

Volume II Issue #21

Written by Rabbi Yair Hoffman

-- Sponsored by Dr. and Mrs. Paul and Barbara Bermanski L'Ilui Nishmas Yisrael Ben Avigdor --

Parshas Nitsavim, 28 Elul, 5782

September 24, 2022

## On the Parsha

Our Parsha begins with the words, "Atem Nitzavim Hayom Kulchem Lifnei Hashem Elokaichem. - You are all standing today before Hashem your G-d." The Kabbalah Seforim note that the very first word "Atem – You" (which is spelled **Alef, Taf, Mem**) contains the same letters as the word "Emes" (which is spelled **Alef, Mem, Taf**). Hashem is telling us that no matter your wisdom, stature or status, you are all standing before Hashem i.e. your very existence, is merited through the Middah of Emes.

In Devarim, Pasuk 29:14, the Torah makes it clear that Hashem's covenant is between Him and those members of Klal Yisrael that are here today and those that are yet to be born. The previous Pasuk also mentions that the covenant is with members of Klal Yisrael that are here today by saying, "It is not just with you that Hashem has made this covenant..." Why did the Torah include these seemingly superfluous words?

The Gemorah in Shavuos (39b) answers that Moshe Rabbeinu is trying to ensure the absolute integrity of the covenant that is being made. The words are not extra. "It is not just with you" means something deeper, according to the Gemorah. They mean that the very terms upon which the covenant is made is not to be self-defined by Klal Yisroel. Effectively, the Posuk is saying "It is not up to you to define the terms of the covenant." This means that Klal Yisrael cannot later say, "Oh that is not what we meant when we entered into our covenant." The criterion is not subjective, but rather objective – the covenant has exacting, clearly defined terms and conditions. These conditions should be kept honestly, as originally intended, and should not be reinterpreted by Klal Yisrael at a later time, but rather as defined for eternity by Hashem and Moshe.

We also know that Moshe went to great lengths to ensure that the terms and conditions of the covenant were so precise and exacting. Moshe did this to ensure that the covenant would be carried out with Emes and integrity. As we said above, "Atem" and "Emes" contain

the same letters. Our existence before Hashem is on account of our Emes.

## Chizuk - Inspiration

*From a Reader of The Emes Parsha Sheet:*

Regarding last week's story about a man who removed his Yarmulka for an interview and did not get the job (Vol II #20) I know a story where the opposite happened.

The story occurred to one of my father's congregants many years ago. We lived in a community where you could not find a Minyan of Shomrei Shabbos people. My father ran a youth group class on Shabbos afternoons. One boy in the class had just finished an accounting program and was having difficulty finding a job. He believed it was because he wore a Yarmulka. He asked my father the Rav, if he could take off his Yarmulka for an interview. My father explained that while it was not a serious Aveira like Chillul Shabbos, compromising his beliefs would tangibly affect him.

A few weeks later, he reported to my father that he had interviewed with an Irish accounting firm and relayed the following to him. When he arrived at the office, he walked into the waiting room and saw a dozen people filling out applications. He figured he had no chance of landing the job as he was wearing his Yarmulka. Then the door opened, and the boss walked in. He looked around the room, pointed at the man with the Yarmulka and said, "You're next."

In the office, the boss asked, "You're religious? You're gonna wear that beanie and take off Saturdays and Jewish holidays?" Not sure what was to come next, the boy stood his ground and answered affirmatively. The boss said, "Good. I need someone I can trust and now I know you're honest."

## Halacha – Jewish Law

**Question:** I have a

relative that is often very jealous of me. Is it

permitted to lie to my relative about those aspects of my life that make him envious so that he is not jealous of me?

To subscribe to this weekly, free newsletter or for further information about our Foundation, please visit us

at [www.everydayemes.org](http://www.everydayemes.org)  
or contact: [info@everydayemes.org](mailto:info@everydayemes.org).

