The Parsha starts off “Daber El Rosh Hamattos” – this statement is directly addressing the leaders of Klal Yisrael. Why does the Parsha of Nedarim, which is of seeming insignificance in the full scope of Mitzvos, need to be addressed specifically to the leaders?

The Sifri says that the “Rosh Hamattos” is referring to Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe was the “Rosh Hamattos” who had the highest level of Nevuah and saw BiAsplakria Hameira. Why is this Parsha of Nedarim chosen as the place to teach us this distinction of Moshe in relation to the other Neviim?

Tosafos says when “Lo Sisa Es Shem Hashem Elokecha LaShav” was said in the Aseres Hadibros, the whole world shook. We are always so careful to say Bli Neder when making any statement. We don’t go into Rosh Hashanah without being Matir Neder. Why is so much value attributed to Nedarim and Shevuos within the framework of Yiddishkeit?

Even more perplexing is Kol Nidrei. Coming in to the holiest and most serious day of the year, the Kol Nidrei on Yom Kippur is seemingly out of place and not addressing the true seriousness of the day. It’s just a statement about being Matir our Nedarim and Shevuos that sang in a somber and serious tone. Why is the Kol Nidrei such a critical component of Yom Kippur and our Teshuva?
The Gemara says that during the Zman of the Churban, Klal Yisroel were involved in Torah, Avodah, and Gemilas Chasodim. If there was indeed Gemillas Chasadim, how does this reconcile with the reason of the Bais Hamikdash being destroyed for Sinas Chinam?

We know that the Rabbanim were at the party of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza, but they didn’t object to what was going on. This shows a lack of feeling in sincerity in the Chessed, and a lack of true caring. This was the prevailing attitude of the time. That’s why this story is so seminal to the Churban. There was a general lack of Emes in feeling for one’s friend and neighbors, and much of the Chessed was fake, with each person acting for his own interests.

In order to achieve a level of Nevuah, the message has to be entirely for the people. It has to be entirely Emes without personal involvement. That is why Moshe had a higher level of clarity, because he lived up to the highest standard of truth as a Navi. Moshe was an Ish Emes – “Bichol Baysi Neeman Hu”.

The leaders have to know that their entire mission is for the Emes, their leadership has to be entirely Emes and for the people, without any of themselves in there. That’s why the Parsha starts off with the “Rosh Hamatos” – every leader has to know that the sincerity that their leadership is not for them, but for the people they are leading. The Parsha of Nedarim, of keeping one’s word to the utmost level of truth, is where this point is stressed.

And that’s why we start out the new year and Teshuva with Hataros Nedarim and Kol Nidrei. We cannot enter the new year or do Teshuva without a total commitment to the truth.