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On the Parsha

In this week's Parsha, Moshe Rabbeinu relates to the nation of Israel how he tried to convince Hashem to allow him to enter into Eretz Yisroel, but Hashem was firm. He then relates how Hashem told him as follows (Dvarim 3:27): "Go up to the top of the summit and gaze about, to the west, the north, the south, and the east. Look at it well, for you shall not go cross this Jordan [River]."

The commentaries ask, "What the purpose was of Hashem having had Moshe Rabbeinu see the land?" The author of the *Kitzur Shluchan Aruch*, Rav Shlomo Ganzfried zt"l (1804-1886) in his *Sefer Aperiion*, explains that it was not a propitious time for Moshe to enter the land because there was no appropriate place yet for the *Beis HaMikdash* to be built. Rav Ganzfried explains that Moshe Rabbeinu could not fully see this truth, however, unless he would have actually observed it with his own physical faculties. Only after he was to see the land for himself, with his own eyes, was he able to accept this truth. This is why Hashem showed the land to Moshe Rabbeinu.

We find an even greater insight in regard to Moshe Rabbeinu's smashing of the two tablets. HaRav Shmuel Eidels zt"l (1555-1631), the author of the *Maharsha*, points out (*Yevamos* 62a) how Moshe Rabbeinu broke the *luchos* on his own accord. He did so without having consulting with Hashem, even though Hashem ultimately agreed to his actions.

Moshe Rabbeinu had made a *kal v'chomer* argument: "If someone who is a *ben Neichar* (Moshe knew from Hashem that this refers to someone estranged from Hashem) may not partake of the *Korban Pesach* – which is just one *mitzvah* of the 613, how can those who had fashioned an *eigel* – which violates all 613 commandments partake of the Torah? Should I not, therefore, break the *luchos*?"

The *Maharsha* asks, "Why didn't Moshe make this very same argument **even earlier**? Why didn't Moshe do so

when he was first informed by Hashem that *Klal Yisrael* had sinned? The *Maharsha* answers with a quote of the *Ikkarim* (4:15) - that it was *nirah l'einayim* – apparent to his eyes. A tangible, visible, experience makes for a far greater impression.

Part of the *middah* of *Emes* is to be able to fully see truth when we are confronted with it. Unfortunately, **everyone has limitations in this regard**. This is true even of the greatest of people, and certainly us. How then can we make sure that we see the truth when it confronts us? There are two things that we can do. We can be aware that we all have this limitation. We can also ensure that we do see and here things for ourselves with our own faculties. If Moshe Rabbeinu deemed it important enough to tell all of *Klal Yisroel* this piece of information, then it is certainly important enough for us to take heed of the concept.

Chizuk - Inspiration

There was a married couple with children that had moved from the United States to *Bnei Brak*. The couple had converted to Torah Judaism while yet in America, and had sought a more spiritual environment. Their daughter attended a *Bais Yaakov* in *Bnei Brak* and, unfortunately, was teased by some of the other girls in her school. As a result, she did not wish to return to school.

The parents were at wits' end - not knowing what to do. It was suggested that they go to Rav *Eliezer Menachem Man Shach* zt"l (1899-2001) for advice. After presenting the problem to Rav *Shach*, he requested that they bring their daughter to him.

Rav *Shach* asked the young girl. "Do you know who I am?" The girl responded, "Of course, you are Rav *Shach*!"

Rav *Shach* responded, "Yes, but I am also going to tell you something else." He continued, "Do you know that I too am a *ger*? And not only that, but many teachers in your *Bais Yaakov* are also *geirim*. There is nothing wrong with being a *Ger* – in fact, it is a very precious things and something of which to be very proud. So, if anyone ever

says anything negative – smile to yourself and be very proud.”

Rav Shach was widely known for his absolute devotion to emes. After the meeting with the young girl, someone who was present had asked Rav Shach as to how he could have left the young girl with the impression that he was actually a ger.

Rav Shach explained: “In order to remove *tzaar*, anguish from someone – it is permitted to lie. When Chazal tell us that for someone who is careful to be meticulous in only saying the emes - it is “mutar l’shanon mipnei hashalom” to promote peace and harmony it is permitted to “veer.” This also includes trying to alleviate someone’s *tzaar* – anguish.

Nonetheless, it is still preferable, if possible, to use an expression that is still technically true – even if the person you are speaking to may interpret it differently. It states in Parshas Aikev (Dvarim 10:19). ‘You must love the Ger for you were Geirim in Mitzrayim.’ Technically, we are all Geirim (and/or descendants thereof).”

The young lady went back to school and adjusted quite well, having been inspired by Rav Shach zt”l. We see from Rav Shach zt”l that Emes is like keeping Shabbos. We must meticulously observe every detail of the 39 malachos and the Rabbinic protections to Shabbos, but when there is a situation of *pikuach nefesh* – saving life - we must be quick to act.

By the same token, if we observe that a person’s anguish can be relieved through “veering” we should do so. If, however, the “veering” could be minimized by technically making sure that it is still true, we should do so. Rav Shach’s actions here are remarkably inspiring in keeping to this principle.

Halacha – Jewish Law

Is it merely permitted to “veer” from the truth on account of peace or is it, in fact, a Mitzvah? The final conclusion, believe it or not, is unclear in the Poskim. The Gemorah in Yevamos 65b records a dispute:

And Rav Ilai said in the name of Rabbi Elazar Ben R’ Shimon: **It is permitted** for a person to depart from the

truth in a matter that will bring peace, as it states: “Your father commanded before he died, saying: So you shall say to Yoseph, “Please pardon your brothers’ crime..” (Bereishis 50:16–17). Yaakov never issued this command, but his sons said he did - to preserve peace between them and Yoseph.

Rabbi Nosson says: **It is a mitzvah** to depart from the truth in order to preserve peace, as it states, “And Shmuel said: How can I go, and Shaul will hear and kill me?” (Shmuel I 16:2). Hashem responded in the next pasuk that Shmuel **should say he went to sacrifice an offering, indicating that Hashem commands one to lie in order to preserve peace.**

It was taught in the school of Rabbi Yishmael: Great is peace, as even Hashem veered from the truth for it. As, Sarah said of Avraham: “And my lord is old” (Bereishis 18:12), and in the end, Hashem told Avraham that Sarah said: “And I am old” (Bereishis 18:13). Hashem adjusted Sarah’s words to spare Abraham hurt feelings that might lead Abraham and Sarah to quarrel.

The Rif (Bava Metzia 23b) rules that for shalom it is, in fact, a Mitzvah. The Chofetz Chaim, (Hilchos Rechilus 1:8), however, uses the term Muttar – it is permitted and does not use the term “Mitzvah.”

Mussar – Introspection

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

More specifically, one who accustoms himself in it [lying], does it many hundreds of times throughout his lifetime. He thus brings himself to a horrible and bitter end. This is what it states in Tanna D’bei Eliyahu Zutah chapter 3: “The Holy One Blessed be He [directly] created everything in His world with the exception of the character trait of lying and doing evil – for the Holy One Blessed be He did not make them [rather, man in his heart chose to generate them], as it states (Dvarim 32:4), “The deeds of the [Mighty] Rock are perfect, for all His ways are just; a faithful G-d, without injustice..” And it further states (Tzefania 3:5), “The L-rd is just in [the nation’s] midst; He commits no injustice..”