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On the Parsha

In this week's Parsha, we find the future site of Hashem's Holy Shechina described as, "But only to the place which Hashem your G-d shall choose from all your tribes, to set His Name there; you shall inquire after His dwelling and come there." (Devarim 12:5).

The exact site of the Beis HaMikdash was chosen on account of the remarkable rise in spirituality that occurred there. Noach offered his thanksgiving offerings there after he emerged from the Teivah. This was also the site of Akeidas Yitzchok, and Yaakov Avinu recognized the site as a house of Hashem - Bais Elokim. Surely, revealing these facts and the location of the site of the Bais HaMikdash could have been remarkably inspirational to the nation of Israel! And yet, nowhere in the Pasukim do we find that Hashem revealed the location of the Bais HaMikdash. Why is this so?

The Rambam in his Moreh Nevuchim (Part III Chapter 45) provides three reasons why Hashem did not reveal this information. The first reason is so that the surrounding gentiles would not attempt to preemptively take from us the holy site of the future Beis HaMikdash. The second reason is so that the gentiles would not attempt to plow the place under (which ultimately occurred anyway - See tractate Taanis 23a). The third reason is so that it would not foster jealousy among the tribes of Israel - Shevatim as to who would ultimately merit to host the Shechina's presence here on earth.

There is an important principle that we can derive from here: we must always weigh our words carefully - even if what we are saying is the truth. Indeed, notwithstanding the benefits of revealing the true location of the Bais HaMikdash, Hashem weighed the negative repercussions of revealing that truth and decided not to volunteer it. When there are potential negative repercussions, we must weigh our words carefully - it is certainly not a Mitzvah to blindly volunteer the truth.

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Chizuk - Inspiration

In New York State, there is (and still is - it seems) a requirement that teens under 18 must state that they have completed at least 50 hours of behind-the-wheel practice with a licensed parent, guardian, or driving school instructor before receiving a driver's license. 50 hours is a long time and this often places a huge burden on the busy parents of such teenagers - a burden that manifests itself either in time or in money. The repercussions of this requirement is that when it comes to certifying that the requirement has been met, these teens will sometimes a) sign someone else's name to the certification which is not permitted, b) lie outright about meeting the requirement or c) pursue a course of action that raises serious Halachic and Hashkaphic questions. They place a tiny, barely detectable dot between the five and the zero in the aforementioned number and thus assert that they had fulfilled five, not fifty hours of instruction.

There was a young lady, who was attuned to Hashem's Midah of Everyday Emes who asked her peers, "Is it so difficult to wait until 18 to get our license? Is it worth it to not be Ehrlich and sacrifice our Midos? Let's try to get those fifty hours of driving practice so we can complete the certification honestly, and if we don't manage to do so, we can wait until we are 18." She and many others in her grade that she personally inspired acted accordingly.

Halacha - Jewish Law

A young graphic designer living in Eretz Yisroel finally found a position where she could effectively use her talents and hard work in school to make a living. Her employer seemed to have two businesses. The first business was that he published and promoted local Yellow Page type publications to various communities throughout the country. He and his other employees obtained ads from both local businesses as well as more prominent national businesses to place in these local publications. The young lady's job was to design the advertisements that would appear in each of

"May I back out of a school carpool that I have already committed to?"
"Should I report a co-worker who is acting dishonestly?"
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these local publications. It was a dream job – or so she thought.

Her employer also owned a more lucrative, second business. The second business was a van transport business. The graphic artist would design ads for five of the van transport advertisers that appeared in each of the Yellow Page type publications.

One day, she observed her employer carrying five different cell phones. She then observed him speaking on the different cell phones in different accents! The first phone call he received had inquired as to the price of a van transport from, say, Yerushalayim to Kiryat Sefer. He responded using one of his different accents that it would cost 1900 NIS. The caller responded that this was an insane amount of money. Her employer calmly answered that given the cost of gasoline, insurance and the cost of vans and their maintenance, the cost was very reasonable. He then invited the customer to shop his competition in the Yellow Page publications. The caller responded that he definitely would do so.

The next call her employer received was from the very same caller – this time on a different cell phone of his. Pretending to be a different person, and using a different accent, her employer quoted the caller a price of 2150 NIS. This same scenario played out a third time and her employer, pretending to be yet another person and using a different accent, quoted the caller a price of 2050 NIS. Finally, her employer's first cell phone rang again, and he closed the deal with the caller for the original 1900 NIS using his original accent.

The young lady was appalled. She realized that her entire job was a façade! That first business of printing and promoting local Yellow Page publications was a front to enable her employer's van transport business to extract exorbitant fees from its clients.

She posed the following question to Hagaon Harav Yitzchok Zilberstein Shlita: Must she quit her job due to the dishonesty of her employer? Rav Zilberstein answered that she is obligated to inform him that what he is doing is forbidden and wrong. However, she is not obligated to quit her job, because she is merely

performing her duties as a graphic designer and not engaging in deception herself. Even though she is providing her services to the dishonest employer, it is not considered a violation of Lifnei Iver or Mesayeh Lidei Ovrei Aveirah – assisting the hand of evil-doers, since even without her, her employer can readily do the Aveirah as the graphic design can be readily done by others (Vavei HaAmudim Vol. #104, Siman 1. Av 5782).

Mussar – Introspection

This week we continue with Chapter Two of our translation of the Chofetz Chaim's Sefer entitled, "Sfas Tamim."

The rest of the work (Tanna D'Bei Eliyahu 3:2-3), I have copied below.

Let us take an example from the ways of the world: A person only builds a house in order to bring inside it nice fruits and beautiful furniture, and to light his fire and to light his lamps. (The intent is that a person builds a house so that he can benefit from it and receive pleasure.) Likewise, the Holy One Blessed be He only built the universe and everything in it for His Honor to reward and benefit those who choose to do good (it is just that mankind messed things up by their own choice). So too is mankind. Because of your ways, as it says in Hoshea (7:13), "Woe to them for they have strayed from Me."

A person should contemplate three things every day. When he enters the bathroom they say to him, "Look that your ways are just like that of a farm animal." When he lets out blood, they say to him, "See that you are but flesh and blood." When he see a person who is being buried, they say to him, "See to where you will end up." And even still you are not changing your actions. Rather you sit and talk excessively about matters of no consequence, as it states (Mishlei 19:3), "Man's folly perverts his ways, and his heart rages against Hashem." And you speak lies and violate that which it says in the Torah (Shmos 23:7), "Stay far away from falsehood."

The meaning is that through lying and the incorrect actions that man takes up – such punishments are brought unto him.