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Written by Rabbi Yair Hoffman

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## On the Parsha

In this week's Parsha, we read about the process of how the Bikkurim, the first fruits, were brought. The Mishna (Bikkurim 3) explains that there was a grand and festive procession for those who were bringing their first fruits to Yerushalayim and then onto the Beis HaMikdash.

On the way, they were led by flutists and were greeted by dignitaries. There were stations (Ma'amados) with deputations representing the people of all the cities in the district assembled in the open squares to greet them.

When they arrived at the outskirts of Yerushalayim, messengers were sent ahead to announce their arrival. The officers of the Beis HaMikdash came out to meet them, and all the artisans along the streets of Yerushalayim rose before them, greeting them and hailing them as brothers from this area or that area. When they reached the outer court and hall of the Bais HaMikdash, they were welcomed by the Leviim who were singing Tehillim.

The Bikkurim were brought in gold, silver, or willow baskets to which live doves were tied. The doves that were tied to the baskets were given as a Korban and a declaration would be made in front of the Kohain in the Bais HaMikdash.

As we can see, this was a very elaborate and celebrated process that culminated in the declaration in front of the Kohain. What was said in this declaration?

The Pasuk says as follows, "You shall go to the Kohain in charge at that time and say to him, 'I acknowledge this day before Hashem that I have entered the land that Hashem swore to our fathers to give to us.'" (Devarim 26:3).

The Ramban explains that the point of the declaration is to state that **Hashem keeps His word – He gave us the land that he promised to our fathers.**

We must note that the entire celebration and elaborate procedure of the bringing of the Bikkurim culminates in a declaration that begins with the recognition of Hashem's Middah of Emes - He keeps His word. This underscores the importance and centrality of keeping our word and our commitment to Emes.

So important is the Middah of Emes that it is reflected in our very name. The people of Klal Yisrael are called "Yehudim." This is after Yehuda, the son of Yaakov Avinu. Why are we named after Yehuda? Chazal explain that Yehuda admitted the truth when he admitted that Tamar was in fact righteous and it was he that was mistaken. Therefore, it is fitting that we should be named after him.

## Chizuk - Inspiration

In the early 1980's, the life of an observant Jewish lawyer was a little bit different than it is today. Back then, it was not the norm for a lawyer to wear a Yarmulkah in the office. Indeed, very few even wore a Yarmulkah in law school.

When Reuvain was in law school he wore his Yarmulkah. Having graduated from law school, he was on his way to a job interview at a prestigious law firm in Manhattan. As he exited the subway, he debated with himself whether he should wear his Yarmulkah during his interview. Ultimately, he decided to remove it.

He entered the law office and was soon called in for the interview with the founder of the firm. Toward the end of the interview, the founder told him, "The main reason that I granted you this interview was that after I had done my due diligence on you, I was impressed that you were a man of integrity and conviction. Through my research, I discovered that you wear a Yarmulkah even though it runs against the societal norm. However, when you exited the train this morning on your way to our interview, I was actually walking behind you and I saw you remove your Yarmulkah. I thought you were a man of

integrity and conviction, but now I am uncertain. I do not think that you are the candidate that we are looking for.”

Although this incident does not have a happy ending, it does highlight two important points. The first is the importance of living a life of conviction. The protagonist in our story should have stuck with his convictions and worn his Yarmulkah on his job interview as he did in law school. The second is that, when we do not stick to our convictions, aside from the fact that Hashem sees us when we compromise our convictions, you never know who else may be watching – it may be the person who is about to interview you.

### Halacha – Jewish Law

Reuvain and Shimon decided to purchase two lottery tickets together and split their potential winnings. They reasoned that since the Gemorah says that the Mazel of two is greater than one (Bava Metzia 105a) they had a greater chance of winning. Reuvain bought one ticket for himself and one ticket on Shimon’s behalf. With help from above, Reuvain’s ticket won the lottery. Reuvain, not wanting to share the winnings with Shimon, decided to test Shimon. He called Shimon on the phone and said, “Shimon! Your ticket won the lottery. You have won a half-million New Israeli Shekels! You do remember our agreement though, right? Please honor it and split your winnings with me.”

Shimon responded, “Look Reuvain, we discussed the lottery and what we would do if we won, but by no means was this an agreement. I will give you something, but I certainly do not intend to split the winnings with you.”

Reuvain responded, “It is quite clear that you had never intended from the beginning to honor our agreement. Since that is the case, I will not honor our agreement either. To tell you the truth, it was not your lottery ticket that won, it was mine – and I will not be splitting my winnings with you, the same way you would not have split the winnings with me if your ticket had won.”

Is Reuvain justified in not honoring their agreement after he discovered that Shimon would not have honored the agreement if he would have won? In the work entitled, “Zichru Eliyahu Moshe” by Rav Yechiel Michel Stern Shlita (p.98), the following ruling is cited: The Gemorah in Bava

Basra 106b concludes that when brothers divide their father’s estate between them by lottery to determine which brother is to receive which portion, once the lot for one of the brothers is drawn, no one can retract their decision to divide the estate by lottery even if the brothers are now unhappy with the portion they received. Rav Ashi explains that with the satisfaction that each brother receives from the fact that they agreed to accept the results of the lottery, they fully transfer ownership to each other.

Rav Stern notes that the Rashbam (ibid) explains that we may extend the above ruling to cases of partnership as well (as in our case where Reuvain and Shimon bought two lottery tickets together and decided to split the winnings). We may also extend the above ruling that dealt with inheriting land to cases of moveable objects (Metaltilin – as in our case with Reuvain and Shimon). Therefore, it would seem that in our case, since Reuvain and Shimon agreed to split the winnings of the two tickets they bought together, it is binding and Reuvain must split the winnings of his ticket with Shimon regardless of Shimon’s reaction.

### Mussar – Introspection

This week we continue with

Chapter Two of our translation of the Chofetz Chaim’s Sefer entitled, “Sefas Tamim.”

“Due to the abundance of our sins, lies and deception have become more rampant among some people, and it has become to them as if it were permitted. They lie in their everyday business dealings and say, ‘I purchased it at such and such an amount or they gave it to me for such and such. At times they will even swear to this. [And an oath even in another language is considered like an oath by Torah law.]

They think that this is all within the concept of being a sharp businessman to know how to turn a profit. They further say, ‘Whoever does not do this in today’s generation – does not eat bread [make a living.]’ It has reached the point where people have become a source of shame. They say, ‘It is well known that these people cheat and lie. They do not speak the truth.’ Woe to us for this grave desecration.”