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*– Sponsored anonymously for the Refuah Shleimah of Yair Nissan Ben Sara –***Chizuk - Inspiration**

The trait of Emes—absolute integrity—shaped every aspect of Rav Moshe Feinstein ZT”L’s life, from his responsa to his daily conduct and character. In order to escape the military draft in Russia, he obtained a birth certificate listing him as five years older, a date that later appeared on his passport and other official documents upon arriving in the United States. Accordingly, when he reached the age of sixty-five according to the official documents, he began to receive Social Security checks. However, Rav Moshe would not take any money that he was not entitled to. Every month, for five years until he actually reached the age of sixty-five, Rav Moshe returned each check with no other explanation other than, "Thank you, I do not need it. When I need it, I will let you know."

Rav Moshe was extremely generous, giving a significant portion of his income to charity and carefully documenting every donation. He never returned a fundraising envelope without including at least a few dollars. Despite earning a modest \$7,000 a year, his charitable contributions drew the attention of the IRS, resulting in five audits. However, he always had proper receipts and never claimed a donation he couldn’t verify. Each time, the auditor was so impressed by Rav Moshe’s honest and careful record-keeping that he sent him a courteous letter of apology for the inconvenience. Still, these audits continued, likely triggered by the unusual ratio of donations to income that appeared each year on Rav Moshe’s return due to his incredible generosity!

On The Parsha

The Torah discusses in this week’s Parsha, the covenant that was made between Hashem and Bnei Yisrael.

“To enter into the covenant of Hashem that He is concluding with you this day...” (Devarim, 29:11)

Commenting on this verse, the Yalkut Shimoni (Devarim, Remez 940) says, “The Holy One enacted three covenants with Bnei Yisrael. The first covenant was enacted when Bnei Yisrael left Egypt. The second covenant was enacted at Mount Sinai when they received the Torah and the third covenant is here in this week’s Parsha.

It is understandable why Hashem had to enter a second covenant at Mount Sinai, as the first covenant didn’t include the Mitzvos which had not been given yet. However, why did Hashem find it necessary to create a third covenant which generally contained the same elements as the second covenant?

It was necessary because the agreement that they had entered into with Hashem at Mount Sinai had been invalidated when Bnei Yisrael worshipped the golden calf and said, ‘These are your gods, oh Israel...’ Therefore, Hashem created a new covenant with them.”

This Yalkut Shimoni is difficult to understand. How could this covenant be invalidated? The Torah states in two different places that His covenant that was made at Mount Sinai will not be abrogated. In Devarim, 4:23 it states, “Take heed not to forget Hashem’s covenant that He enacted with you.” In Devarim, 5:2-3, the Torah says that Hashem has entered into a covenant with our forefathers, and not only with them, but with us as well today. It clearly states that Hashem would not negate the covenant made at Mount Sinai. How then could the Midrash possibly state that Bnei Yisrael had invalidated it?

Rav Henschel Leibowitz ZT”L explains that it was not, in fact, negated, but rather – in their own minds, they had thought that they had perforce negated the covenant by breaking their agreement by saying “These are your gods, oh Israel...” when they worshiped the golden calf.

The question still remains as to why Hashem felt it necessary to enter into an entirely new agreement. If the covenant was indeed not broken, and Bnei Yisrael only perceived that it had been, Hashem could have merely repeated the second covenant to them and emphasized that Hashem’s covenant can never be abrogated no matter what Bnei Yisrael does.

The answer to this question lies in recognizing a fundamental reality about the nature of a truth. There is a great distance between knowing a truth intellectually and fully believing it in one’s heart of hearts. In the language of our Sages, we speak of knowing something in one’s heart as well as knowing it in one’s mind. Scientists speak of knowledge that is incorporated

in different and additional sections of the brain and how that reflects a more deeply engrained knowledge.

Accordingly, if Hashem would have just reassured Bnei Yisrael that the covenant had not been broken, Bnei Yisrael may have believed it intellectually, but there may have been a lingering doubt in their hearts, and they may not have completely believed that it was true. Due to Hashem's love for Bnei Yisrael, He sought to remove any lingering doubts that Bnei Yisrael may have had and therefore established a new agreement with them even though He did not have to.

Often, we know intellectually that something is true, but we may not completely believe in our heart that it is true – we may have lingering doubts about it. We do not have the benefit of what Hashem did for Bnei Yisrael as described above to remove these lingering doubts. However, we can help remove our lingering doubts about something we know to be true, by calmly repeating the truth to ourselves. This can help prevent our minds from focusing on our doubts and may remove them. As an example, we know that Hashem provides for our livelihoods, however we may have lingering doubts, "But what if this investment fails?" or "What if that venture falls through?" If we calmly repeat to ourselves that Hashem is in charge and He will provide for us, that can reassure us and help us truly believe in our hearts, what we know in our minds.

Halacha – Jewish Law

QUESTION: A family member of mine needs a job. There is an opening for a store manager at the Tesla dealership in Rishon L'Tzion. I ask, because recently, a Reuter's article claimed that Tesla actively misrepresented the driving range of its electric vehicles by saying its cars could drive twice as far between charges as they could in reality. The article further reported that Tesla even created a dedicated team specifically designed to thwart customer efforts to schedule appointments to get help with understanding why their Teslas were not getting the driving distance between charges that they were expecting. Is it permitted to work for such a company?

ANSWER: There are two matters to discuss. The first matter is whether you can trust the Reuters article and act on the information provided. The second matter, is whether one can work for such a company assuming it is true.

It is generally accepted that Reuters is generally a reputable source for news and has the requisite journalistic integrity to be

relied upon unless there is evidence to the contrary.

According to Vavei HaAmudim (Vol. #104, Siman 1. Av 5782) it is forbidden to work for a dishonest firm unless one is allowed to be fully transparent. So in the case of the Tesla dealership, one would have to admit to the buyer that the driving range claim is not accurate to be able to work there.

Regarding the verse in Parashas Mishpatim (Shemos 23:7) "Midvar Sheker Tirchak" — stay away from a false matter, there is a three-way debate as to how we understand this verse. The Chofetz Chaim rules in his Ahavas Chesed that there is an out-and-out prohibition to lie. This is in accordance with the view of some Rishonim (early Halachic commentaries). Other Rishonim believe that the Torah is merely advising one not to lie because it is not an admirable practice, but one is not prohibited from doing so. A third opinion believes that the biblical prohibition is limited to judges when they adjudicate the law as that is the circumstance that the Torah is discussing in the verse when it mentions the prohibition of staying away from falsehood. Generally speaking, the view of the Chofetz Chaim (that there is a biblical prohibition to lie) is normative Halacha.

However, there are some Halachic authorities that will give dispensation under pressing circumstances to follow a view other than the Chofetz Chaim's.

However, not in this case. In the case of Tesla, the lie of the driving range of the car is being used to sell a car under false pretenses – if customers that are buying Teslas really knew the true number of miles they could drive between charges, many would not purchase the car. Accordingly, this untruthful claim is being used to extract money unfairly from customers and is full-fledged theft. In such a case, no one would permit working at the Tesla dealership unless as outlined above, one discloses to the buyer that the driving range claim is not truthful.

"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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