



Volume III Issue # 1  
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### On the Parsha

In this week's Parsha, we find a fascinating Targum Yonasan (Bereishis 4:8) that elaborates on the sin of Kayin who murdered his brother Hevel. Kayin points out that his offering which was brought first was not accepted by Hashem, but Hevel's offering which was brought after Kayin's, was accepted. Further, it was Kayin, not Hevel, who conceived the idea of bringing an offering to Hashem in the first place. Hevel responded that Kayin's offering was of inferior quality, and that was likely the reason why his offering was refused. Kayin responded, "Les Din V'les Dayan – there is no justice and there is no Ultimate Judge."

Rav Yerachmiel Chassid is a Rosh Chaburah in the Lakewood Yeshiva (BMG) who authored a Sefer entitled, "Im Levavi Asicha." In his Sefer (Vol. II #20), he notes that Kayin ended up denying the concept of true justice in the world and the existence of the Ultimate Judge (i.e. the Creator of the world) only because of the extraordinary difficulty in being Modeh Al HaEmes – admitting the truth.

The fact is, as Rav Chatzkel Levenstein ZT"l points out, that Kayin had a personality flaw of being miserly and that is why he brought Hashem an inferior offering. When his brother pointed out to him that the true reason his offering was not accepted was because it was of inferior quality, he could not accept the truth and it was then that he came to deny his Creator.

There is a Ralbag regarding the sin of Gaychazi (Malachim II 5:25) that gives us insight here. Elisha the prophet, cured Naaman the general of Aram, of his leprosy. Naaman wanted to reward Elisha, but Elisha refused. Hoping to keep for himself the reward that Elisha refused, Gaychazi waited until Elisha was out of sight and ran quickly to Naaman. He tactfully implied that Elisha needed a talent of silver and two suits of clothing. Naaman gave Gaychazi two talents of silver to give to Elisha which Gaychazi kept for himself. Later, Elisha asked Gaychazi, "Where are you coming from?" Gaychazi answered, "Your servant went neither here nor there."

The Ralbag remarks that if Gaychazi would have admitted his crime he would have incurred a lesser punishment. Elisha

would have told him to return the items in a manner that would show Naaman that Elisha had never asked for payment. Instead, Gaychazi added to his sin by not being Modeh Al HaEmes and admitting his error.

It is clear from this Ralbag that when a person has erred, even if he errs grievously – his punishment is lessened if he is Modeh Al HaEmes and admits guilt. Not so with Gaychazi – he compounded his error by not admitting. This proved to be the cause of his complete downfall as Gaychazi was stricken with leprosy forever.

If Kayin would have been Modeh Al HaEmes to Hevel, then Kayin would not have killed Hevel. When Hashem confronted him subsequently, his punishment would have been mitigated significantly if he would have admitted his crime. However, he did not admit to killing Hevel and therefore received the severe, unmitigated punishment to wander the earth in exile and struggle to work the land.

### Chizuk - Inspiration

Amsterdam Centraal Train Station is the true heart of the city. It is central not only in name, but it is also the biggest public transport transfer spot in Amsterdam, serving both visitors to Amsterdam as well as its city inhabitants.

Every day, 250,000 people go through Amsterdam Centraal Station. Local trains to Amsterdam Schiphol Airport depart every ten minutes from platform 14a and platform 15. It is also where a main Amsterdam tourist office as well as a money changing location are based.

Rav Moshe Aharon Stern ZT"L (1925-1998), the Mashgiach of Kamenetz would often arrive there along with a close acquaintance. In August of 1998, two months after the Mashgiach's passing, his acquaintance was at the money changing location in Amsterdam Centraal Station, and the gentile woman working there recognized him as Rav Stern's travel companion. She asked where Rav Stern was. When she heard of his passing she burst into tears.

She explained that years earlier, when she first started her job, the Rabbi came back to her after she had already changed his money and he had left the store. She was incensed. “You should have counted your currency before you left! You can’t come back now to complain!”

