



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת and חדוותא דדעיר אנפין collections of maamarim given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Seuda Shlishis and Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Chukas 5764

The *haftarah* which we read after *Parshas Chukas* is the story of Yiftach in *Sefer Shoftim*. The *Gemara* (ר"ה כ"ה.) states that יפתח בדורו כשמואל - Yiftach in his generation is equivalent to Shmuel in his generation, to teach us that even the least significant person who is appointed as a leader, is equivalent to the mightiest of the mighty.

Even though the *Gemara* classifies Yiftach as קלי עולם - insignificant, that is only when compared to Shmuel Hanavi. We aren't able to comprehend the lofty *madreigah* of the *Shoftim*, who were spoken to by Hashem. Therefore, we must learn how to serve Hashem, from the pesukim in Tanach that tell the story of their lives.

There is an important lesson in the story of Yiftach that each of us must learn. The elders of Gilad asked Yiftach to become their leader, and lead them in battle against Amon. Yiftach responded;

Haven't you hated me and banished me from my father's house? And why have you come to me now when you are suffering? (שופטים י"א:י"ז)

In our generation, it would be impossible to find someone who would respond so sharply to a venerable delegation of elders who ask him to lead them. It is far more likely that anyone who is asked to become a leader, will jump at the opportunity since his desire for *kavod* drives him to assume leadership without a moment's hesitation.

Even if, for some reason, he didn't want to accept the position, he certainly wouldn't rebuke the delegation of dignitaries as Yiftach did.



[1]

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א

The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at

hamaortolna@gmail.com

He would express his refusal by pretending that he truly wishes that he could accept the great honor, but unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond his control, he must refuse their kind offer.

Yiftach taught us not to be, אחד בפה ואחד בלב - one way in our words and one way in our heart, duplicitous in our interactions. Instead, a person should present his position honestly and clearly, without flattery and deception.

We also find this concept in Chazal's *drashah* (קידושין ל:) on a *pasuk* in our *parshah* (במדבר כ"א:י"ד) אֶת-יְהוֹבָב בְּסוּפָהּ, and a *pasuk* in *Tehillim*

אֲשֶׁר־יִהְיֶה אִישׁ מְלֵא אֶת אֲשָׁפְתּוֹ מֵהֶם לֹא יִבְשׁוּ כִּי יִדְבְּרוּ אֶת אוֹיְבֵיהֶם בְּשַׁעַר (קכ"ז:ה)
Fortunate is the man who has filled his quiver with them, they will not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate.

“What do the words אֶת אוֹיְבֵיהֶם בְּשַׁעַר mean? Rav Chiya bar Abba said, ‘Even a father and his son, a *Rav* and his *talmid*, who are learning Torah in the same *shaar*, become each other’s enemy. (However) They don’t depart before they become each other’s dear friend, as the *pasuk* says, ואת והב בסופה. Don’t read the word as *b’sufah* but rather *b’sofah*. (the word והב means *ahavah*)

In other words, when two people are learning Torah with energy and enthusiasm, they must become “enemies”. This may even lead them to utter harsh statements while in a state of ריתכא דאורייתא - the heat of learning. Each of the *lomdim* will speak his mind with no concern about what people may think of him.

Here, in the *Beis Medrash* of my grandfather zy”a we should remember how he would often quote my grandmother who said, "איך האב נישט ליב - I have no love for two-faced people.

I remember something that took place during my childhood in the Bayit Vegan neighborhood. A very negative person held a position that put him in charge of many aspects of life in the neighborhood. One day, a group



[2]

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א

The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at

hamaortolna@gmail.com

of Rabbanim planned to approach this bureaucrat and ask for his assistance in a certain matter. They asked my grandfather to join them, and he agreed.

When they arrived in the man's office, a predetermined spokesman began by praising and flattering him. Rather than softening the man's heart, the flattery simply hardened it. When my grandfather saw what was happening, he followed his path of *midas ha'emes* - the attribute of truth. He said, "Until now, you have been mistreating the people of this neighborhood in many ways. The time has come for you to mend your ways, and do something for their benefit."

The other Rabbanim in the delegation panicked and tried to smooth over my grandfather's words. Surprisingly, this stubborn official was actually impressed by my grandfather's approach. He said that from the day that he assumed his position, no one had ever dared to speak to him as frankly and forthrightly as my grandfather did. As a result, he acceded to their request. In fact, that meeting totally transformed his approach to the Torah-observant community in Bayit Vegan, and he went on to assist them in many ways.

This transformation took place as a result of my grandfather's *midos* of *emes* and *temimus*.

I often present a scenario that illustrates the importance of "straight talk". Often, even when a neighbor or acquaintance behaves in a way that you find unbearable, you speak with them as if that behavior doesn't bother you in the least. For example, parents may knock on a neighbor's door and ask if they could leave one of their children in the neighbor's house for a few hours. Even if the timing is inconvenient and the presence of that child will disturb the rhythm of the household, the neighbor feels that she can't refuse. She fears that if she simply tells the truth and explains that it's not a good time for her to babysit, people will view her as selfish or unkind.



[3]

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא ע"ה"ק ירושלים תובב"א

The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at

hamaortolna@gmail.com

So, instead of telling her neighbor that she can't do it, she will smile and pretend that having the opportunity to watch the neighbor's child is a dream come true. When the child's parents see how delighted their neighbor is with the arrangement, they allow themselves to stay out for a few hours longer than they had originally planned.

Meanwhile, the neighbors are having a difficult time with the misbehaving child, and with every minute that passes after the designated "pick-up" time, their anger and resentment increases. Despite that, when the parents finally come to pick up their child a few hours later, the neighbors smile and reassure the parents that it was an absolute pleasure to have their child in their home. The door closes and the parents are totally unaware of their neighbor's hard feelings.

If the neighbors had only stated the simple truth, and told the parents that it wasn't a convenient time to watch the child, the build-up of negative feelings could have been avoided. Unfortunately, it is difficult to tell the truth in our *olam ha'sheker* - world of falsehood. Eventually, the unfortunate result is that the angry party can't keep up the façade, and unleashes all of that pent-up anger and resentment. The situation then deteriorates into a full-blown feud that could have been avoided by simply telling the truth.

This week, the *menahel* of a large *Talmud Torah* and some of his staff met with me. They asked for my advice on a variety of issues. One of the issues that came up was that when parents meet with teachers, the *rebbeim* often avoid telling the parents the truth about their child's learning and behavior. Often, the fathers of the students are friends and acquaintances of the *rebbe* who wants to remain on good terms with them. Clearly, this practice harms both the students and the parents.

We have the *zechus* to sit at a *seudas sheva brachos* of two *chasanim* who are building new homes in Am Yisrael. When it comes to *shalom bayis*, it is vitally important to understand that the state of *shalom bayis*



[4]

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא ע"ה"ק ירושלים תובב"א

The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at

hamaortolna@gmail.com

depends primarily on proper communication. Sometimes, a few words can prevent years of suffering and turmoil.

After reading this week's *haftarah*, each of us must increase our commitment to tell the truth, and to avoid falsehood. When a situation arises that seems to require us to deviate from the truth because of *darchei shalom* - the ways of peace, we must first ask the opinion of a *poseik*. He will be able to instruct us as to what extent, and in which way, we are permitted to deviate from the *emes*.

ובזה נזכה להדבק במידת האמת, ויטהר לבנו לעבדו באמת, אכי"ר



[5]

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א

The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at

hamaortolna@gmail.com