

Volume IV Issue 16
Written by Rabbi Yair Hoffman

Parshas Beshalach, 17 Shevat, 5784
January 27, 2024

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On the Parsha

“And Moshe took with him the bones of Yoseph, who had exacted an oath from the Bnei Yisrael, saying, ‘Hashem will be sure to take notice of you. You shall carry up my bones from here [and take them] with you [when you leave Egypt].’” (Shemos 13:19)

It is interesting to note that the Possuk singles out Moshe as the one who took Yoseph’s bones with him. That begs the question as to what were the rest of Bnei Yisrael doing when Moshe was busy with the bones of Yoseph? The Gemora provides us with the answer: “Our Rabbis taught, ‘Come and see how beloved Mitzvos were to Moshe Rabbeinu! For the entire nation of Israel engaged in retrieving the spoils [of Egypt] and he engaged in Mitzvos as the verse states, ‘A person who is wise of heart grabs hold of Mitzvos.’” (Sotah 13a)

The Gemora says that while Moshe was occupying himself with the Mitzvah of fulfilling Yoseph’s oath to take his bones from Egypt, the rest of Bnei Yisrael were busy taking the spoils of Egypt. The Gemora uses the words, “the entire nation of Israel” when talking about those who engaged in taking the spoils of Egypt. “The entire nation of Israel” must surely have included everyone – even those with the highest moral fiber, including Tzaddikim and Talmidei Chachomim. And yet, from this Gemora, we see that they miscalculated - they abandoned the Mitzvah of taking Yoseph’s bones and opted instead, for gathering the spoils of Egypt.

It is true that Hashem wanted Bnei Yisrael to take the spoils of Egypt in payment for their forced labor as Hashem had promised Avrohom that Bnei Yisrael would leave Egypt with great wealth. However, Bnei Yisrael should have prioritized fulfilling the oath made to Yoseph first.

We see from here, that the desire for the wealth of Egypt, caused a slight impairment of judgement in Bnei Yisrael and even the Tzaddikim and Talmidei Chachomim among

them. Nonetheless, that slight impairment caused them to be blinded to the truth – that they were supposed to fulfill a promise to their ancestor, Yoseph, before seeking repayment for their forced labor by taking the spoils of Egypt.

Unfortunately, we encounter a similar dynamic today. The Possuk tells us, “Hineh Mah Tov uMah Na’im – Sheves Achim Gam Yachad” (Tehillim 133) – Behold what is good and pleasant, is when children show brotherhood and unity and sit peacefully with one another. Parents would like nothing more than to see their children get along. And yet, one of the leading causes of discord within the family, is often the fighting over possessions after parents have passed away. The family knows the importance of maintaining Shalom (peace) within the family and they know that is what their parents would want. Nevertheless, in pursuit of their parents’ wealth, questions such as, “Why does he get to run the family business?” or “Why does she get more property than me?” prevent the children from seeing the truth – that maintaining Shalom within the family is of the utmost importance and trumps the pettiness of bickering over material possessions.

Halacha – Jewish Law

QUESTION: There is an app called “Flip”. It is an app where you create an account and purchase products. Once you receive whatever you have bought, you can earn money by using the product and creating a short video with your review. Flip then pays you with “credits” when people buy the product based off of your review, or if you refer someone to the app. You can then use these credits to buy more products on Flip or transfer the credits into cash and then transfer the cash to your bank account. It only takes me a few minutes to create these video product reviews, and I have made a considerable amount of money with this app. There is nothing wrong with what I am doing, but I still do not want anyone to recognize who I am as it may not sit well with some members of our

community (e.g., what is a nice, observant, Jewish boy doing creating product reviews for an app?). May I record my reviews using a fake name for purposes of anonymity? Would I be transgressing the prohibition of “Midvar Sheker Tirchak” – distancing oneself from falsehood?

ANSWER: It is a good question. Rav Yaakov Moshe Hillel’s Bais Hora’ah has ruled that technically, using a nom de plume is not considered failing to tell the truth and therefore is not prohibited (Bais Hora’ah Ahavas Shalom OC Shailah 451). However, it is not recommended because the Possuk says, “Midvar Sheker Tirchak” – distance yourself from a falsehood and using a fake name may not be putting “enough distance” between you and a falsehood.

Some Poskim (Halachic authorities) are more lenient if the fake name alludes to the actual person in a truthful manner. For example, if instead of using your real name, you use the pen name “Davidson” when you are indeed the son of a man named, “David”. In such a case, the fake name is not entirely false.

Regarding whether a journalist is permitted to use a pen name, Rav Yaakov Chizkiyahu Fish in his Titein Emes L’Yaakov (5:21) quotes a ruling he received from the author of Kinyan Torah (Rav Avrohom Dovid Horvitz) that although sometimes there may be a leniency in saying a falsehood to ensure that a correct Halacha is followed, regarding a journalist writing in a newspaper, there is absolutely no leniency whatsoever. For a journalist who wants to retain his anonymity, Rav Horvitz recommends not signing any name at all. Alternatively, he may write, “Name Withheld Upon Request.” In your case, it would seem that using a pen name would be permitted, because it seems that you do not wish to be recognized as an observant Jew who creates product reviews for an app - hoping to minimize the chance of a potential Chillul Hashem.

Chizuk - Inspiration

Bnei Yisrael has been deeply saddened by the suffering of the kidnapped victims and their families, and the daily death toll of those who have died defending their brethren. Some people were further saddened by the fact that Hamas began to outright deny the cruelties that they

engaged in on October 7th, even though much of it was filmed with their own GoPros.

Recently, a Mashgiach of a Yeshiva said that these denials can be viewed as a sign of hope. Chazal tell us that “Sheker, Ain Lo Raglayim” – lies and falsehood have no legs to stand on. This shows that this enemy of our people who speak lies and falsehood will have no legs to stand on and will soon be destroyed. They do not speak the truth and so they will fail.

Mussar – Introspection

We continue with our translation of the seventh chapter of the Chofetz Chaim’s Sefas Tamim.

“So too did Moshe Rabbeinu, peace be upon him, instruct us regarding Temimus (innocent devotion and wholehearted sincerity). As the Torah relates (Devarim 18:13) ‘You shall be perfectly wholehearted with Hashem your G-d.’ Temimus is so great that anyone who conducts himself in this way throughout his life, will merit to sit in the Chamber of Hashem as King David teaches us (Tehillim 15:1-2) ‘Who will dwell in Your tent... those who walk in perfect faith.’ So too we find a similar idea regarding Yaakov Avinu, who conducted himself in perfect unquestioning faith, as the Possuk states (Beraishis 25:27) ‘Yaakov was a man of perfect character, a man of wholehearted innocent devotion.’ So too did King David, peace be upon him, praise those people who are perfect in their devotion, as the Possuk relates (Tehillim 119:1) ‘Praiseworthy are those who walk with Temimus.’

What is Temimus? It means that a person should speak without deceit and conduct his business without deceit. This means that his mouth reflects what is in his heart, since whoever speaks one way but intends something else is not called someone who has Temimus, but rather, without any question at all, he is called a manipulator, a flatterer and a fraud. King Solomon expresses this lesson (Mishlei 12: 20) ‘Deceit lurks in the heart of one who is planning evil.’ In contrast, anyone who lives a life of Temimus, will be aided by Hakodosh Boruch Hu in the conduct of his service and He (Hashem) will perfect his ways. As it says (Shmuel II 22:26) ‘With the devout you will deal devoutly.’ In this regard, Chazal have taught (Yoma 38b) ‘Those who want to purify themselves will be assisted in their efforts by Heaven.’