



SPEAKING TRUTH

The Importance of Truth

One should always speak truthfully; as the Torah says, *Midvar sheker tirschak* – "Distance yourself from falsehood." Even if the proposed lie will not cause any harm to anyone, it is forbidden to tamper with a story. Moreover, whoever is careful to ascertain the facts of a story before repeating it will always have many listeners.

(אורחות צדיקים שער כ"ב, ר"ח שער קדושה פ"ב)

There was once a town called Kushta (in Aramaic, "truth"), where the inhabitants never veered from the truth and no one died at a young age. The *amora* Rav Tavus moved to the town, married there, and had two sons. Once when his wife was washing herself, a neighbor knocked on their door, and feeling that it was inappropriate to have someone come in, Rav Tavus said that his wife was not there. As a result, shortly after, his two children died. When the townspeople heard the story, they asked him to leave Kushta and not bring the *malach hamaves* upon them.

(סנהדרין ז' ע"ז)

The Torah warns us to *distance* ourselves from falsehood, since falsehood is more disgusting than all other negative traits. One who speaks truth follows the path of *HaShem*, and merits His *brachos*; one who chooses falsehood invites upon himself worry, conflict and pain.

(ס' החינוך מצוה עד)

There was once a young man who, since his childhood, had always done as he pleased, and had committed many *aveiros*. One day, feeling remorseful, he went to Rabbi Shimon ben Shetach and told him he wanted to do *teshuva*. Rabbi Shimon told him that all he had to do was to watch himself from telling lies and he would be saved from transgression. "No problem," said the young man. Rabbi Shimon had him swear, and the young man went home.

Some time later, the young man was in his

neighbor's home and, not managing to control himself, he stole all the gold and silver. As he was leaving, he thought to himself, "What will I tell the neighbor when she asks about her possessions? If I deny taking them, it will be a lie, and what will be of my oath?"

He then returned whatever he had stolen, and understood the wisdom of Rebbi Shimon.

(אוצר המדרשים, ס' חסידים החדש ע' יג)

The Misfortune of Falsehood

When *HaShem* commanded Noah to take a pair of all living creatures into the *teiva*, Falsehood wanted to enter as well, but was stopped because he had no pair. Searching for a match, he met Tragedy and asked if he was willing to be his pair.

"What will you give me in return?" Tragedy asked.

"All my profits," Falsehood promised, and Tragedy agreed.

After the *mabul*, when they left the *teiva*, Falsehood went around to collect his earnings, but they had all been taken by Tragedy.

"Where are all my profits?" he complained.

Tragedy replied, "Didn't we make an agreement?"

To this, Falsehood had no response. Nothing is achieved by falsehood, for everything will be taken by tragedy and misfortune.

(מדרש שו"ט ז')

All the letters of the word *emes* (אמת) stand on two feet, whereas the letters of the word *sheker* (שקר) stand on one. This teaches us that truth stands firm and endures, while falsehood does not. Additionally, the letters of *emes* are far apart in the sequence of the *alef-beis*, while the letters of *sheker* are close

to one another, for keeping truthful can be difficult, while resorting to lying is easy to do.

(ילקוט שמעוני, בראשית ג)

The punishment of a liar, *Chazal* say, is that even when he tells the truth, no one believes him.

(סנהדרין פ"ט ע"ב)

Keeping to Truth

One is allowed to change the truth for the purpose of peace. However, this only applies when relating something about the past, but not when promising something that is to be done in the future.

However the Baal Shem Tov cautions that one who often speaks falsehood should abstain from changing the truth for the purpose of peace, since this may strengthen his bad habit.

(שו"ע אדה"ז ס' קנ"ו, כתר שם טוב אות מ)

A wealthy man decided one night, while saying *Kerias Shema*, that he would give twenty-five rubles to *tzedaka* every time he said something that was not true. When the local *melamed* heard this, he exclaimed, "Then lie and provide for the poor!"

Later, when that *melamed* visited Lubavitch, the Rebbe Maharash rebuked him for his advice, for one is not allowed to lie, even for a good reason.

(סיפורי חסידים זיון תורה ע' 208)

CONSIDER THIS!

- What is the problem with falsehood: the speaking itself or its bringing to distrust?
- Is changing the facts for the sake of peace: permissible form of falsehood or is it the real truth?

A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Moshe Gourarie

Setting Times for Learning Torah

Are there specific requirements? I.e. how much, when and what subjects must be learned?

