



Volume II Issue #11

Parshas Balak, 17 Tammuz, 5782

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**An Important Message:** *What is the connection between Tisha B'AV and Emes? Please join **Rabbi Elya Brudny Shlita, Rabbi Paysach Krohn Shlita and Rabbi Noach Oelbaum Shlita** for an informative and inspiring Tisha B'AV video presentation. Please encourage your Shul to show this 30-minute presentation as part of their Tisha B'AV programing. Please contact [info@everydayemes.org](mailto:info@everydayemes.org) for further information.*

This is what happened with Bilaam, according to one understanding of the Ohr HaChaim. To avoid the pain of guilt he felt about cursing klal Yisrael, Hashem's chosen nation, he engaged in an act of self-deception. When he told Hashem that he invited Balak's messengers to stay the night, he actually believed, as he stated to Hashem, that it was on account of respect for royalty.

Part of our mission in life, is to understand when we are deceiving ourselves. We must always remember that Hashem's seal is Emes – truth, and that we must extend effort to remove all thoughts of self-deception. We should replace those thoughts with an honest assessment of who we are, and with the realization that we are a combination of positive, neutral, and negative traits.

## On the Parsha

After Bilaam invited Balak's messengers to sleep over at his house, Hashem asked Bilaam who the messengers were. Bilaam responded:

"And Bilaam said to Hashem, 'Balak Ben Tzipor, the King of Moav, sent them to me.'" (Numbers 22:10)

Why did Bilaam add that Balak was the king of Moav? Didn't Hashem know who Balak was?

The Ohr HaChaim explains that by adding that Balak was the king of Moav, Bilaam was telling Hashem that he had invited Balak's messengers to sleep in his home out of *Kavod Malchus* – respect for royalty. We know, in fact, from an earlier Rashi that Bilaam's underlying motivation was far less noble – he was interested in obtaining money to curse Klal Yisroel.

There are two very interesting natural tendencies that Hashem has placed within the psyche of the human being. The first one is the feeling of guilt. Guilt is a means by which we can get back on track to do the right thing. For example, it is guilt that often brings us to make a phone call that we should be making, or to visit someone who needs a visit, even though we may not feel like it at the moment.

The second natural tendency is a protective one, which we use to avoid pain. The protective tendency to avoid pain is both on a physical level as well as on an emotional level. Thus, we quickly move our hand away from intense heat so that we will not get burned. By the same token, it is natural to avoid the pain of guilt. To avoid the pain of guilt, we often engage in self-deception.

## Chizuk - Inspiration

Many sefarim or books have a "corrections" section at the end. In English, these pages are called an "erratum" or a "corrigendum." An erratum is the term for a production error, an error introduced during the publishing process. A corrigendum is the term for an author's error.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky ZT"l wrote a fascinating Sefer entitled, "Kiryas Melech." This incredible work is a commentary on the Rambam's Mishna Torah that specializes in finding the actual sources for his many Halachos, where neither he, nor the commentaries provide a source for the stated halacha.

For many years, Rav Chaim would keep a small notebook in his pocket and as he would travel, he would think about the possible sources of these Halachos. Each time he would discover a source for a Halacha, he would jot it down in his notebook. That notebook ultimately became the basis for the Sefer Kiryas Melech. Upon its completion, his father, the Steipler Gaon, wrote him a glowing Haskama – a letter of approbation.

The Haskama explained how, "innumerable times, my son, HaRav HaGaon suggested sources [of the Rambam's Halachos] to me."

After the Sefer was printed, however, the question arose that, technically, the term "innumerable" in this context may not be accurate. Although the term is bandied about

by many people – there is nothing in the daily activities of people and their interactions with others that is actually “innumerable.”

Rav Chaim, therefore, included in the corrigendum – “The words ‘Ain Sefor – innumerable’ should be erased.” We see from here how exacting Rav Chaim ZT”L was in his Middas HaEmes.

## Halacha – Jewish Law

A surgeon has discovered, Rachamana Litz'lan, inoperable, cancerous tumors in his patient. In his estimation, the patient has less than nine months to live. The patient has no idea how grave his situation actually is and the doctor believes that the patient may become severely depressed if he is told his grim prognosis. Should the doctor tell him the truth?

This question is one that each family member and each doctor should present to his own Rav or Posaik. There has been a sea-change in the approach of doctors in the United States in this regard. Fifty years ago, the tendency was to suppress such information. Now, however, the overwhelming tendency is to fully inform the patient of his condition. This is true in the United States, England and in most western countries. In Israel, however, the tendency among doctors is not to fully inform the patient.

The Laiv Avrohom (Volume 1 p. 156), written by Dr. Abraham S. Abraham, a noted doctor and Talmid Chochom, rejects the Western approach of revealing all – even in modern times. He cites numerous proofs from Acharonim that the information should, in fact, be suppressed until the last possible moment.

Rav Yigal Shafran in Assia (42-43, Nissan 5747) rejects Dr. Abraham’s readings of the above referenced Acharonim, and cites recent data that indicates that full knowledge of the terminal illness is actually calming and reassuring to the patient.

The conclusion of Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein Shlita (Shiurei Torah LaRofim Volume 1 p. 142) is that, unless there is a benefit to the person who is terminally ill, the truth of his condition should be suppressed. The example that he gives where it would be beneficial is if the patient would be more motivated to seek a cure. In such a case, Rav Zilberstein rules that there would be an obligation to inform the terminal patient.

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## Mussar – Introspection

This week we begin translating the Chofetz Chaim’s sefer entitled, “Sfas Tamim.” Sefas Tamim, from which our foundation takes its name, focuses on the importance of honesty in word and deed. We begin with Chapter One – Defining Deceit.

Deceit is defined as all speech that man makes with the intent of misleading another, including all matters of fraud and financial abuse in trade and in partnerships. Even if, within a lie, there is no actual damage or loss, but a possibility of bringing about damage or harm [it is still forbidden]. An example is one who misleads another so that he will further trust him, since he likes him or is his trusted friend. His intent is so that he will trust him and not be wary of him so he can eventually take advantage of him. This is also a serious sin.

One who does so is of those whom Hashem hates. As our Sages have said (Psachim 113b): There are three [groups of people] who the Holy One Blessed be He hates, and one of them is one who speaks one way through his mouth and another way in his heart. Furthermore, the Holy One Blessed be He avenges against him on account of this evil trait. As it states in Yirmiyahu (9:7), “One speaks to his fellow in friendship, but lays an ambush for him in his heart” and it further states, “Shall I not punish them for such deeds? says Hashem, on such a nation as this shall I not bring retribution?”

On these matters, the punishment is on two things: On the lie and the damage contained within it. For the lie, aside from the damage aspect of it, it is also an abomination before Hashem, as its states in Mishlei (12:22), “Lying speech is an abomination to Hashem, but those who act faithfully please Him.” And certainly, he that cunningly plans to damage and harm another.

Even if in his deceitful words he does not steal something that he had previously owned, nor does he rob him, but he places his eye upon some future benefit that the other will have, and he hunts it to take it from him deceptively; or with his lies, he attempts to secure from the other person something that was designated for him – this is also considered deceit. His main punishment will be for this – the lie. However, his punishment will be greater since harm came to another because of him.

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