

business dealings, they don't consider it a lie – they think of it as cleverness or sharp business skills. They convince themselves that a person cannot succeed nowadays unless he is willing to stretch the truth.

A person should know that even if the *yesser hara* makes it appear that he profited greatly from his dishonesty, in the end there is no doubt that he will lose. Either his wealth will be lost, or his days on this world may be shortened, or the retribution will come to him in the next world. On the flip side, Hashem will never withhold goodness from those who live with truth and integrity.

One who lies is despised by Hashem and by his fellow man. If a person deals dishonestly with non-Jews, he caused a desecration of Hashem's Name, because he causes the other nations to view the Jews as cheaters and thieves. When a person is known to be a liar, he is not believed even when he tells the truth.

Professional Courtsey

Dr. Kook was a general practitioner who tended to patients with all types of ailments. His unpretentious medical office was housed in a simple home in which he lived with his family. A front parlor served as a waiting room and an interior room was used for examinations.

As Dr. Kook did not have a receptionist, those who came to his office would seat themselves in the front parlor and quietly wait to be called. When he finished with each patient, Dr. Kook would come out to the waiting room and ask who was next. The individual whose turn it was would stand up and go with the doctor.

Everyone who visited Dr. Kook knew the system. It was an honor system that all his patients respected and abided by. There was, however, one exception to this rule and that was for Rav Yechezkel Sarna, *Rosh Yeshivah* of the Hebron Yeshivah in Jerusalem. Because of R' Sarna's diabetes, he had to come to the office regularly, and out of deference to his imposing Torah stature, Dr. Kook made an exception for him. Thus, whenever R' Sarna came to the office he would automatically be taken in next.

One day R' Sarna came to the office and was seated among other patients in the parlor waiting to be called in. As Dr. Kook peered into the room, R' Sarna began to get up from his seat to make his way to the examining room. Dr. Kook looked around and then said to R' Sarna, "Excuse me, *Rosh Yeshivah*, but first I must see this lady." Dr. Kook then motioned to an elderly lady, who had been waiting for a while, to come in.

When Dr. Kook was finished with the elderly woman, he once again went out to the waiting room and this time beckoned to R' Sarna to come in. Once inside, R' Sarna immediately began to apologize for getting up "out of turn."

Dr. Kook responded, "I usually do take you in before anyone else, but today I had to make an exception. The lady whose turn it was is a poor old woman who does not pay me anything for her visit. It occurred to me that if I were to take anyone in before her, she would think that the reason I was giving priority to others is that since she doesn't pay me, she therefore deserves less attention than my paying patients. That is why I specifically made it a point to take her when it was her turn, so that she shouldn't in any way feel that she was getting less care than anyone else! (In the Footsteps of the Maggid)

The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נִשְׁמַת לְאָה בַּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

Congregation Magen Abraham

479 Monmouth Road - P.O. Box 444

West Long Branch, New Jersey 07764

(732) 870-2225



SHABBAT SHEMOT ✪ שַׁבַּת שְׁמֹת

Haftarah: Yirmiyahu 1:1 - 2:3

JANUARY 13-14, 2023 21 TEBET 5783

Shir Hashirim/Minhah: **4:24 pm (upstairs)** Shaharit: **6:20, 6:45, 8:25, 8:30, 9:00 am**
Minhah: **4:34 (main shul)** Morning Shema by: **9:08 am**
Candlelighting: **4:34 pm** Shabbat Minhah: **1:30 & 4:10 pm**
Evening Shema after: **5:32 pm** Shabbat Ends: **5:33 pm, R"T 6:05 pm**
These times are applicable only for the Deal area. Shabbat Class: **3:55 & 5:33 pm**
Weekday Shaharit: **6:45, 7:10 am**, Sundays: **8:15 am**, Weekday Minhah: **4:40 pm**

A Message from our Rabbi

”וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת־חַיֵּיהֶם בְּעִבְדָּה קָשָׁה”

“And they embittered their lives with hard work” (*Shemot* 1:14)

Although we are not explicitly told the reason why Amram and Yochebed named their daughter Miriam, we often find in *Tanach* that people would base their children's names on events that occurred in their lives. Therefore it is reasonable to suggest that Miriam's name was a reference to the bitter times that were facing the Jewish people at that time (the root of the name Miriam is *mar* – bitter). In fact, the *Shelah* explains that for this very reason, Yochebed's brother, Merari, was so named.

