לזכות
הילדה בצבאות ה' **חנה** שתחי'
בקשר עם הולדתה למז"ט ביום **ש"ק אחש"פ** בזמן סעודת משיח
ולזכות הורי' הרה"ת ר' **שמואל** וזוגתו מרת **חי' מושקא** שיחיו **ששונקין**
שיזכו לגדלה לתורה חופה ומעש"ט כרצון וברכת **כ"ק אדמו"ר**
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' **מנחם מענדל** וזוגתו מרת **קיילא** שיחיו **ששונקין**
ולזכות זקני' הרה"ת ר' **שד"ב** וזוגתו **דבורה לאה** שיחיו **דובאוו**

Words Count

The Positive Approach to Speech

A resident of Mezibuz had a quarrel with another. Once, while in the Baal Shem Tov's shul, he shouted that he would tear the other fellow to pieces like a fish.

The Baal Shem Tov told his talmidim to hold one another's hand, and to stand near him with their eyes closed. Then he placed his holy hands on the shoulders of the two talmidim next to him. Suddenly the talmidim began shouting in great terror: They had seen that fellow actually dismembering his disputant.

This incident shows clearly that every potential has an effect - either in physical form or on a spiritual plane that can be perceived only with higher and more refined senses. (Hayom Yom, 29 Tishrei).

איינער פון די מעזיבוזשער בעלי בתים האט געהאט א מחלוקת מיט נאך א בעל הבית, און זייענדיג אמאל בא דעם בעש"ט אין שוהל האט ער געשריען, אז ער וואלט זיין בר פלוגתא קורע כדג זיין.

דער בעש"ט האט געהייסען די תלמידים געבען איינע די אנדערע די הענט, און זיך שטעלען לעבען אים מיט צוגעמאכטע אויגען. דער בעש"ט האט ארויפגעלייגט זיינע הייליגע הענט אויף די אקסלען פון די צוויי תלמידים, וועלכע זיינען געשטאנען לעבען אים, פלוצלונג האבען די תלמידים אנגעהויבען שרייען פון גרויס שרעק: זיי האבען געזעהן ווי דער בעל הבית איז קורע כדג זיין בר פלוגתא.

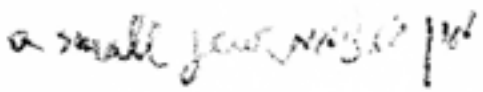
דאס באווייזט קלאהר, אז פון יעדער כח איז פאראן א פועל דבר: אדער אין א לבוש חומרי, אדער א רוחני וואס מי קאן אים אנעמען נאר מיט העכערע און איידעלערע געפילען. (היום יום כ"ט תשרי).

Uncovering Beneath the Surface

The world we live in is the lowest of a long chain of higher worlds. Based on this premise, Chassidus teaches us that everything that happens down here is affected by, and has an effect on, the occurrences of higher worlds.

When one speaks, his words reveal ideas that were previously hidden; hidden in his own thought, or hidden in even deeper realms. Words have the power to bring those ideas to the surface. We are therefore to be very careful to speak only in positive terms, especially about another Yid.

Chazal already alluded to this concept with their instruction of, "לעולם אל יפתח אדם פיו לשטן"—one should never open his mouth [in a negative form, giving fuel] to the Satan [to prosecute].[1]



A SMALL JEW אין במציאות

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213
Hyacinth 3-5250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש
770 איסטערן פארקווי
ברוקלין נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
3rd of Nissan, 5744
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mr. Chaim Yosef Groisman
P. O. B. 2073
Breedestraat 74 (o)
Curacao, N. A.

Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to receive your regards through our esteemed mutual friends.

I must, however, take exception to your referring to yourself as "a small Jew from Curacao." There is surely no need to emphasize to you at length that every Jew, man or woman, has a Nefesh Elokis, which is a "part of G-dliness Above," as explained in the Tanya, beginning of chapter two. Thus, there is no such thing as "a small Jew," and a Jew must never underestimate his or her tremendous potential.

