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## On the Parsha

This week's parsha begins with a special Mitzvah, a commandment to tell the Kohanim, the descendants of Aharon, to observe the special purity rules that only apply to them. A Kohain must maintain his special status and may not become impure through any contact with a corpse or even be under the same roof as a corpse. This should not be viewed as an onerous restriction. On the contrary, it is a remarkable badge of honor that is a testament to his special status.

The Midrash (Vayikrah Rabbah 26:6) explains that this special set of purity laws must be kept forever – by Aharon, his sons and grandsons until the end of all generations. But how did Aharon earn this special set of purity laws?

The Midrash above cites a verse in Tehillim (19:10), "The fear of Hashem is pure, existing forever; the judgments of Hashem are true, altogether just." Rav Levi explains from this verse that, 'He [Aharon] merited this special status through the fear of Hashem that Aharon demonstrated before Hashem.'"

The previous Aleksander Rebbe, Rav Avrohom Menachem Danciger ZT'L (1921–2005), author of the Imrei Menachem, explains that the fear cited in the Midrash refers to Aharon's complete submission to Hashem's will, which the Sages call "Hachna'ah". It is this complete submission that propelled Aharon to an extremely high level of truth in word and deed. Since he reached this level of truth, he merited receiving the special set of purity laws.

How does Hachna'ah lead one to truth? The answer can be found in another Midrash that explains the verse in Tehillim (85:12), "Truth sprouts from the ground" – to mean that truth sprouts only from someone who makes himself like the ground, i.e. where all step upon him and he neither has, nor demonstrates any personal agenda or animosity toward anyone. Since he bears no ill will to anyone and has no personal agenda, his actions are sincere, and his words are completely true and without compromise.

"Truth," writes the Imrei Menachem further, "is one of the only things that is established and lasts forever." This is the meaning of the Talmudic statement in Shabbos 104a that truth is what lasts. Since Aharon reached this remarkable level of truth - the reward that Aharon received, measure for measure, was the lasting special purity laws that were to be kept forever as mentioned above.

The Imrei Menachem understands this Midrash as revealing two remarkable observations. The first observation is that the sole means to achieving this extremely high level of truth in all that we say and do is through having no personal agenda or animosity toward others, and being entirely submissive to Hashem and His will (as the Midrash said that truth sprouts *only* from someone who makes himself like the ground). The second observation is that just like Truth is eternal and everlasting, so too is the reward to be received by one who is truthful.

## Halacha – Jewish Law

**QUESTION:** Chegg, Inc. is an American education technology company based in Santa Clara, California. Among other things, it provides Internet based, study assistance and help with homework. It is well known that unfortunately, many college students around the country use it to cheat. Specifically, students can cheat with Chegg by submitting questions to the Q&A service and then receive an answer from one of Chegg's experts in India within minutes. Other students who are subscribed to the Q&A service can also see that answer, which has sometimes resulted in multiple students providing suspiciously similar answers on exams. May a college professor who is suspicious that his students are using Chegg to cheat, go on Chegg's Q&A service and post a false answer to a question that is to appear on one of his tests? That way, he can catch the students that cheated by using the false answer that he had planted.

**ANSWER:** Before responding directly to your question, it is important to emphasize that cheating in school, in

any form, is forbidden. This is obvious, but it bears mentioning that it is also found in the responsa of Rav Moshe Feinstein ZT"l (Igros Moshe, CM Vol. II #30).

Regarding the question at hand, the first consideration is whether there is a prohibition to lie if one writes a falsehood, or does the prohibition only apply if one verbally tells a lie. The conclusion of the Rishonim is that there is a prohibition to write a falsehood as well (See Tzitz Eliezer Vol. XV #12 who cites Tosfos and the Yad Ramah). This would mean that the professor may not post a false answer on Chegg. On the other hand, one may counter that here the goal of the professor's lying is to prevent students from lying and cheating and may therefore be permitted. The Rosh in a responsum (35:4) deals with a similar question regarding Reuvain who hired false witnesses against Shimon, may Shimon, in turn, hire his own false witnesses to counter Reuvain's false witnesses? The Rosh rules that it is forbidden. Therefore, a college professor should not plant a lie on Chegg by posting a false response even if his goal is to prevent lying and cheating.

However, if the college professor ended up doing it anyways, he can fail any of the students who he caught using the false answer that he planted. This is because while it is forbidden to lie, we do not find in Halacha an Issur Hana'ah - a prohibition of benefitting from a lie that one has told.

### Chizuk - Inspiration

There is perhaps no greater example of dishonesty in the business world than the Ford Pinto. During production, the Ford Motor Company discovered that the design of the car's fuel tank had a critical error in it that left the fuel tank vulnerable to ruptures in the event of an accident. This could cause deadly fires. Ford could have chosen to admit the design flaw, recall the affected vehicles and fix the fuel tank. This would have been an honest and ethical thing to do. Instead, Ford chose not to disclose the design flaw and fix the problem because they felt it would be too expensive to remedy.

In the end, Ford's course of action was more expensive than doing the right thing to begin with. Engine fires led to many payouts due to deaths and injuries caused by the design flaw. Ford had to recall almost two

million vehicles and had to settle very costly lawsuits out of court. This exemplifies the words of Chazal (See Rashi Mishlei 12:19) – "Sheker Ain Lo Raglayim" – dishonesty has no legs to stand on. It will eventually be found out and lead to grave consequences.

### Mussar – Introspection

We continue with our translation of the fifth chapter of the Chofetz Chaim's Sefas Tamim.

"...Chazal have taught that a Chochom (wise man) is someone who can foresee the consequences of his actions. This means that even when a man is entrenched in a situation in life, he must constantly think about how his life circumstances can completely turn around to his detriment, which is very common today, because of our many sins. When it comes to his household expenditures, he should only spend an average amount of money and hold to a middle ground. He should not spend too much and not too little – it should be based on his position in life [squarely within his means]. And even if Hashem endowed him with great wealth, he should not wear embroidered clothes which are very expensive because in so doing, he is only harming his Nephesh, which will take him to a state of arrogance and allow the Yetzer Hora to utterly seduce him even further.

It [spending excessively] also causes other people who are not as wealthy to watch him and want to emulate him. In the end, they will borrow money and not pay back their debts or they will steal and extort.

As a consequence of these [spending] excesses, the cost and expense of making a wedding has increased to the point where many girls have come to a state of humiliation. When the time comes for them to marry, their fathers and mothers cry and there is no one to help them.

So too has the cost of living severely affected poor families. What is the cause of all of this, if not the excesses in extravagant [spending on] apparel, apparel that has now become necessities, because of our many sins. This has caused people to harm themselves both here and in the World To Come, and [caused harm] to the entire world."