Rabbi Moshe Kormornick asks that Amram and Yochebed were from the tribe of Levi, who were not subject to slavery like the rest of the Jewish people. If so, why would they name their child with a depiction of bitterness when they themselves did not face any bitter subjugation? The *Shelah* answers that naming their children in such a way enabled them to join in the suffering of their brethren. Specifically, the gesture of naming their children in such a way would serve as a constant reminder of the importance of this principle.

Although it is no longer a prevalent custom to create a name for a child based on contemporary circumstances, we nevertheless find many examples of great people “joining in” the Jewish people's pain in recent history. For instance, the *Hafess Hayim* was known to sleep on the floor during the first World War because he knew that many Jewish people had lost their homes in the fighting. More recently, from the moment that Rav Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz heard about the atrocities of the Holocaust, he never again ate meat.

One can ask though, what is the point of causing ourselves to suffer? Even if we would sleep every night on the floor, what would it achieve? To answer this, Rav Frand relates in the name of the Alter of Kelm that the more we are pained by the Jewish people's suffering, the more Hashem becomes pained, so to speak, and thus commits Himself to alleviate their pain. We can only begin to do this, though, if we first recognize that the Jewish people are one unit., as the *Keli Yakar* explains so beautifully: We are all part of the same body, and when one limb gets hurt, the entire body feels pain.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

All About Me

In this week's reading we are introduced to a new Pharaoh, "who did not know Joseph" [*Shemot* 1:8]. Pharaoh had an imagined, entirely unfounded worry: "And it will be, if a war will occur, that he [all the Jews] will join our enemies" [1:10].

So what did he do? He enslaved the entire Jewish nation, trying to keep them so busy and oppressed that they would be unable to harm him and his country.

Rabbi Yaakov Galinsky zt"l looks at the cost-benefit relationship that Pharaoh had to balance. On the one side of the scale is his very unlikely concern; the Jews had been nothing but loyal subjects, and the idea that they would join Pharaoh's enemies was whimsical at best. On the other, the notion of enslaving an entire, blameless people, to embitter and ruin their lives, only in order to assuage that baseless fear.

It is obvious that Pharaoh thought only of himself, for otherwise it would have been impossible to proceed. But as it was, since the phantasmal worry was his own, and someone else had to absorb the brutality, his own fright took precedence. He didn't even consider the other side of the scale.

And this was not a unique aspect of this story. Later, his astrologers told him that a boy would be born who will save Israel from Pharaoh's oppression. What was his response? To have every newborn boy thrown into the river!

Once again: on one side he had a vague warning from the astrologers, who saw a vision and were unsure what they were seeing — they didn't even know if it was a Jewish or Egyptian boy — and on the other side, the murder of untold numbers of infants because maybe, possibly, one of those is the one the astrologers thought they saw. And without a moment's deliberation, Pharaoh demanded that all those babies be killed.

The *Midrash* even says that Pharaoh had a skin ailment, and was told that the cure required bathing in babies' blood. So he had more babies killed every day, for the sake of his skin.

To us, this sounds like a dystopian fantasy, that Pharaoh's inhumanity could never really happen. When we think about it, though, we know that such depravity is all too possible. Not only did the Roman Coliseums feature prisoners thrown to the lions and slaughtered by gladiators, but within the past century, millions of Jews were murdered due to similarly whimsical concerns to those of Pharaoh, rooted only in fantasy.

