

Say It Nicely

Hashem commanded Noach and his family to enter the ark. Along with them, seven of each type of *tahorah* (pure) animal and two of each type of animal which is *annenah tahorah* (not pure) (Bereshis 7:8). The Gemora (Pesachim 3a) explains that the Torah could have used the word *tamei* (impure) and thereby used eight fewer letters. We all know that the Torah does not waste one word or even one single letter. Why, therefore did the Torah use extra letters and words to describe these impure animals? To teach us the importance of speaking nicely. Rebbe Yehoshua Ben Levi says, "A person should never let a displeasing word pass his lips. Behold, the Torah added eight extra letters in order to avoid using a displeasing word."

Kinderlach . . .

Before you speak, think about what you are about to say. Is there a nicer way to say it? Instead of saying, "You are wrong," try saying, "Perhaps there is another way to look at it. Let's examine the facts together and see if this is really so." Instead of saying, "Ow! You hurt me," try saying "I'm sure you didn't realize but you bumped into me." Instead of saying, "You're always oversleeping," try saying, "It's time to get up. Can I help you with something?" Sweet words are like sugar on the lips and soothing to the soul. Speak nicely. People will always be anxious to hear what you have to say.

Your Greatness

"Every moving thing that lives is for you to eat" (Bereshis 9:3). Thus the Torah permitted Noach and his descendants to eat meat after the flood. Until then it was forbidden. What changed after the flood that allowed them to eat meat? Rav Zalman Sorotzkin zt"l explains that the *dor ha'mabul* (generation of the flood) did not appreciate the sanctity of a human being. Man is the center of the universe. The whole creation exists for his sake. They felt that a human was nothing more than a glorified animal. Therefore they

behaved like animals and committed all sorts of abominable sins. Men were not men, and creation ceased to have a reason to exist. Therefore it was destroyed. After the flood, man was allowed to eat animals to demonstrate his elevated status. The flesh of the animals could now be elevated by being eaten and becoming a part of the body of the man.

The Malbim zt"l adds that man's good *middos* (character traits) encompass those of all the animals. He has the industriousness of the ant, the modesty of the cat, the strength of the lion and the boldness of the leopard. When a person perfects his *middos*, the animals and indeed the entire world are perfected along with him. When man corrupts himself, sadly, the world sinks along with him.

Kinderlach . . .

Don't ever forget your greatness. The whole creation exists for you. When you do your job, the world flourishes. What is your job? To learn Hashem's Torah and keep His mitzvos. Every word of Torah that you learn brings down spiritual energy that keeps this world running. Every mitzvah that you perform properly perfects yours middos. As your perfect yourself, you perfect the world. Think about it, kinderlach. A perfect world. No crime, sickness, war, poverty, lying or hatred. What a wonderful place to live. Don't give up the dream. Perfect the world. It's in your hands.

How You See It

The thin man innocently walked into the store. It was full of people waiting in line with their purchases... milk, eggs, bread, cake. They seemed to be buying everything in sight. The cash register kept ringing, and the money kept coming in.

"This store is doing very well," the man thought. "The security is very lax here. We will be able to break in and rob the store in the middle of the night."

The man went on to a bigger store, with more customers.

"A bigger store to rob," he thought.

Everywhere he looked, he thought about the evil he could perpetrate there.

"And Cham the father of Canaan saw" (Bereshis 9:22). What did he see? The Medrash on Parshas Balak comments that it is better for evil people to be blind. Their eyes only bring evil to the world. How is this possible? Rav Shach zt"l explains that a person contemplates the things that he sees. His thoughts take him deeply into the subject in front of his eyes. A wicked person will see opportunities to do evil. Therefore, it is better for him to be blind. That way he will not see and contemplate new ways to bring more evil into the world. Contrast this with a righteous person. He only sees opportunities to do good and help people. His eyes bestow good upon everything he sees.

Kinderlach . . .

Your friend just kicked the football in the wrong direction and caused the team to lose a point. He feels badly. What do you see? A person who made a foolish mistake and needs to be condemned? That is an aveyra (sin) - humiliating a person and making him feel bad for no good reason. Or perhaps you see a person who feels down and needs reassurance. "Come, Eli. Don't feel badly. Everyone makes mistakes. Pick yourself up and try harder next time." Now you're looking at the world the right way: through the eyes of a tzaddik.

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