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Chizuk - Inspiration

Rav Shmuel Salant ZT"l (1816 – 1909) was the Ashkenazi

Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem for almost 70 years. He was a world-renowned Posaik (Halachic authority) known for his encyclopedic knowledge of the Talmud and Halacha.

The "Period of Restoration" (1660-1688) was a time in British history that became highly influential for its satirical literature as well as for giving birth to the idea of "repartee" in general conversation.

Repartee is conversation or speech characterized by quick, witty comments or replies. One such conversation was had by Rav Shmuel and an unlikely party. Rav Shmuel once said, "Only once in my life have I been bested in conversation, and that was by a four year-old girl."

The late 1800's was a time of world-wide poverty, especially in Israel. A woman had a Halachic question regarding the Kosher status of a chicken that had been Shechted (ritually slaughtered). The chicken appeared to have been injured with noticeable bruising and the pooling of blood. Chickens that have been injured in such a fashion may not be Kosher even if Shechted correctly. The woman knew that this was a question that should be brought to Rav Shmuel to determine whether it was Kosher. However, being that it was the eve of Shabbos, and she was busy with Shabbos preparations, she sent her four-year-old daughter to Rav Shmuel to ask the question. Rav Shmuel looked at the chicken and determined that the chicken was indeed Treif (not Kosher). The protocol for the Rav in these cases, is usually to return the chicken to the family so the family could potentially return the chicken to the merchant to get their money back or to feed it to the dogs (see Exodus 22:30) However, he was concerned that due to the combination of the girl's young age, and the poverty that her family was experiencing, her desire to eat the chicken may have caused her to lie to her mother and say that the Rabbi said that the chicken was Kosher. Therefore, Rav Shmuel kept the chicken and instructed her to tell her mother to send an older sibling (so that he could return the chicken to him or her). The young girl took leave of Rav Shmuel.

Ten minutes later, there was a knock on Rav Shmuel's door. Lo and behold, it was the very same girl!

Rav Salant began to gently admonish her for not following his

instructions. She responded, "But Rebbe, you told me to bring an older sibling and that was 10 minutes ago. I am older now!"

Halacha – Jewish Law

QUESTION: According to a recent Securities and Exchange

Commission ("SEC") release, two financial services firms, Delphia (USA) Inc. and Global Predictions Inc., were fined for making false and misleading statements about their purported use of artificial intelligence (AI) and how it was used in the investment recommendation process. The firms agreed to settle the SEC's charges and pay \$400,000 in total civil penalties.

SEC Chair Gary Gensler said, "We find that Delphia and Global Predictions marketed to their clients and prospective clients that they were using AI in certain ways when, in fact, they were not. We've seen time and again that when new technologies come along, they can create buzz from investors as well as false claims by those purporting to use those new technologies. Investment advisers should not mislead the public by saying they are using an AI model when they are not. Such AI washing hurts investors.

Gurbir S. Grewal, Director of the SEC's Division of Enforcement further said, "As more and more investors consider using AI tools in making their investment decisions or deciding to invest in companies claiming to harness its transformational power, we are committed to protecting them against those engaged in 'AI washing.' As today's enforcement actions make clear to the investment industry – if you claim to use AI in your investment processes, you need to ensure that your representations are not false or misleading."

From the perspective of Halacha (Jewish law) is lying where there is monetary gain considered lying or is it actually considered theft? Please cite sources.

ANSWER: Due to the nature of your inquiry and its references to AI, it may be interesting to use Gemini AI ("Gemini") to give you

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an answer (with the author factchecking the responses).

We directed Gemini to www.everydayemes.org and the Emes Parsha Sheets that have been posted there to search for an answer to your question. Gemini retrieved the following: Lying where there is monetary gain is considered a form of stealing in Halacha. This is because lying to gain money deprives someone else of their rightful property, which is a violation of the prohibition against stealing.

Gemini found several sources related to this claim:

The Torah: The Torah explicitly prohibits stealing in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:15). [Author Factcheck – Gemini is mistaken, see Rashi that says that the, “Do Not Steal” in the Ten Commandments does not refer to monetary theft, but rather refers to a prohibition against kidnapping.]