With the approach of the Yom Tov Pesach, I take this opportunity of extending to you my prayerful wishes that the Festival of Our Freedom bring you and yours true freedom, freedom from anxiety material and spiritual, from anything which might distract from serving G-d wholeheartedly and with joy, and to carry over this freedom and joy into the whole year.

Wishing you and yours a Kosher and happy Pesach,

With blessing

This teaches us, explains the Frierdiker Rebbe, that one should always use his words carefully, choosing only clean and refined language (ריינער איידעלער אויסשפראך).[2]

Lashon hara is referred to as לשון תליתאי קטיל תליתאי—a threefold talk which harms three: the one who speaks it, the one who listens to it, and the one being spoken about.

The Rebbe asks on this precept:

The fact that the first two are punished for *lashon hara* is understood; they transgressed a very grave sin. But why would the one of whom they speak also be harmed? After all, he committed no crime.

The reason is because by speaking about his wrongdoing, the other fellows have revealed his faults which would have otherwise remained undercover. The one who is the subject of *lashon hara* now has his bad traits brought to the surface, and this can cause him harm.

If this is the case when speaking bad about another person, certainly we can bring about positive energy when speaking good about another.[3]

The Rebbe taught us, both in his *sichos*, and perhaps more importantly by his own example, how to use positive speech whenever possible.

Based on the premise of Chazal, לעולם אל יוציא אדם דבר מגונה מפיו—one should never utter an improper word from his mouth, and לעולם יספר אדם בלשון נקיה—one should always relate things in a clean manner.[4]

Word Choice

Paying attention to the Rebbe's careful choice of words, we come upon myriads of examples of his insistence on using positive language.

When speaking of death, the Rebbe used the expression of היפך החיים—the opposite of life. Instead of saying "bad," the Rebbe often used the words היפך הטוב—the opposite of good.

At times, the Rebbe went so far as to avoid even a mere reference to something not-good. There is a certain animal that we refrain from calling by name; instead we call it by the Hebrew phrase "דבר-אחר"—lit. "something else." There were instances when the Rebbe would refer to it as a ד.א.—spelling out only the first letters of the phrase!

Below we will highlight some of the more interesting examples.

23 AV 5736, YOSSI MELAMED *via* JEM 24031

IN A CLOSED-DOOR SICHA TO INJURED IDF SOLDIERS, THE REBBE ADVOCATED TO REPLACE THE TITLE 'THE INJURED OF ISRAEL' WITH 'THE OUTSTANDING OF ISRAEL'.

Spirit of the House

In contemporary Israeli society, a hospital is referred to as "*beis cholim,*" a house for the sick. In a letter to Professor Mordechai Shani, director of Sheba Medical Center in Tel Hashomer, Israel, the Rebbe writes:

"I certainly recall our meeting during your visit here with your colleagues. I hope you also remember my suggestion that instead of referring to it as a '*beis cholim*' it should be called a '*beis refuah*.' Although the difference between these two phrases seems to be merely in the wording, still, changing the words will have an uplift of the spirit [of the patients].

"Moreover, this name is more suitable for the true purpose of the facility: to bring about a complete recovery. Why then, would you call it by a name that does not befit its true purpose?"[5]

A Yid is Close

When referring to other Yidden, the Rebbe refused to apply the often used titles of "secular," "small," or "distant" Jew.

The Rebbe often discouraged the use of the term קירוב רחוקים - reaching out to those who are distant. No Yid can be called "distant." Instead, the Rebbe would explain, "those who are already close can be brought even closer…"

To a young boy who had written to the Rebbe requesting a *bracha* in honor of his bar mitzvah, noting that he was from a "secular" Jewish family (משפחה חילונית), the Rebbe wrote:

"You write that you come from a 'secular' family. Obviously, the 'secularism' is only a 'nickname' and an external coating over each member of your family's true essence. Each of you is a son of Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov; daughter of Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel, and Leah…"[6]

