



Volume II Issue #13

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An Important Message: What is the connection between Tisha B'Av and Emes? Please join **Rabbi Elya Brudny Shlita**, **Rabbi Yaakov Feitman Shlita**, **Rabbi Paysach Krohn Shlita** and **Rabbi Noach Isaac Oelbaum Shlita** for an informative Tisha B'Av presentation. Please encourage your Shul to show this inspiring, 30-minute, free video presentation as part of its Tisha B'Av programming. Please contact info@everydayemes.org for further information.

On the Parsha

In this week's Parsha, the Bnei Gad and Bnei Reuvain asked Moshe Rabbeinu to permit them to remain outside of Eretz Yisrael so they could inherit land that they said was more suitable for their abundant livestock.

They told Moshe, "We will build enclosures for our livestock here and cities for our children." (Bamidbar 32:16) When Moshe responded, he switched the order of the request citing first the need to care for the children and then the need to care for the livestock. Moshe said, "Build yourselves cities for your children and enclosures for your sheep, and what has proceeded from your mouth you shall do." (Bamidbar 32:24)

Why did Moshe change the order of the request? Also, Moshe's words at the end of the Possuk, "... and what has proceeded from your mouth you shall do" seem to be extra. Why doesn't he just say, "and then do what you said"?

Rav Avraham Shmuel Binyamin Sofer ZT"L (1815-1871) also known as the Ksav Sofer, explains that Moshe is really delivering to the Bnei Gad and Bnei Reuvain a very deep and powerful lesson in honesty.

The Ksav Sofer says that someone whose nature is to be drawn toward possessions and monetary gain, and values them more than his own body - one should never trust his word – for the desire for Mammon (money) takes over him to the point where he will not live up to nor fulfill his words. Moshe was telling the Bnei Gad

and Bnei Reuvain that since you valued money so much that you gave your possessions preference over your own children – your words cannot be trusted. However, once you prioritize things correctly, and begin to value yourselves and your children more than your possessions – then the desire for money will not consume you. Then there will be integrity in your words and you will fulfill your commitments, just as Moshe says at the end of the Possuk, "...and what has proceeded from your mouth you shall do."

In other words, "and then you will be a person who speaks only truth." Speaking truth is one of the traits of Hashem Himself. When we dedicate ourselves to speaking only truth – we fulfill the Torah Mitzvah of V'Halachta B'Drachav – walking in His ways.

Chizuk - Inspiration

Dr. Joseph McArdle once used electroencephalography (EEG), a brain imaging technique that measures electrical impulses of neurons in the brain, to study the brain while a person listened to music. Specifically, he studied the brain responses of tune-deaf people that listened to melodies with **one sour note** at the end of a melody. He discovered that even regarding the tune-deaf people who didn't report hearing the sour note - their EEG's showed that their brains processed the wrong note in the same way as the normal participants that did report the wrong note.

Rav Simcha Zissel Ziv ZT"L of Kelm ("Rav Ziv") once passed a musician who played a wrong note. Rav Ziv was a student of Rav Yisroel Salanter ZT"L and was known as an Ish Emes – a person with an outstanding sensitivity to the truth. Rav Ziv was also the Rebbe of the Alter of Slabodka.

Rav Ziv informed the musician of the wrong note because he believed that even one incorrect note in an entire melody that has been played correctly is still not a true rendition of the melody and therefore a deficit in truth. Another time, he explained that overreacting while one is in pain is also something that could be

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lacking in truth. Namely, if we scream more loudly than the pain warrants – that too is not speaking truth in one’s heart.

Halacha – Jewish Law

Part of “distancing oneself from Sheker – a lie,” according to Rav Nachum Yavrov ZT”L (Niv Sfasayim first edition, pp 131-133) is to distance oneself from anything that could lead one to lie. We continue where we left off in last week’s newsletter with more from Rav Yavrov (and that is why we start with item 9. below).

9. If, when relaying a story or incident, one leaves out some of the information, and it changes the nature of the story – then this is forbidden on account of the prohibition of lying.

10. Indeed, even if the nature of the story does not change, it is still a Midas Chassidus – a best practice, to avoid doing so.

11. It is possible that when quoting the words of one of the Gedolei Torah, whose every word requires study, that one is obligated Halachically to relay everything that he said. If he does not remember exactly how it was said then he should say, “these were not his exact words.”

12. If, in relaying an incident or story, a friend asks him to say everything that happened, then one is not permitted to exclude something that happened [unless including it would be prohibited (e.g. Loshon Hara)], even if the nature of the story does not change by excluding it.

13. It is forbidden on account of the prohibition of lying even to hint or allude to an untruth.

14. Even truth that is mixed with a lie is as forbidden as the lie itself - by Torah law. This is even if the underlying nature of the incident or story does not change. [There are caveats, however, found in Niv Sfasayim 6:8.]

15. Part of the obligation of “distancing” is to examine all of one’s actions to ensure that there is no element of untruth in them.

16. There is also a prohibition of lying when writing. This is not just because of the Talmudic concept of “writing is like speaking,” but for other inherent factors as well.

Mussar – Introspection

This week we continue 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.

“A person who employs truthful speech, and is careful in all his conversations and statements to express them along the line of truth - that type of speaking will succeed and endure forever, and he will be trusted in all matters. People will hold him as a man of truth, since he has accustomed himself for all his life to only speak truth. However, he that has a lying tongue, the people will only believe him momentarily. For those that hear him will believe him just for that time, and afterward, when they investigate his words and examine them carefully, they will recognize that they are lies. This Possuk [‘Truthful speech abides forever, but a lying tongue [lasts] for but a moment.’ (Mishlei 12:19)] comes to warn humanity, that they should be of pure speech, and they should speak nothing but the truth.

How much more so must he be careful, that within his words, there not be mixed in any deception, where he says one thing with his mouth and another thought in his heart. The Holy One blessed be He calls him ‘evil’ on this account. It is as it is said in the Aggadatah on the verse in Mishlei 12:12, ‘The wicked covet the harvest of evil men, but the root of the righteous yields [fruit].’

The Tanna D’bei Eliyahu (attributed thus in the Naizer HaKodesh, but actually from Meseches Derech Eretz chapter 2) explains, “Those who harvest evil, falsify words, add language and are of slippery tongue, upon them the verse in Tehillim (35:6) says, ‘Let their path be dark and slippery, with Hashem’s angel in pursuit [of them].’

Therefore, one who cares about his own good will go in honesty and he will merit to sit within the domain of the Holy One blessed be He as it says in Tehillim (15:1-2), ‘Hashem, who shall dwell in your tent? One who walks with honesty.’”