RELIGIOUS INTEGRITY: Three Kosher Lies (Part 1 of 2)

Previously, we explained the value the Tora gives to saying the truth (see **here**). We also discussed one exception: *shalom*, peace which is above the truth (see **here**).

We will see now three other cases in which the Rabbis admitted that the truth could be modified (*leshanot min ha-emet*) when it clashes with other important values.

1. **Masekhta** (Talmudic tractate). According to Rashi this means that if a person, for example, knows perfectly one Tractate of the Talmud and someone asks him how well he knows this Talmudic tractate, he can conceal the truth and say that he does not know it very well. Jews value immensely the habit of behaving with humbleness and since in this case by modifying the truth there is no damage involved, he is permitted to do so. Other Rabbis (*Magen Abraham*) add that in the same way one can conceal his vast knowledge to behave with humbleness, one can also behave with humbleness in other religious or spiritual areas. For example: if someone is doing an act of Chesed or an extra stringency he can (should!) conceal it from others. On this note I remember that Rabbi Ytzchaq Shehebar, z"l from the Syrian community in Buenos Aires, use to wear his Tefilin of Rabbenu Tam at home, due to his great humbleness.

2. **Puraya** (Sexual intimacy): In issues of intimacy, it is also permitted not to disclose all the truth or even modify the truth. (This is the reason why it is permitted to hide the news of pregnancy during the first months). If someone inappropriately asks a private question (For example: is your wife going to the Mikve tonight? etc.) one could withhold the truth for reasons of Tzeni'ut (=discretion). Tzeni'ut is not just revealed by the way we dress. Discretion is also manifested by our speech: knowing what words we use, what subjects we discuss and with whom we discuss these subjects.

(*to be continued…*)

WATCH
Simon Sinek: How great leaders inspire action

from TED