To worry about only my needs, and ignore the impact on others, is the behavior of Pharaoh. It is the Torah that forces us to consider others. Every person has a soul, and that soul is breathed into that person by G-d Himself. The *Talmud* asks rhetorically, "who says your blood is redder than his?" And on that basis, a person must allow himself to be killed rather than murder someone else. We are obligated to treat even animals properly, much less others endowed with holy souls. (Rabbi Yaakov Menken)

Balance of Power

When Moshe is approached by Hashem to speak to Pharaoh, he defers. First he ponders, "Who am I to go to Pharaoh?" After Hashem exhorts him, Moshe tries a

different tactic. "I am a man heavy of mouth and speech." Again G-d refutes his extenuation and chides Moshe that, after all, "who makes a mouth for man if not the Almighty?" And once again He urges Moshe to go to Pharaoh, assuring him that "I will be with your mouth and teach you what to say." Moshe still does not accept. He has one final seemingly lame pretext: "Send the one who You are accustomed to send."

The scenario is almost incomprehensible. After every one of Moshe's protestations are well refuted by the Almighty, how did Moshe have the audacity to petition G-d to send someone else?

Rabbi Chaim Follman, asked his *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, to officiate at the wedding of his daughter. Reb Yaakov checked his appointment calendar and shook his head slowly. "Unfortunately I have a prior commitment." He wished Reb Chaim and his daughter a heartfelt *mazel tov*, showered them with blessings, and added that if his schedule would open, he would gladly join them at the wedding.

On the day of the wedding, Rav Yaakov was informed that his original appointment was canceled. Immediately, he made plans to attend the wedding. He arrived at the hall long after the time that the ceremony was scheduled to commence.

Upon entering the wedding hall, Rav Yaakov realized that for one reason or another the *chupah* had not yet begun. Quickly, Rav Yaakov went downstairs and waited, almost in hiding, near the coat room for nearly 40 minutes until after the ceremony was completed. A few students who noticed the *Rosh Yeshiva* huddled in a corner reciting *Tehillim* could not imagine why he was not upstairs and participating in the *chupah*. They, however, did not approach him until after the ceremony.

Reb Yaakov explained his actions. "Surely Reb Chaim had made arrangements for a different *mesader kidushin* (officiating Rabbi). Had he known that I was in the wedding hall he would be in a terrible bind —after all, I was his first choice and I am much older than his second choice. Reb Chaim would be put in the terribly uncomfortable position of asking someone to defer his honor for me. Then Reb Chaim would have to placate that Rabbi with a different honor, thus displacing someone else. I felt the best thing to do was stay in a corner until the entire ceremony had ended - sparing everybody from the embarrassment of even the slightest demotion."

Moshe's older brother Aharon had been the prophet of the Jewish nation, guiding them, encouraging them, and supporting them decades before Moshe was asked by Hashem to go to Pharaoh. When Moshe was finally convinced by the Almighty that he was worthy of the designated mission and that his speech impediment was not an inhibiting factor, there was one more issue that Moshe had to deal with. And that factor was not in Hashem's control. It was a very mortal factor - his brother Aharon's feelings. Under no circumstance, even if every other qualification were met, would Moshe accept a position that might, in some way, slight his brother Aharon.

Only after Moshe was assured of Aharon's overwhelming moral support and willingness to forego his commission did Moshe accept the great task. Sanctity of mission and divinity of assignment end somewhere very sacred: at the tip of someone else's heart. (Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky)

Weekly Pele Yoetz

Each week we will offer a brief excerpt from the *sefer Pele Yoetz*. **This week's topic is: Truth (Part I) – אמת**

Truth is very beloved to Hashem, and one who distorts his words and tells lies is considered like he loved to worship idols. Many unlearned people have become so accustomed to lying that they will even lie and exaggerate when telling a story even though they don't benefit from it in any way. And when they twist the truth in their