



Shhh... Don't say that

THE PRICE OF LIES
THE POWER TO SPEAK THE TRUTH

לע"נ
הרה"ת ר' ניסן בן הרה"ח ר' יוחנן ע"ה
נלב"ע ל' כסלו ה'תש"נ

ולע"נ זוגתו
מרת שרה רוזא ע"ה בת ר' אהרן ע"ה
נלב"ע כ"ח אדר ה'תשע"ז
גארדאן
ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

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When the Friediker Rebbe was six years old, his father, the Rebbe Rashab, took him to Yalta—a resort city in the Crimean Peninsula.

The Friediker Rebbe records in his diary that he cried to his father that he really did not want to go, for fear of missing out on the stories his melamed, Reb Yekusiel would tell him. In response, the Rebbe Rashab promised his son that if he'd learn well, the Rebbe Rashab would tell him stories of tzaddikim as well. The following is one of the stories related by the Rebbe Rashab on that trip.

Velvel was a smart boy with one negative character trait; he was a terrible exaggerator. Eventually, this bad habit developed into straight out lying.

As he grew older, he earned a reputation for himself as a liar and naturally no one wanted to be associated with him.

Being intelligent, he recognized what was going on and was greatly ashamed of himself. As time went

on, a burning desire to do teshuva and cleanse himself from this character flaw grew stronger and stronger but he could not muster the inner strength that was needed.

As he progressed in his learning and became a talmid chacham he could not shake off the bad habit of lying. This trait infected every part of his life, even his learning would be punctuated with falsehoods. He would be called out for it by others but to no avail.

One day he heard about a big tzaddik in a nearby town and decided to travel there in search of a cure to his flaw.

The tzaddik tested the young man on his learning and found that he was indeed very learned.

"You are surely familiar with the verse, 'From falsehoods you should stay away,' and 'The speaker of lies will not stand in front of his eyes!'"

With pain written all over his face he replied, "I know how serious it is to lie and that liars are part

of the four groups about which Chazal say that 'they cannot greet the Shechina,' but I can't help myself. Heaven is not giving me the opportunity to do teshuva."

"Nothing can stand in the way of one's will," replied the tzaddik. "If you sincerely want to repent, your teshuva will be accepted!"

The young man indicated that he was willing to do a proper teshuva.

"Will you accept upon yourself to do all that I tell you?" asked the tzaddik.

"Yes! Whatever the tzaddik tells me to do I will do and I will refrain from all that I am instructed to stay away from."

The tzaddik prescribed him very specific directions. For five years he was not to say a single word that was not part of learning Torah and if he slipped with even one word he would become mute for five years.

"Are you willing to accept this?"

"Yes!"

His final instructions were a detailed guide to learning and acting with yiras Shamayim. He also cautioned him to be extremely scrupulous with placing negel vasser near his bed before retiring for the night.

The first five months went smoothly and the young man overcame the many urges he had to speak unnecessary words. One morning, as he lay in bed moments after waking up, he thought he heard the voice of someone talking to him. In a moment of confusion, he forgot the instructions and called out, "Who is there in the room?" At that very moment he became mute.

For the next five years he was unable to talk, exactly as the tzaddik had described. When the five years came to an end, his power of speech was returned and his terrible sickness of lying was gone.¹ **T**

1. Sefer Hamaamarim Admur HaRayatz 5711, p. 302.