The Talmud: The Talmud discusses various cases of lying for financial gain and concludes that it is a form of theft. For example, in Bava Metzia 61b, the Talmud states that one who sells an item at an inflated price and justifies the high price by lying about its superior quality is considered a thief.

Later Halachic authorities: Many later Halachic authorities, such as the Shulchan Aruch (Choshen Mishpat 228:6), reiterate the prohibition against lying for monetary gain.

In addition to these sources, Gemini also retrieved from the posted Emes Parsha Sheets that lying for monetary gain can also be a violation of other Halachic prohibitions, such as the prohibition against causing emotional harm to others (known as "Ona'ah"). This is because lying to someone to take their money can cause not only financial harm, but emotional pain as well.

Overall, Gemini concluded that lying for monetary gain is a serious offense in Halacha and should be avoided at all costs.

On The Parsha

The pursuit of being truthful in all our everyday affairs (“Everyday Emes”) can be a lifelong journey. The great leaders of the Mussar Movement defined “Shleimus” – wholeness, as cultivating and perfecting the various character traits that shape our identities and interactions both with Hashem and with others around us – especially the character trait of Emes.

Some of the various character traits that foster Emes include humility or modesty, courage and compassion. One needs to work on one’s modesty to acknowledge one’s mistakes and shortcomings. One needs to develop courage to empower oneself to resist societal pressures and speak out against falsehood and injustice. And one needs compassion, to be able to empathize with others and understand their truths or perspectives which may be different than one’s own.

Regarding modesty, the Midrash tells us in this week’s Parsha (BaMidbar Rabbah 1:3) that, “before the Mishkan (Tabernacle) was erected, Hashem spoke to Moshe through a bush. After that, Hashem spoke to Moshe in Midian. After that, He spoke to him in Mitzraim. After that, He spoke to Moshe in Midbar Sinai. However, once the Mishkan was erected, Hashem began to speak to Moshe from the Ohel Moed (Tent of Meeting) only, as the verse states (Micha 6:8), “He has told you, O man, what is good, and what does Hashem demand of you; but to do justice, to love loving-kindness, and to walk in a modest manner with Hashem.”

This is hard to understand – it appears that the Midrash is saying that Hashem spoke to Moshe only from the Ohel Moed (a private place) for modesty reasons, and that this, “modest manner with Hashem” is associated with the other special, elevated activities mentioned in the verse. However, isn’t modesty generally associated with behaviors that are unseemly or embarrassing and that is why they are covered up or done in private? Further, we see in another Midrash (BaMidbar Rabbah 12:4) that Hashem states, “It is not a praise of My sons for Me to speak to them publicly...” This is another example of Hashem saying that speaking publicly to them (without modesty) is not praiseworthy.

Both of these Midrashim lead us to a new definition of modesty. We are modest, not because we seek to cover up something unseemly, but just the opposite, we seek to do something in private because it is precious and holy. We now understand the above Midrashes. Hashem speaking to Moshe or Bnei Yisrael is precious and holy and therefore it should only be done in private. There is a Midrash Tanchuma (HaYoshon Parshas Bechukosai #4) that further supports this sentiment. The Midrash states that before the giving of the Torah, Hashem spoke publicly. However, after the giving of the Torah, we (Bnei Yisrael) grew and matured and now our learning of Torah is compared to a precious pearl which is sold only in the innermost hidden room and not in a public flea market.

Much of the modesty that is prescribed for us during our daily lives, is derived from the fact that we are guarding something very precious. And that is our Neshama (soul) which contains a “Chailek Eloka MiMa’al” - a portion of Hashem from above. With our new understanding and appreciation of modesty, we will be able to develop it further, and in combination with courage and compassion as mentioned above, we will be well on our way to living lives of Everyday Emes.

*“May I back out of a school carpool that I have already committed to?”
“Should I report a co-worker who is acting dishonestly?”*

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