*"May I back out of a school carpool that I have already committed to?"  
"Should I report a co-worker who is acting dishonestly?"*

Call our **Emes Halacha Hotline** with your Everyday Emes questions at: **718-200-5462**.

**Response:** Generally speaking, this is a classical case of “Mutar Leshanos Mipnei HaShalom – it is permitted to lie to maintain the peace” as it ensures that someone is at peace, i.e. not be jealous or upset. However, Rav Nachum Yavrov ZT”L explains that most Poskim hold that permitting a lie to maintain the peace is limited to people who are committed to leading a life of Everyday Emes. However, if one is generally not careful with telling the truth, then one may not avail oneself of this dispensation. Rav Yavrov also writes that even when it is permitted to lie to maintain the peace, if possible, one should phrase the lie in a manner so that what is said could still be interpreted theoretically in a truthful manner.

It is interesting to note that if one is generally not truthful, then his or her ability to make peace between people is compromised since most Poskim according to Rav Yavrov, hold that one may only lie to maintain the peace if one is generally careful to be honest. The uncompromised ability to make peace between people can be a powerful incentive to practice Everyday Emes.

In Shmuel Aleph (Chapter 17) Dovid asked Shaul HaMelech for permission to battle with Golyas. The Midrash Tanchuma (Parshas Emor Siman 4) explains the Pasukim in the following manner. Shaul HaMelech clothed Dovid with his royal tunic and weapons which should have been too big for the younger and smaller Dovid. A miracle transpired, and the tunic and weapons fit Dovid perfectly. Immediately, Shaul HaMelech glanced at Dovid enviously because he saw this as a sign that Dovid would succeed him as king of Israel. When Dovid noticed that Shaul’s face was white with envy, he lied so as not to arouse Shaul’s jealousy. He said that he could not walk with Shaul’s tunic and weapons.

Rav Chanoch Zundel Ben Yoseph ZT”L, author of the Aitz Yoseph and Anaf Yoseph commentaries, explains that even though it was a lie, Dovid said it so as not to add to the pain of Shaul and awaken his jealousy. It seems that the possibility of this happening was enough to invoke the dispensation of lying to maintain the peace. Similarly, in the case mentioned above, to quell the jealousy of a relative, it would be permitted to lie to maintain the peace.

## Mussar – Introspection

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

“The prohibition of deception caused this world to diminish, the cycle of poverty continues in this world [on its account]. It is quite rare in our times that a wealthy person maintains his wealth for the entirety of his lifetime – he keeps it for only half of his days or one third of them. At times, he only keeps his wealth for a few years which is something that did not exist in the generations before us. Wealth only lasts for a few years or a few months. The reason this is so, is because this [the prevalence of deception] created it all. And it is known that we are responsible for one another.

If it appears to someone that he is doing evil and he still maintains his wealth, this is certainly because his wealth is destined to bring him down as the Pasuk in Devarim (7:10) states, ‘And He repays those who hate Him, to their face, to cause them to perish..’ He will be lost to the World to Come, he will grind his teeth in despair and his descendants will beg for bread. For he combined his money with tainted money and this came [the tainted money] and destroyed the former [the honest money] as mentioned earlier. It is like what happened with [the money of] Nakdimon Ben Gurion cited in Kesuvos 66b.

[The daughter of the very wealthy Nakdimon Ben Gurion who was impoverished said to Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakkai, ‘My teacher, sustain me.’ He said to her, ‘My daughter, who are you?’ She replied, ‘I am the daughter of Nakdimon ben Gurion.’ He said to her, ‘My daughter, the money of your father’s household, where did it go?’ She replied, ‘My teacher, don’t they say such a proverb in Jerusalem: Salt for money is lacking [Choser]? There is nothing with which to preserve it and prevent it from being lost. And some say the proverb asserts that kindness [Chesed] is salt for money - it preserves it. He continued to ask her: ‘And the money of your father-in-law’s house, which was used properly, for benevolent acts, where is it?’ She replied, ‘This one [the dishonestly earned money] came and destroyed that one [the honestly earned money].’”