

And I said to my master, perhaps the woman will not follow me. (24:39)

The *Midrash* cites a *pasuk* in *Hoshea* (12:8) "As for the merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand, he loves to oppress." applying it to Eliezer. Since he did not reveal his true intentions of seeking to have Yitzchak marry his daughter, he is labeled as deceitful. This seems puzzling. Is someone considered a liar just for covering up the truth? Never did Eliezer utter an untruth, yet he is referred to as deceitful!

Rabbi Tzvi H. Volk suggests the following insight into the *Midrash*. He cites *Rabbi Mordechai Yaffe* who disagreed citing the popular dictum: "Whatever comes out of one's mouth must be the truth; but not everything which is true must necessarily come out of one's mouth." He explained that one who adheres to this dictum is actually following the path of Canaan, who on his deathbed advised his children, "Do not tell the truth." He did not say, "Speak falsely," he said, "Do not tell the truth." This implies that withholding the *emes*, truth, is tantamount to lying!

According to *Rabbi Volk*, this explains the *Midrash*. *Chazal* chose the word *vorn*, deceit, which is a subtle form of falsehood. Eliezer wasn't an outright liar, he simply withheld the truth. This is not a true *Torah* orientation. *Emes* must prevail throughout every aspect of our lives. Indeed, that which is not one hundred percent true remains one hundred percent false. It is our mandate as members of the *Torah* nation to be veracious and straightforward, scrupulous and sincere, in all our dealings with people -- especially with ourselves!