע"א)

Rebbi Zeira said that one should not promise something to a child and then not fulfill it, for then he would be teaching him to lie.

The *tzaddik* Reb Yechezkel of Shinova was known as the 'lover of truth.' His father, the *Divrei Chaim* of Tzanz, once said that his son would never go back on his word, even if he was given everything in the world. Once, a tailor sewed a garment for Reb Yechezkel's grandchild. After trying it on, the boy refused to take it off until the tailor promised that he would sew pockets for it. The *tzaddik* then insisted that he do as he had promised, so the child would not become accustomed to telling lies.

(סוכה מ"ו ע"ב, סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 208)

Chazal say that when questioned about a matter about which one is not entirely sure, one should respond "I don't know," so that he should not end up telling a lie and be held responsible for his words.

(מס' דרך ארץ פ"ב ה"א)

When one answers Yes or No, that answer should be completely truthful. Even nodding or shaking one's head, or any kind of expression, should indicate only the truth.

(ספר חסידים ס' תתנח)

EXACT WORDING

A decree against the *Yiddische* style of dress was

placed on many cities in Poland, and the *rabbanim* differed as to whether one had to be *moser nefesh* for this or not. The *tzaddik* Reb Avraham of Chechanov held that one must have *mesirus nefesh*, while other *talmidei chachomim* in his city insisted that another opinion should be considered on such a vital subject. Therefore, despite the dangers of travel, Reb Avrohom decided to travel to Warsaw to the *tzaddik*, the *Chiddushei HaRim*. When his family expressed their concern, he assured them that there was no need to worry. After all, he was not going to settle there ('*avek-zetzin zich*'). When he arrived, the Rebbe offered him a chair, but Reb Avrohom refused and remained standing as the *Chiddushei HaRim* gave his view (which also expressed the need for *mesirus nefesh*).

When Reb Avrohom left, he explained why he had refused to sit: "I had told my family that I was not going to '*avek-zetzin zich*' (literally, "sit"), and I did not want to go back on my word, even in its literal sense."

(סיפורי חסידים זוין מועדים ע' 259)

CONSIDER

Was it permissible for the Rov to deny owning the knife? How then could he admit it and put his life in danger?

Did Reb Refael hold that it was forbidden to say "it is raining" when coming in from the rain? Why did he refrain from saying so?

One of the *talmidim* of Reb Pinchas Koritzer, Reb Refael of Bershad, excelled in this *middah* – so much so, that if he were to walk into the *beis medrash* dripping wet and someone would ask him if it was raining outside, he would only say, "When

I was outside it was raining..."

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 243)

STAYING FAR FROM FALSEHOOD

Once, in the city of the author of *Machatzis HaShekel*, a dead man was found, and the Rov's knife, full of blood, was lying near him. The murderer had evidently stolen it from the Rov in order to implicate him. The townsmen advised the Rov to tell the judge that the knife was not his. In court, however, the Rov told the truth, admitting that it was his knife, though he insisted that he had not committed the murder, and in the end he was freed. He later explained to his well-meaning townsmen that when the *shevatim* were told by Yosef to bring Binyomin to Mitzrayim, Yehuda could have taken another child and told Yosef that this was Binyomin, but he could not bring himself to tell a lie.

(הקדמת המו"ל למחצית השקל יורה דעה)

Reb Aizik of Vitebsk was one of the outstanding *chassidim* of the Alter Rebbe. He lived to the age of 105. During all his 85 years as a *rov*, he abstained from eating *lekach*, and when questioned about this, he would not answer. A short time before his passing he told the following story:

Once, as a young *rov*, I participated in a *simcha*, and took a piece of regular cake from the table. One of the guests asked me why I did not take the *lekach*, since it was more special. I had forgotten about the *lekach* but was embarrassed to say so, so I answered, "I don't eat *lekach*!"

From that day on, I never tasted a piece of *lekach* again, in order to stay true to my words.

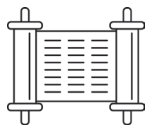
(שמועות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 261)

Chazal teach that the *Yidden* were sent into *golus* only because they transgressed the *possuk*, *Midvar sheker tirchak* – "Distance yourself from falsehood."

The *tzaddik* Reb Pinchas Koritzer would tell his *talmidim* that if *Yidden* refrained from telling lies, *Moshiach* would have come long ago. The main deterrent to *Moshiach*'s coming is falsehood.

(שערי הקדושה להרח"ו ח"ב שער ה', שמועות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 243)





SKIPPING TO CATCH THE MINYAN

If I came late to shul, should I skip korbanos to daven Shemoneh Esrei with the minyan?

Halacha states that since the tefilah of a minyan is always accepted, one who arrives in shul late should skip *pesukei dezimra* — instituted for Shemoneh Esrei to be well received — in order to daven with them. Shulchan Aruch lays out how much to skip according to the time left, and if there is no time even for that, one begins with the minyan and makes it up afterwards without its brachos.¹

All of this is only *b'dieved*. *L'chatchila*, every person must come to shul on time so that he will not need to skip at all.² Racing through *pesukei dezimra* is no alternative, since it cuts short the praise of Hashem for the sake of one's own requests.³

In contrast, the Beis Yosef's Maggid (a personal *malach*) warned him to come early and daven in order, because one who skips overturns the channels. The Mishnah Berurah brings that many *anshei maaseh* daven in order even when they come late.⁴ Indeed, this is the widespread custom among chassidim, and Chabad chassidim in particular. The Rebbe noted that the Rebbeim directed against skipping, and one should daven the entire tefilah in order and with *kavana*, even at the cost of *tefilah b'tzibur* and of *zman tefilah*.⁵