In fact, the Rebbe wouldn't even refer to Yidden as being in a מקום אחר—a different place! (The word אחר, after all, can have a negative connotation to it). Instead, the Rebbe referred to, "the Yidden at this farbrengen, and those in a second place, a third place (מקום שני, מקום שלשי). I don't want to use the words מקום אחר—because a Jew is never in a foreign place. He is always together with Hashem!"[7]

NO LEHAVDIL

The story is told of my father-in-law, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe:

When speaking of a Yid who was on a very low spiritual level in his observance of Yiddishkeit, someone used the term *"lehavdil."* My father-in-law remarked: "When speaking about another Yid, one need not use the term *'lehavdil.'"* The term lehavdil is used to differentiate between Yidden and other nations—בין ישראל לעמים. But within the Jewish nation, there is no place for the use of *"lehavdil"*...

(Yud-Beis Tammuz 5731)

Exceptional Soldiers

In the summer of 5736, the Rebbe received a group of wounded veterans of the IDF and addressed them in *Lashon Hakodesh* in the big shul at 770.

Yiddishkeit teaches that one must elevate everything he or she comes in contact with, the Rebbe explained to his visitors. Therefore, someone who has a disability is actually blessed by Hashem with additional power, more than the ordinary person, with which he or she may overcome the unique challenges facing them because of their handicap.

"Hence," said the Rebbe, "I do not like the fact that this group is referred to as 'נכה'— 'handicapped soldiers.' I would suggest they be called a more appropriate name: מצויינים בישראל— the exceptional of Israel..."[8]

THE SHUL

An announcement was once made in the Rebbe's presence, inviting everyone to join a farbrengen in the big shul at 770, which the gabbai referred to as *"unten"* ("downstairs" in Yiddish). The Rebbe told one of the *mazkirim*, "אויף א שול זאגט מען ניט אונטן"—one should not use the expression *"unten"* about a shul.

(Beis Chayeinu p. 253)

Positive Effect

Indeed, our words are not a mere circulation of air. Words carry energy. And positive words carry positive energy.

Aside for the spiritual significance of one's choice of words and the effect it has on higher worlds, the Rebbe teaches us that even in the practical sense, positive speech proves a lot more effective than the harsh approach.

At the famous farbrengen of Shabbos parshas Vayakhel, 5752, the last time the Rebbe spoke publicly before Chof-Zayin Adar, one of the main themes of the day was the importance of *ahavas Yisroel* and uniting with a fellow Jew. Our relationship with a fellow Jew must always be a positive one, the Rebbe explained.

Even when one must correct and teach his fellow Jew and offer *musar*, it should be done with kind and pleasant words. In fact, it is clear to see: when one wishes to influence someone else, especially fellow Jews, the most efficient way to do so is with good-natured, pleasant words. This is always more effective than the harsher approach ("שטריינגע ווערטער"). Besides, the approach of *musar* is only to be used in certain rare instances. For the most part, one should only use positive tactics—.עשה טוב[9]

תורה איז ניט שווער

During the farbrengen on Shabbos parshas Shemini, 5712, the Rebbe quoted a phrase from the Gemara and then asked for that volume of Shas to be brought over in order to read the precise words. After concluded checking the text, the Rebbe still held on to the heavy *sefer* and continued speaking about other topics. Someone in the crowd suggested that he take the Gemara from the Rebbe, saying: "אפשר איז דעם רבי'ן שווער?"—Perhaps it is tough [heavy] for the Rebbe? The Rebbe responded: "א רבי'ן איז תורה ניט שווער"—For a Rebbe, Torah is not tough!

(Toras Menachem vol. 5 p. 182)

1. Brachos 19a
2. Sefer Hamaamorim Yiddish p. 75 and further
3. Likutei Sichos vol. 5 p. 44; see also ibid. vol. 27 p. 158
4. Pesachim 3a
5. Letter dated 3 Adar, 5737; Igros Kodesh vol. 32 p. 130
6. Heichal Menachem vol. 2 p. 76
7. Shabbos parshas Noach 5741; Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 1 p. 339
8. Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 2 p. 634
9. Sichos Kodesh 5752 vol. 2 p. 793