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### On The Parsha

In this week’s Parsha, the Bnos Tzafchad are concerned about the legacy of their father and approach Moshe Rabbeinu about the laws of inheritance. “Why should our father’s name be eliminated from his family because he had no son? Give us a portion along with our father’s brothers.” (Bamidbar 27:4) In the next verse, the Torah says that Moshe brought their “Mishpatan” their case, before Hashem. But the word “Mishpatan” is written with a very large “Nun” at the end of the word. What is the reason for the large Nun?

Rav Dovid Feinstein ZT”L provides a fascinating suggestion (Kol Dodi on Chumash). He writes that Moshe Rabbeinu suspected that the Bnos Tzafchad were not being entirely truthful in arguing that their concern was for their father’s legacy. Moshe felt that a subtle part of their motivation was to inherit land for their own financial gain. The “Nun” in the word “Mishpatan” translates to “their”. Moshe wrote a larger Nun so that it would be clear to everyone that it referred to their case – “MishpataN” – since he suspected they had their own agenda.

Hashem corrected Moshe’s misconception – the Bnos Tzafchad did not have this ulterior motive. He answered, “Tzafchad’s daughters speak justly. You shall certainly give them a portion of inheritance along with their father’s brothers, and you shall transfer their father’s inheritance to them.”

We see from here, Hashem’s Middas HaEmes (attribute of truth). If someone’s intentions are correct and that person has been misunderstood, it is important to tell everyone that the person’s intentions were true and proper. This is the reason, Rav Dovid Feinstein suggests, why this incident of the Bnos Tzafchad was recorded in the Torah: To record that Moshe suspected the Bnos Tzafchad of ulterior motives as indicated by the larger Nun that he wrote as referenced above, and then record how Hashem responded – He announced to everyone that their motives were correct. (Others believe that the reason why this section

was recorded was to teach a Halacha about inheritance. Reb Dovid believes that this Halacha could have been taught in a different manner.)

### Chizuk - Inspiration

There is a theory that dates back long ago, that the origin of the word, “lullaby” comes from the Yiddish words - “Lilith Abi” – Lilith go away. Adam HaRishon’s first wife, Lilith, was attached to Adam before Hashem separated them. She later became a Shaid, a damaging demon (see Shabbos 151b). Regardless of the etymological origin, there is an old Yiddish lullaby that contains the words, “Sleep, sleep, my girl, and I shall find you a suitable Chosson (groom).”

The following inspiring story regarding the Vilna Gaon is found in the biographical work “HaGaon” on page 49.

In the 1740s, the Vilna Gaon took upon himself a period of voluntary exile. During his exile, he stayed in a home where there was a baby girl who was crying in the middle of the night. The Vilna Gaon picked up the baby girl, and yes, sang her the soothing old Yiddish lullaby to get her back to sleep.

Years passed. When the girl was of marriageable age, the Vilna Gaon sent a young man to her parent’s home with a letter signed by the Vilna Gaon himself. It said:

“Years ago, your daughter was crying and I soothed her with the old Yiddish lullaby that ended with the words. ‘... and I shall find you a suitable Chosson.’

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The young man who bears this letter is a suitable Chosson. I am not saying that they should marry, but in the lullaby that I sang to her, I said that I would find her a suitable Chosson – I have kept my word.”

Such was the Vilna Gaon’s commitment to Everyday Emes – always speaking the truth, even if it meant fulfilling a commitment made in a Yiddish lullaby! And by the way, they did end up marrying. The story was repeated by none other than Rav Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk ZT”L.

### Halacha – Jewish Law

**Question:** I have a relative that is often very jealous of me. Is it permitted to lie to my relative about those aspects of my life that make him envious so that he is not jealous of me?

**Answer:** Generally speaking, this is a classical case of “Mutar Leshanos Mipnei HaShalom – it is permitted to lie to maintain the peace” as it ensures that someone is at peace, i.e. not be jealous or upset. However, Rav Nachum Yavrov ZT”L explains that most Poskim hold that permitting a lie to maintain the peace is limited to people who are committed to leading a life of Everyday Emes. However, if one is generally not careful with telling the truth, then one may not avail oneself of this dispensation. Rav Yavrov also writes that even when it is permitted to lie to maintain the peace, if possible, one should phrase the lie in a manner so that what is said could still be interpreted theoretically in a truthful manner.

It is interesting to note that if one is generally not truthful, then his or her ability to make peace between people is compromised since most Halachic authorities according to Rav Yavrov, hold that one may only lie to maintain the peace if one is generally careful to be honest. The uncompromised ability to make peace between people can be a powerful incentive to practice Everyday Emes.

In Shmuel Aleph (Chapter 17) Dovid asked Shaul HaMelech for permission to battle with Golyas. The Midrash Tanchuma (Parshas Emor Siman 4) explains the verses in the following manner. Shaul HaMelech clothed Dovid with his royal tunic and weapons which should have been too big for the younger and smaller Dovid. A miracle transpired, and the tunic and weapons fit Dovid perfectly. Immediately, Shaul HaMelech glanced at Dovid enviously because he saw this as a sign that Dovid would succeed him as king of Israel. When Dovid noticed that Shaul’s face was white with envy,

he lied so as not to arouse Shaul’s jealousy. He said that he could not walk with Shaul’s tunic and weapons.

Rav Chanoch Zundel Ben Yoseph ZT”L, author of the Aitz Yoseph and Anaf Yoseph commentaries, explains that even though it was a lie, Dovid said it so as not to add to the pain of Shaul and awaken his jealousy. It seems that the possibility of this happening was enough to invoke the dispensation of lying to maintain the peace. Similarly, in the case mentioned above, to quell the jealousy of a relative, it would be permitted to lie to maintain the peace.

### Mussar – Introspection

This week we continue with translating the Chofetz Chaim’s Sefer entitled, “Sfas Tamim.” Sefas Tamim, from which our foundation takes its name, focuses on the importance of honesty in word and deed. We continue to translate Chapter 1, “Defining Deceit”.

“In so doing, the speaker becomes hateful to Hashem, as Chazal have stated (Pesachim 113b) [There are] three kinds of people in particular that are hated by HaKadosh Baruch Hu...’ one of them being the hypocrite who says one thing but has a completely different intent. HaKadosh Boruch Hu will take revenge on this person for this bad character trait, as the prophet Yirmiya states (9:7) “With his mouth he speaks words of peace with his friend, but inside of him, he waits in ambush.” The verse then further relates, ‘... because of these things should I not punish him – the word of Hashem – from a nation such as this, should not My soul take vengeance?’”

The punishment for this duplicity is doubled - one for the lie itself and one for the damage that the lie has done to his fellow Jew. Because apart from the damage caused by the lie, the lie itself is abhorrent to Hashem, as the verse states (Mishle 12:22) “Lying lips are disgusting to Hashem,” and more so here in this case of premeditated deception for the purpose of harming or aggrrieving a fellow Jew.

*“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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