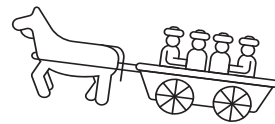
Asked for the reason of this minhag, the Rebbe pointed to the Kuntres Acharon in Tanya, which explains that as the generations have descended, *tefilah* has become the main avodah, and its details are correspondingly important.⁶ Elsewhere, the Rebbe writes that even the poskim who permit skipping acknowledge that it's unbecoming, and that a child taught the *heter* soon comes to belittle davening.⁷ One who davens more slowly should begin with the *minyan* and then continue at his own pace, answering *kaddish*, *borchu*, and *kedusha*.⁸

Regarding the sections before davening (such as *akeida*, *korbanos*, etc.), although the Ketzos Hashulchan writes to skip them and make them up later, the Rebbe discouraged skipping even these, since they lead into the feeling needed for davening.⁹

On erev Shabbos, Hodu is said before Mincha as a *hoda'ah* for coming through the mundane pursuits of the week unharmed, and is not specifically associated with the tefilah. It would seem appropriate to recite it after Mincha in order to daven with the minyan.¹⁰

6. מענה שנדפס בשולחן מנחם ח"א ע"י ר"ח, ושם שגם המשיג עצמו רש"י ג"ב הביא כן.
7. אג"ק ח"ח ע"פ. אג"ק ח"א שם.
8. אג"ק אדמו"ר מוהרי"צ ח"ד ע"י שצח. אג"ק ח"ח שם.
9. קצות השולחן סי' י"ד ס"א. אבל ראה אג"ק חט"ו שם. תול"מ ח"ח שם. ולהעיר מסדר העלי המותאר בכף החיים סי' מ"ח אות א' ("מן תחלת התפלה עד ברוך שאמר הוא עולם העשי...").
10. בדי השולחן לקצוה"ש סי' ע"ז ס"ק א' ("ומי שהוצרך לדלג הודו משום תפלה בצבור פשוט דיש לאמרו אחר מנחה..."). ושם משער הכולל שהודו "כעין ברכת הודאה... על אשר מעובדין דחול (טרדת פרנסה) לא נזקקו בגוף ונפש". וראה אתרא דרב סי' יח"ל.

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



R. MENACHEM MENDEL GLUSKIN

R. Menachem Mendel Gluskin (5638-5697) was raised in Paritch, where his father served as the Rov. A great *talmid chacham* in both *nigleh* and *Chassidus*, R. Mendel became the son-in-law of the famous non-Chassidish Rov of Minsk, R. Eliezer Rabinowitz. He served as Rov in various towns, including Paritch, before being appointed in 5624 to succeed his father-in-law as Rov of Minsk, a large and prestigious community.

During this time the Communist oppression increased, and R. Mendel fought valiantly to preserve Yiddishkeit, despite being arrested and expelled from his home as a result. He was a prominent member of the Frierdiker Rebbe's underground network in Soviet Russia, nicknamed *Seder Hadoros* in their secret correspondence, after the author of *Seder Hadoros* R. Yechiel Halperin, the Rov of Minsk centuries earlier.

In 5695, R. Mendel accepted the position of Rov of Leningrad, where he continued his work with *mesiras nefesh* until his untimely passing two years later.

R. Shmerel Sasonkin recalls a private conversation he held with R. Gluskin in Leningrad:

Once, when no one was around, I questioned him about his interrogations with the NKVD. He shared that they asked about his connection to "Rabbi Schneersohn." He told them that he had been in contact, but he discontinued when he was told that that it wasn't to the government's liking.

He then asked his interrogator why they had such hate for the Frierdiker Rebbe, when there were other *rabbonim* and *tzadikim*. The man replied, "If Rabbi Schneersohn would behave like all *rabbonim* and just bless his followers, we would remain silent. However, he doesn't sit still and is unceasingly active in spreading Yiddishkeit!

(זכרונותי, שם)

R. Gluskin had a charm to him, and no one was felt offended by him even when he put them in their place. Once, his brother-in-law, Professor Shaul Lieberman, repeated a comment insinuating that the chassidish *shtiblach* are unneeded. R. Gluskin replied with a smile, "I still think every town needs a *chassidish shteibel*. Inevitably one will end up stepping inside, and there he will be told who he really is..."

(אישים שהכרתי (זיידמן) עמ' 373)

A Moment with The Rebbe



CHINUCH BEGINS AT HOME

Rebbetzin Sima Ashkenazi, wife of Kfar Chabad rov, Harav Mordechai Shmuel Ashkenazi a"h, related:

During a *yechidus* in Tishrei 5729 (1968), the Rebbe suddenly asked me, "What happened at the meeting with Harav Chefer?"

At the time, I was working at the seminary in Kfar Chabad. Reb Shmuel Chefer had called a meeting with the mothers after hearing many complaints about the girls. He told them that if they spoke more positively about the school and the *hanhala*, the girls would hear it and behave differently. Naturally, the parents felt that the school was

responsible for the situation.

I explained to the Rebbe what Harav Chefer had told the parents, and then began to say that the parents... I wanted to say that they had blamed the school.

I had only said the word "parents" when the Rebbe looked up and interrupted me: "Certainly they are at fault! Certainly they are at fault!"

The Rebbe wished to emphasize the tremendous responsibility parents have and how much their words and attitudes can positively shape their children's chinuch.

(As heard from Mrs. Sima Ashkenazi)