- Every person, even sickly, poor or with a large family, is obligated to set aside time to study Torah¹. Aside for being a *mitzvah midoraisa*, this *mitzvah* carries extreme importance. The Frierdike Rebbe writes² that only through set times for learning can a person remain sensitive to *ruchnius* and inspire his household.
- One should have a set time for learning ("*kvius itim*") so that it will never be forgotten³. The set time should be consistent, not even being cancelled for an opportunity to earn a large sum⁴. If for whatever reason one cannot keep the *kvius*, missed amount of time should be made up. Additionally, one should try to learn at least one *halacha* or *posuk* during the regular *kvius* time⁵.
- The times for learning must include one session sometime during the day and another session at night, as the *posuk* states "*v'hogisa bo yomam vo'laila*." The ideal time by day is in the morning immediately after *shachris* (and breakfast), and doing so merits greeting the *Shechina*.⁶ The *kvius* at night can also be fulfilled during the time between *mincha* and *maariv*.⁷
- Ideally, one should divide his time between learning Tanach, Gemoro and Halacha⁸. Halacha is the most important of the three, enabling one to know day-to-day conduct and to be able recognize a *shaila* requiring consulting a *Rov*⁹. One who considers himself a Chabad *chossid*, should also have set times for studying Chassidus. HaYom Yom¹⁰ states, "Ordinary Chassidim must learn Chassidus on Mondays, Thursdays and Shabbos. *Temimim* (those who wish to subscribe to the lifestyle of Tomchei Temimim) must learn one hour each day."
- In addition to the above¹¹, the Rebbeim instituted a system of daily learning of Chumash, Tehillim and Tanya, and the Rebbe added a daily study of Rambam (3 *prakim*, 1 *perek* or Sefer HaMitzvos).
- While learning, one should actually verbalize the texts being learned. Listening to a live *shiur* (not via electronic means) is considered as if one has articulated the words ("*shomeia ke'oneh*")¹².
- It is important to note, that all the above is concerning someone who needs to work to make a living. However, one whose *parnassa* is provided for is required to learn all day¹³. The classification of this category is a separate discussion.

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

1. שו"ע אדה"ז או"ח סי' קנה ס"א.
2. אג"ק מהור"י צ"ח ד' ע' תכד. היום יום ד' חשון.
3. משנ"ב שם סק"ד.
4. שו"ע אדה"ז שם.
5. שם ס"ב.
6. הל' ת"ת פ"ב ה"ב.
7. ביאור הלכה שם ד"ה עת ללמוד.
8. שו"ע אדה"ז שם.
9. ראה הלכות ת"ת לאדה"ז פ"ג הלכה ד, וראה שם פ"ב ה"ט.
10. כא כסלו.
11. ראה לדוגמא ת"מ חנו"ו ע' 361.
12. הל' ת"ת פ"ב ה"ב.
13. שם פ"ג ה"ה.

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OUR HEROES

י"ג מנחם אב

Reb Mordechai Banet

Reb Mordechai Banet was one of the great *rabbonim* of the 18th century. He was a *talmid* of the Noda Biyehuda and Reb Schmelke of Nikolsburg, and later became the *dayan* and Rosh Yeshiva of Nikolsburg during the time that Reb Schmelke was the *Rov*. He was known for his extreme diligence in Torah and his abstinence from worldly pleasures. Reb Mordechai passed away on the 13th of Av, תקפ"ט (1829).



There was a widespread custom for the *rabbonim* to host a *minyan* in their homes, early in the morning, giving them the opportunity of utilizing their time to the fullest. Reb Mordechai, however, would not hear of this. He wanted people to see the importance of coming to *shul*, and thus nothing would deter Reb Mordechai from coming to *shul* every day even during very fierce weather conditions. Reb Mordechai's efforts proved effective and there was a large crowd in *shul* at all times.

Reb Mordechai was *niftar* in the town of Carlsbad, which he visited for health purposes, and was buried in the nearby town of Lichtenshdad. When the people of Nikolsburg heard of the passing of their beloved *rov*, they demanded that his body be transferred to the *beis hachayim* in Nikolsburg. The demand grew into an intense controversy and eventually reached the king of the land, who turned to the Chasam Sofer. Six months after the *petira*, the Chasam Sofer finally finished writing the *psak*, which ruled in favor of the Nikolsburg community. He had been up all night writing and at day break, he fell asleep.

During his sleep, Reb Mordechai appeared to him in a dream. Reb Mordechai expressed his consent for this body to be transferred to Nikolsburg. Reb Mordechai told the Chasam Sofer that it had been decreed that he be temporarily buried in Lichtenshdad because as a young man, he called off the proposal to marry the daughter of the *Rov* of Lichtenshdad. To atone for this, Reb Mordechai was to be buried right next to that girl for those six months. The Chasam Sofer awoke in terror, and sure enough, found Reb Mordechai's *kever* right next to the *kever* of the daughter of the *Rov*.

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

The Goal of a Gemach

The elderly *chossid*, Reb Yochanan Gordon, was in charge of a small *gemach*, which would lend money to *Yidden* in need. Every year, since its inception in the 5700's, he would give the Frierdiker Rebbe a report of the accounts.

In the month of *Adar* 5710, after the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, Reb Yochanan gave the report to the Rebbe. He was stunned by the reply, "Reb Yochanan, do you have enough funds to meet the needs of the entire *Yiddische* community of New York?"

The Rebbe's demands for the expansion of the *gemach* did not stop. One year, Reb Yochanan excitedly reported that this year there was no deficit in the accounts of the *gemach*. The Rebbe became serious and said, "This shows that either the *gemach* is pressing lenders too much for money, or that you are not trusting people enough!"

On a similar note, in 5751, when the *mazkir* Reb Sholom Mendel Simpson handed in the list of *anash* who would be receiving help from the Rebbe's *mazkirus* before *Pesach* (*maos chitim*), the Rebbe wrote on the list, "How is it that no new name has been added since last year?!"

לזכות השליח שלום דובער בן לובה

לזכות ר' אברהם יהודה הכהן שיחי' שווארמין

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