

The 118th Yahrzeit of the Sfas Emes (5 Shvat 5783/January 27, 2023)

HaRav Yehuda Aryeh Leib ben Rav Avraham Mordechai, zt"l

Jesse Hefter – after Shacharis Minyan at the Maimonides Kehillah (1/26/23) where we made a Kel Maleh in the Sfas Emes' memory after laying...

With our upcoming Daf Yomi Siyum this Shabbos afternoon (Parshas Bo) on Masechet Nedarim, let's review one comment of the Sfas Emes on a pasuk from the beginning of Parshas Matos where the Torah presents the source text for Nedarim.

The Torah tells us "לא יחל דברו" – that a person shall not cheapen or profane his or her word and "ככל היוצא מפיו יעשה" -According to everything you commit to, shall you do.

The Sfas Emes commented in תרל"ד (1874) that the power of the Jewish people is strongly aligned with our ability to speak, as the pasuk says in Beraishis – YaYipach B-Apav Nishmas/Ruach Chayim: and HaShem breathed into the human creation the power of speech (as Onkelos translates – a Ruach Memalelah).

Therefore, it is in our power through the words of Torah that we speak to (re)turn ourselves towards the Divine. He explains that this is why we recite/speak the paragraphs of Shma twice every day along with all the many recitations of Berachos and Tefilos that Chazal established.

However, he continues, the condition underneath all that we say is that we don't deviate from following through, that is to say, lo yachel, meaning that we never forget the sacred nature of what we say and to what we commit ourselves in our lives. What we say is Kodesh since our power to speak is directly due to the Ruach MeMalelah that HaShem placed inside each of us.

So, he concludes, to the extent that we each exercise caution in how we use our power of speech, so we can merit that what we say and what we commit to takes us only in positive directions.

Yehi Zichro Baruch.