

DOMINO THEORY

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

The men who play dominos in the park are very serious about the game. For one who does not play, however, their serious interest in such a simple pastime is quite puzzling. We live in an age of extreme everything from sports to energy bars and quiet entertainment just doesn't cut it. Little children don't understand the game but they too like to play with dominoes. They stand them up one behind the other in a wavy line just far enough apart to reach each other lying flat. After standing all the dominoes on end, the child knocks the head piece down and giggles in delight as all the others fall in sequence until the last one bites the dust. Not too exciting but still entertaining.

Growing up in the sixties, we learned another use of the word domino. The politicians of the day justified American involvement in a war in Southeast Asia, better known as the Vietnam War, based on the domino theory. They proposed that should Vietnam fall to the communist it would be followed by a takeover of all the other countries in the area like dominoes falling in a child's playroom. Hence "The Domino Theory."

The problem with lying is that one false statement leads to another -- the second lie made to cover up the first -- only to be followed by a third falsehood to justify the second. Living in America today it seems like we are living in a land where everything we perceive is false -- only a pretty cover on an ugly book. The top people -- once admired and looked up to by all -- from Presidents to sports and entertainment figures and even the clergy -- are falling one by one in quick sequence like dominoes. In *loshon hakodesh* -- the Hebrew language, the word *Sheker* -- falsehood is made up of three letters of the Aleph Bet that are next to each other -- to hint at the fact that *sheker* -- lies are everywhere. The letters also stand on one leg to show instability of a lie. The word for truth -- *emet* -- is made up of the first -- the last -- and the middle letter of the Aleph Bet to hint at the fact that truth is far and few between. The letters, however, stand firmly on two legs.

Today -- when you are under pressure to speak a lie rather than the truth -- stop. It only takes a minute to avoid knocking down that first domino and canceling a series of lies that will eventually come tumbling down. The truth stands up to inspection firmly and in the end will yield success

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