Rav Stern explained that he believed that she had given him far too much money in the exchange of currencies. She was so amazed at his level of integrity that she told her manager. The manager was so impressed that he announced over the loudspeaker for all to hear what the Rabbi from Israel had done.

The story is inspiring in two ways; Rav Stern’s integrity in returning the money, and the woman’s integrity in relating the story to her manager even though it made her look bad because it highlighted the error in changing money that she had made.

### Halacha – Jewish Law

**QUESTION:** I am a Yeshiva student who is studying in Yerushalayim. Every time I go back to Eretz Yisroel, there is a non-religious Israeli man or woman at the airport who asks me security questions such as what Yeshiva I attend, who the Rosh Yeshiva is, and what Mesechta I am learning. I believe that they have no idea what they are really asking about and what a proper response would be, so I am quite tempted to have some fun and make up the most preposterous responses I can think of such as, “I am studying in the Volozhin Yeshiva under Reb Naftoli Tzvi Yehuda Berlin and we are studying Meseches Bava Genush. Am I allowed pull such shtick?”

**ANSWER:** You should definitely not do so. The reasons are as follows: 1] We should first and foremost demonstrate Hakaras HaTov (gratitude) for the fact that airport security is on guard for us to help ensure our safety. We should not tease them or take them for granted. The Orchos Tzaddikim (Midas HaSheker) explains that our propensity to lie is predicated upon our Middos and we must be sure that we develop the Middah of Hakaras HaTov. 2] The Chofetz Chaim in the 7th chapter of his Sefer “Sfas Tamim” cites the Sifre on the Passuk of “VeHalachta BiDrachav – and you shall walk in His ways” that since Emes is one of the ways of Hashem, you are not “walking in His ways” when you lie and it is therefore a negation of a positive Mitzvah in the Torah. This is called a “Bitul Assei” and is a serious matter. Many people are entirely unaware of this ruling of the Chofetz Chaim. 3] There is a three-way debate regarding the Passuk in the Torah that

states, “Midvar Sheker Tirchak – stay far away from a false matter” (Shmos 23:7). Some say that it only applies to Dayanim (judges) involved in adjudicating a ruling (Orech Meisharim 9:1). Others say that by Torah law, it applies to everyone – but only when harm can come to someone through the lie (Sefer Yereim Mitzvah #235). The third opinion, which is generally considered Halacha L’Maaseh (the practiced law) and the conclusion of most Halachic authorities is that by Torah law, it applies to everyone - even when no harm will come from the lie. (Chareidim Mitzvas Assei 4:26) This would apply in our case where you are “harmlessly” lying to the security guard about your Yeshiva studies.

In addition to refraining from lying even when it does not harm anyone, there is also a higher level of truth that one should aspire to. It is a concept found in a Rashi at the end of Makkos (24a): “And speaks truth in his heart”. This is referring to one such as Rav Safra. Rashi explains that Rav Safra was reciting Kriyas Shema when a customer approached him to purchase an item. The customer stated his price to purchase the item and Rav Safra intended to accept the offer. However, he was unable to respond to the customer because he was in the middle of Kriyas Shema when interruption is not permitted. The customer misinterpreted Rav Safra’s silence as an indication that the price offered was too low and raised his offer (and continued to raise it due to Rav Safra’s continued silence). When Rav Safra completed the Kriyas Shema, he insisted on selling the item for the original price offered since he spoke “truth in his heart” and in his heart, he intended to accept the original offer.

### Mussar – Introspection

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

“The meaning of ‘Guard your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking falsehood’ [is that] if one conducts his dealings with deception, even if he may succeed initially, he will end up losing it all. As was explained in the earlier Midrash, ‘Damage’ is ready and waiting to take away the profits of ‘Falsehood’. He will not see his days ending in good. However, if he is careful to avoid deception, he will reach a pleasant and ripe old age. In the next world as well, how much goodness awaits him, as it states (Tehillim 101:6), ‘He who walks in the path of wholeness, he shall serve Me.’”