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Written by Rabbi Yair Hoffman

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## On The Parsha

"And the first one emerged ruddy..." (Beraishis 25:25)

Commenting on this Possuk that refers to Eisav's birth, the Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 63:8) teaches the following: "'Ruddy' - Rabbi Abba bar Kahana said: 'Like one who sheds blood.' When Shmuel saw Dovid who was ruddy, as it says, 'And he sent and brought him, and he was ruddy,' (Shmuel I 16:12) he became alarmed (and was hesitant to anoint him king).

He said, 'This one too will shed blood like Eisav.' The Holy One Blessed be He said to him, 'Eisav killed of his own accord, but this one (Dovid) will only kill by the authority of the Sanhedrin (i.e. when Halachically permitted).'"

The Midrash tells us that the ruddiness of Eisav and Dovid was a sign that their nature would lead them to shed blood. Therefore, Shmuel feared to anoint Dovid as king over Bnei Yisrael, lest Dovid be a shedder of blood like Eisav. Hashem told him that Dovid would not be like Eisav because Eisav killed of his own accord while Dovid would kill only by the authority of the Sanhedrin.

This requires further analysis. Why was Shmuel so concerned when he saw that Dovid was ruddy? Shmuel knew that Hashem chose Dovid to be king which obviously meant that he was the right person for the job. It is therefore quite evident that Dovid was on the highest of spiritual levels and exceptional in his piety. That being the case, what was Shmuel worried about? Dovid would overcome his nature and not transgress the severe sin of shedding innocent blood, wouldn't he?

Apparently, Shmuel feared that the character trait of murderousness in Dovid would cloud his judgment and cause him to kill an innocent person inadvertently, believing mistakenly that the victim deserved death and that it was permissible to kill him. Although Dovid had reached the highest levels of fear of Hashem and had a strong desire to do what is just, nevertheless, Shmuel thought that his murderousness trait would overcome his desire not to sin and would lead him to see things incorrectly and shed

innocent blood, like the wicked Eisav.

We learn from here the great power of a character trait. It has the ability to cloud a person's judgment and to bring even the most righteous of people to sin.

Rabbi Yisrael Salanter ZT"l used to explain that fear of Heaven alone is not sufficient to prevent a person from sin, since the trait of "Desire" has the power to confuse and cloud his judgment. Therefore, we cannot be satisfied with fear of Heaven alone. We must work on our ourselves to fix our character, to remove bad traits from our hearts and to habituate ourselves to good traits, so that the tendency to act according to our natural traits will not cloud our judgment and bring us to see falsehood as truth, and vice versa.

## Chizuk - Inspiration

The Baal HaTurim comments that the final Hebrew letters of each of the first three words of the Torah (Beraishis(ת) Bara (א) Elokim (א)) can be rearranged to spell, "Emes" – truth. This alludes to the fact that Hashem created the world with Divine Truth, as it says, "The beginning of your word is Truth." (Tehillim 119:160) One may ask, if the beginning of Hashem's word is Truth, shouldn't Hashem have chosen to start the Torah with words that place the allusion to Emes in the beginning letters of each of the first three words? The answer to this question may be illustrated by the following story.

During the infamous Cantonist Decree, the Russian army would force young Jewish boys to serve for many years in the army. This was especially hard on Jewish children, who were often given the most dangerous jobs and were pressured to give up their Jewish faith. To protect their children from being taken, Jewish families in Russia did everything they could to keep them out of the army.

In one village, there was a butcher who discovered that his son might be drafted. Every community had to provide four recruits for every thousand people who lived there. Instead of letting his son be taken, the butcher made a terrible choice. He bribed local officials to send an orphan boy who

was studying in Yeshiva to take his son's place. The orphan had no one to advocate on his behalf and so, he was drafted and taken into the army.

When the other Jewish people in the village found out what the butcher had done, they were very upset. Some people wondered how Hashem could allow something so unfair to happen to an orphan. When the Chofetz Chaim heard about this situation and the questioning of Hashem's ways, he simply answered, "Wait."

Time passed - five years, then ten years, then twenty years. During this time, the butcher and his son seemed to be doing very well. However, after more than 25 years, something unexpected happened. The butcher's son got very sick with a dangerous illness called cholera, which affects the intestines and is highly contagious. When he died, the Chevrah Kadisha (Jewish burial society) was too afraid to handle his body because they were afraid that they might catch the disease. As a result, the butcher had to bury his own son by himself, using his own shovel, because no one else would come near the body.

The story teaches us that even though we might not understand why unfair things happen at first, that is because we do not have the full picture of what will transpire.

Getting back to our question, that is why Hashem chose to place the allusion to Emes in the letters at the end of each of the first three words of the Torah. We often see the Emes of Hashem's ways only in retrospect, at the end, when we have the full picture of what has transpired. Only then do we realize the justice and perfection of His ways.

### Halacha – Jewish Law

**QUESTION:** I recently participated in a Shabbaton for a Kiruv School (school that seeks to return Jews to their heritage) by hosting some of the students of the school for Shabbos meals. Some of my acquaintances in the neighborhood did the same. I was amazed when I heard that these acquaintances started their Shabbos day meals at precise and somewhat odd times such as 11:50 AM and 12:20 PM. When I inquired further about these start times, I realized that the meals actually started at conventional times such as 12:00 PM or 12:30 PM, however, it was the teacher in charge of the meal arrangements that was lying to the students and telling them that the meals at their hosts' houses started earlier than they actually did. She did this so that all the students would be on time for the meals. Was the teacher permitted to lie about the start times of the meals?

**ANSWER:** Rav Shimon Sofer ZT"l addresses a similar topic in his Hisorerus Teshuvah (Siman 36) regarding deceiving a person by moving his Zeiger (clock) ahead so he will not be late. Rav Shimon initially rules that it is permitted and cites as support, the Gemora in Shabbos where Rava saw people preparing vegetables on Friday afternoon in a manner that was prohibited on Shabbos. He felt that this should not be done after Mincha on Friday afternoon as the activity may unintentionally extend into Shabbos and cause them to sin. Due to his concern, Rava lied and said that a letter arrived from Eretz Yisrael forbidding the cutting of vegetables in such a manner close to Shabbos. Therefore, it appears from this Gemora, that one may lie to someone for their own benefit (in the Gemora's case, to prevent them from sinning).

However, Rav Shimon questions if that is what the Gemora really means because it is also possible to understand the Gemora in a different manner. Perhaps Rava actually did ask that the letter be written to prohibit this practice of cutting vegetables and the letter was indeed written and came from Eretz Yisrael. Therefore, when Rava said that a letter came from Eretz Yisrael prohibiting the practice, that was indeed the truth. Accordingly, there would be no support from this Gemora to the notion that one may lie to someone for their own benefit.

In your case, it would appear that regardless of whether one is allowed to lie for another's benefit, here, in the scenario that you have raised, there are additional factors to permit it. Namely, if some students come late to the Shabbos meals, that can cause discomfort to the students that are already there on time and can damage the atmosphere that the hosts are trying to create and may hinder their Kiruv efforts. Since Kiruv is considered to be Hatzalas Nefashos (saving a life), lying to ensure that everyone is on time for their meal to ensure that Kiruv efforts are not hindered would be permitted.

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

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