

Only The Truth

The Mesillas Yescharim refers to *sheker* (lying) as a widespread and evil sickness. Some people are professional liars. They go around deliberately spreading false stories to boost their egos and feel important. They belong to a group of people called *shakranim* (liars) who cannot receive the *Shechina* (Divine Presence). Other people do not make up false stories. However, when they tell about events, exaggerations and lies are mixed in with the truth. Therefore, it is impossible to believe what they say. Even if they tell the truth, they will not be believed. Still others do not lie habitually; however, they will occasionally mix non-truths into a story to make it funny or interesting. They have no bad intentions and do not realize that they are doing wrong.

Against all of these, the Torah warns, "Distance yourself from a false word" (Shemos 23:7). The Torah does not write, "guard yourself" as it does with many other sins. Rather it says, "distance yourself". We must flee far, far away from falsehood. It stands in direct opposition to Hashem. "The signature of The Holy One Blessed Be He is truth" (Gemora Shabbos 55a). This is how Hashem chose to identify Himself. Therefore *sheker*, it's opposite, is an abomination.

Kinderlach . . .

Sometimes it is so tempting to lie. "If I spruce up the story with a few exaggerated details it will be much more interesting and funny." Correct, but it will be a lie. "If I lie about breaking the glass, I will not be punished." Correct, but you will suffer far worse consequences. "If I lie and say that I came on time today, I will receive a prize." Is it worth it? Do you really deserve that prize? Kinderlach, the Mesillas Yescharim tells us how terrible lies really are. Stay far, far away from them.

Torah Business

Crunch

"What was that noise?"

"It sounded like something breaking. I think I stepped on something."

"Oh no. Look at that. You stepped on

someone's glasses and broke them."

"Oy vey. I didn't even see them. Let's run away before the owner comes."

"You can't do that."

"Why not? It was an accident. I surely don't have to pay for them. However, if the owner sees me here, he may think that I broke them intentionally and then I will have to pay. So let's run."

"Wait a minute. Maybe you have to pay even if you broke them accidentally."

"I hope not."

"On the other hand, maybe the owner can't make you pay without proof that you broke it."

"Could be."

"What should we do?"

"I told you. Let's run."

"I agree. Let's run straight to a Rav and ask him what to do."

"Is that really necessary?"

"I'll answer your question with a question. If some non-kosher food accidentally spilled into your soup would you eat it?"

"Of course not. I would ask a Rav."

"Why is this different? Monetary laws and dietary laws are written in the same Torah."

"And these are the laws that you will place before them" (Shemos 21:1). Why does the verse begin with the word, "And"? Rashi explains that this parsha is connected to the previous one. Just as the Commandments in Parshas Yisro were given at Har Sinai, so too these mitzvos of property damage and business affairs were given at Har Sinai. One might think that business laws are common sense and were written by Moshe Rabbeinu. They are part of the Torah and are the Divine Word of Hashem.

Kinderlach . . .

The Torah tells us how to shake a lulav. And the Torah tells us how to keep Shabbos. The Torah also tells us how to handle our money affairs. The Mesillas Yescharim explains that people have a very strong desire for money. Therefore, it is very easy to make a mistake and take money that is not yours. We must follow the Torah's laws about money just as carefully as we follow the laws of kashrus. That's the Torah's business.

What You Eat

Quareling is a terrible thing. If matters are not settled peacefully, they can lead to violence. If one man injures another, he must pay for many things, including medical bills. The Avi Ezer zt"l uses this subject as a springboard for a fascinating insight. He differentiates between external injuries and internal illnesses. One of the causes of internal diseases is overeating. A verse in Mishle (21:23) also speaks about this, "One who guards his mouth and tongue, guards his soul from troubles." The Eben Ezra zt"l explains that guarding the mouth refers to food, and the tongue refers to speech.

The Pele Yoatz relates that we must eat for the sake of our souls. Excess eating only strengthens the *Yetzer Hora*. It also is a waste of food, time, and a health hazard. To eat properly, one must eat only when hungry. Do not eat until full, rather slightly less. Your selection of foods should not be based solely upon taste, rather choose foods that will strengthen your body. The Raavad zt"l relates that one who stops eating while the food still tastes good receives a *kapora* (atonement) for his sins.

Kinderlach . . .

Good eating habits are so important. They are the basis of good health. It is much more difficult to serve Hashem if you are sick. Eating itself is a way to serve Hashem. Now is the time to develop good eating habits. Eat what is good for you, and eat the right amounts. Eat for the good of your body and soul.

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