



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

The Truth About Falsehood

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Kollel Scholar and Director of Special Projects

"Keep far from a falsehood" (23:7)

In this week's Parsha, the Torah enjoins us to "*keep far* from falsehood." When we contrast this with the more direct command found in Parshas Kedoshim (Vayikra 19:11) "you shall not lie, one person to another," we are left to wonder, what is being added by the instruction to *keep far* from falsehood?

Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg (Haksav V'Hakabbalah) explains that the Torah is relating that speaking falsehood is a common and frequent activity that people fall into and therefore we have to take particular care in not allowing ourselves to even come close to any falsehoods.

Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin (Oznaim LaTorah) suggests a different approach. The verse in our Parsha is coming to teach us that even in a situation where it becomes necessary to speak falsely, such as to maintain peace (see Yevamos 65b), one should at least try to speak in way that could possibly be interpreted as truthful. As an example, he cites the episode where Yaakov impersonates Esav in order to receive Yitzchak's blessings. There (Bereishis 27:18-19), Yitzchak asks, "Who are you?" and Yaakov responds, "I am Esav, your firstborn." Rashi explains that Yaakov was saying, "I am the one delivering to you; Esav is your firstborn." Even though it was absolutely necessary and permissible for Yaakov to deceive Yitzchak, he still spoke in a way that could possibly be interpreted as true, thereby *distancing* himself from falsehood.

What is the purpose of this? If the listener is being deceived either way, what benefit is there in saying something in a way that could be twisted and reinterpreted in a way that could be true? Rabbi Chaim Friedlander explains that the purpose is so that *the speaker* does not become accustomed to speaking falsehood. Even though there are certain situations where a departure from the truth is permitted (see Bava Metziah 23b), one has to be careful not to become desensitized to falsehood, as is stated in Tehillim (119:163), "I hate and abhor falsehood." The antidote is to speak carefully and choose words that could also be interpreted as truth. This ensures that the speaker maintains an awareness that falsehood is something they must distance themselves from.

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

And he shall provide for healing (21:19).

Heal me Hashem, and I will be healed (Yirmiyahu 17:11).

In this week's parasha, when referring to healing performed by a doctor, the Torah uses the phrase "v'rapoh yirapei," with the letter "pay." In Yirmiyahu, however, when referring to Hashem's healing, the Navi uses the phrase "rephoeini ... v'neirophei," with the letter "phay." Why does it change from the hard letter "pay" to the soft letter "phay"?

Parsha Riddle

What is the connection between Moshe's going alone to Hashem to receive the Torah, and Moshe's appearance to Pharaoh in Egypt?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

What similarity is there between Shimshon Hagibor and Matan Torah?
Answer: Answer: 1) Shimshon uprooted a mountain and Har Sinai was uprooted during Matan Torah. 2) Shimshon was healed from his physical blemishes, and B'nei Yisrael were healed during Matan Torah from their physical blemishes.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parashas Mishpatim contains many of the Torah's laws of torts, particularly those categorized as *nizkei mammon* – damage caused by one's property. Rambam introduces his treatise on *Nizkei Mammon* as follows:

[This text] contains four positive commandments; they are: the laws regarding damage caused by [the going of] an ox, the laws regarding damage caused by the grazing [of an animal], the laws regarding damage caused by a pit, the laws regarding damage caused by fire. ...

Whenever a living animal owned by a person causes damages, the owner is required to pay, for the damage was caused by his property. [This is implied by *Shemos* 21:35:] "When a person's ox will gore an ox belonging to a colleague ..." These laws apply equally to an ox and to any other animal, beast or fowl. The verse mentions an ox only because that is a common instance.

Children, however, are not property, and thus parents generally have no liability for damage caused by their children (*Mishnah Bava Kama* 8:4). There are, however, a couple of arguments proposed by contemporary authorities for holding parents liable for such damage, at least in certain cases:

- The *Nachalas Eliyahu* (108) rules that one who brings a child into an environment in which he is able to damage property is liable under the law that "**one who stands another's animal near a third person's standing** grain, and the animal eats the grain, he is **liable**," (*Bava Kama* 56b) despite the fact that it is not the tortfeasor's animal. The *Pischei Choshen (Nezikin* p. 198), however, limits this to where the child was placed directly atop the property that he eventually damaged, as opposed to merely brought into the vicinity of the property.

- R. Zalman Nechemia Goldberg (*Techumin* 18) rules that if the child caused damage by utilizing the unsecured property of his father, then the father is liable for the damage, since he has the responsibility to secure his property and prevent it from causing damage. Subsequent scholars point out, however, that this is limited to where the utilization of the property by the child to cause damage is considered likely and foreseeable (R. Akiva Kahana, *Chovas Katan she-Hizik be-Tashlumin*; Din Online – Ask the Rabbi, *Katan she-He'if Tzror ve-Shiber Shimoshah shel Rechev*).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I come after 6 days.
2. I come after 6 years.
3. I am for the ox and donkey.
4. I am for the field.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I must be covered.
2. Fill me up.
3. I am not a bore yet I am one.
4. I am not for humans or vessels.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Luchos (Tablets) (I was two yet I was four, I am in the front of the Shul, I was rock hard, I am not just like an iPad.)

#2 Har Sinai (Smokey, Quaking, Lightning, Noisy)

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