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**On the Parsha**

"Hashem said to Moshe, 'When you go to return to Egypt, see all the signs that I have placed in your hand and perform them before Pharaoh, but I will strengthen his heart, and he will not send out the people.'" (Exodus 4:21)

It would appear that telling Moshe to perform the signs before Pharaoh in this verse is superfluous as Hashem had already charged Moshe with this task in prior verses. The Ramban explains that Hashem's reiteration was a message to Moshe warning him that when he goes down to Egypt he must be careful to make sure that he does not forget to perform the tasks that He, Hashem had set out for him.

Why would Moshe need to be warned not to forget what Hashem told him? As great as Moshe was, why would there be suspicion that he would be anything but a faithful messenger of Hashem? The Ramban explains that there was a need for Hashem to send Moshe this message, because initially, Moshe did not want to accept the mission of going to Pharaoh, performing Hashem's signs and speaking on behalf of Bnei Yisrael – Moshe claimed that he wasn't fit for Hashem's mission.

Within the explanation of the Ramban, we may be able to identify two factors or biases that, as great as Moshe was, still may have affected Moshe's thinking and his ability to carry out Hashem's mission faithfully. These same factors may bias our thinking as well. The first factor, is being coerced into doing something. Moshe did not want to accept Hashem's charge initially and was ultimately convinced / coerced into doing so. Therefore, Hashem had to reiterate to him to take care that he performed everything that He had said. Being "forced" to take a particular action may unreasonably affect our perceptions of, and our ability to carry out that action. Let us take, for example, an employee that

was not hired by us, but one that we have been told that we have to work with. Even if that employee turns out to be extremely capable, hardworking, and easy to work with, we may not appreciate the employee's virtues or be able to work effectively with him because of the fact that the employee was forced upon us.

The second factor that could have affected Moshe is the concept of first impressions. Once Moshe's first impression of Hashem's request of him was negative, it may have stuck with him and affected his mission. Therefore, Hashem had to reiterate to Moshe to take care that he performed everything that He had said. We are often biased in following our first impressions, and even if those first impressions are ultimately dispelled, they "die hard" and can ultimately lead us to judge something (or someone) incorrectly.

When we have a negative first impression of something or agree to something after being coerced into doing so, we should recognize the biases that these factors can create and endeavor to keep an open mind. We should be aware that when these factors are in play, we may not be able to do what we need to do if we do not focus on it properly (which is why Hashem reiterated the mission to Moshe - to provide him with the focus needed to perform his mission properly).

**Halacha – Jewish Law**

**QUESTION:** We are

planning a vacation and will be traveling abroad. Where we are going, there is not much Kosher food available, so we are planning on packing Kosher food in our suitcases and taking it with us. People have warned us that at the airport, customs officials often take away all sorts of foods that are packed in suitcases – and sometimes, even foods that the law of the country states are completely permitted to enter the country. Can you give us some guidance regarding the prohibition of Genivas Daas (deception) and / or other relevant

Halachic issues as to what we may or may not say, in case we are questioned or stopped at the airport and asked about the Kosher food in our suitcases?

**ANSWER:** It seems that there are three categories of food items in this particular case:

Category One are foods that are clearly forbidden by the law of the land to enter the country. Category Two are foods where the law is unclear as to whether they may enter the country. Category Three are foods that the law permits to enter the country.

With this in mind, let us explore each of the categories. It is forbidden to bring in Category One foods because of Dinei D'malchusa Dina – the law of the land is the law (See Choshain Mishpat 369:8). Regarding Category Two or Three foods, when you pack your suitcases, it is permitted to split the food up and place them throughout your carry-on items and or packed suitcases in order to avoid detection. Should the customs agents end up discovering some of your food and confiscate it, at least you will still have some food in other pieces of your luggage. However, it is forbidden to lie, even in regards to Category Three foods (where your food is at risk of being confiscated illegitimately). If you are stopped by the custom agents, you must answer their questions truthfully or you have violated the prohibition of Genaivas Daas.

The Rambam writes quite clearly in his Peirush HaMishnayos (Kailim 12:7) that Genaivas Daas is forbidden even to Gentiles – especially if it is combined with Chillul Hashem. The concept that Chillul Hashem only applies to other Jews is entirely incorrect. We see from the SMaG (Lavin #2) that the prohibition of (Vayikra 22:32) “Lo Sechalelu Es Shaim Kodshi” – Do not sully My Holy Name, applies to Gentiles as well. It causes Gentiles to say, “the Jews have no Torah.” It negates the Passuk in Tzefania (3:13), “The remnant of Israel shall neither commit injustice nor speak lies; neither shall deceitful speech be found in their mouth..” See also the SMaG in Assai #74.

### Chizuk - Inspiration

Rav Avrohom Yeshaya Karelitz ZT”L, the “Chazon Ish” (1878-1953) was born in Europe and eventually moved to Bnei Brak in Israel. When he first moved there, he rented an apartment on the corner of HaRav Sher and Ben Pesachya street. After some time, however, he informed the owner of the apartment that he had heard that the price of apartment rentals in the area had gone up. Due to the price increase, he felt that he had to move because he did not have enough money to pay for the higher rent.

The landlord was confused, “I have not raised your rent! It would be an honor to have the Rav continue living here as long as the Rav would want.”

The Chazon Ish responded, “I do not wish to deprive you and your family of the additional rent that you are rightfully entitled to now that prices in the area have gone up. I cannot pay you the additional rent, so I will move so you can receive the higher rent from someone else.”

### Mussar – Introspection

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

“Included in this concept of staying distant from a lie is not to tell his friend to whom he is indebted, ‘Go, and tomorrow I will pay you,’ if he will not be able to pay back the debt tomorrow. Truth will show the way and, ‘One who is lowly (indebted) will speak humbly.’ (Mishlei 18:23)\*

Every intelligent person should consciously not permit any lie to come out of his mouth, but rather all of his affairs should be truthful, and Hashem who is Truth, whose signature is Truth, whose Torah is Truth, will guide this person in the pathway of Truth.”

\* Meaning, his friend will be more inclined to hear the truth and accept the humble speech of the borrower.