

Power of Words

Horav Sholom Schwadron, zl, the legendary Maggid of Yerushalayim, was a dynamic speaker. His words could penetrate the most obstinate heart and move the most intractable person. He related that he was once asked to substitute for a mashgiach in one of the yeshivos. The mashgiach had to go fundraising for an extended period of time. The students of the yeshivah asked Rav Sholom to give them shmuessen, ethical discourses, which was one of the functions of the mashgiach. Rav Sholom was in a quandary. He was asked to act as a mashgiach in the sense that he would speak with and motivate the bachurim, young men, of the yeshivah. Shmuessen was a function that belonged solely to the mashgiach. If Rav Sholom's discourses would be impressive, then word would get back to the mashgiach, and it might make him feel bad. On the other hand, did he have the right to impede the students' spiritual development if he had the ability and the charisma to reach out to them? He decided to ask Horav Yechezkel Levinstein, zl, mashgiach of Yeshivas Ponevez, for his opinion regarding the matter. Rav Chatzkel responded, "We have an accepted axiom that if the opportunity to build the Bais HaMikdash avails itself, but, simultaneously, this might cause someone to feel bad, it is better not to build!" Rav Sholom did not give the shmuessen.