

The Daily RYS 10/18/06 More on Being Careful when Speaking

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Every utterance was delivered with all due responsibility and deliberation, and sifted over and over again. Accordingly he exercised extreme caution even in giving praise. He was reluctant to deliver eulogies over the dead, lest he err in his evaluation of their worth. When he deemed it necessary to deliver such an address, he would confine himself to a few dicta which would arouse the assembled to reflect and repent, and make no reference to the worth of the deceased. One of his former acquaintances of long standing had died. He was the noted communal figure, R. Leib Traub. R. Israel ordered that the coffin be brought into the great Bet Midrash. He ascended the Bimah, and opened with the verse: "For man also knows not his time; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net." He repeated the verse fifty times over, with such deep feeling that the entire congregation was taken with weeping. Then he ordered that the coffin be carried out of the synagogue and the funeral proceed. Once when delivering a eulogy over a great man, he said: "He was an upright person," and immediately corrected himself, "As it appears to me, he was an upright person."

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