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Halacha – Jewish Law

QUESTION: There is a food delivery app that delivers food for a certain charge. One charge is for the food itself, and one charge is for the delivery fee. The app works with many restaurants – including Kosher ones. The app’s policy states that if an order is filled incorrectly, there is no charge for the food (but there is still a delivery fee).

Once, “Rachel” ordered an Açai Bowl from a Kosher restaurant through the app and asked them to leave out the coconut shreds. The restaurant made a mistake and failed to remove the coconut. Rachel snapped a picture of the Açai Bowl with the coconut shreds included, and sent the picture to the app. Per the app’s policy, she received a credit for her order (and then proceeded to remove the coconut herself).

Rachel started to realize that this restaurant made the same mistake more times than not, whenever the Açai Bowl was ordered. Can Rachel continue to place the same order (Açai Bowl, but hold the coconut) over and over again, knowing that this is often a path to a free lunch?

ANSWER: Although technically permitted (assuming it is the app that is eating the loss each time the order is wrong and not the Kosher restaurant) the restaurant eventually catches on and this can lead to a possible Chillul Hashem (desecration of Hashem’s name). It goes without saying, that we should always strive to ensure that we are never the cause of a Chillul Hashem.

QUESTION: Unfortunately, there are times when we may see an unsettling phenomenon. We see people who are generally Shomrei Mitzvos (observe the commandments) and learned in Torah, yet they have children who go off the Derech (become irreligious) when they grow up. Can you explain why this may happen?

ANSWER: Rav Menachem Mendel of Rimanov (the,

“Rimanover Rebbe”) is cited by Rabbi Mordechai Leifer in his Pisgamei Oraisah (p.97) to answer this question. He explains that just like non-Kosher food is MeTamtem HaLaiv – that eating non-Kosher renders a person less intelligent in Torah study (see Tractate Yuma 39a), the same is true with eating all prohibited foods (e.g. food cooked on Shabbos according to many). The Rimanover Rebbe extends this idea of “non-Kosher” foods to also refer to foods that were purchased with money obtained dishonestly or by illicit means. Since the child is eating food purchased with prohibited funds, the food is “non-Kosher” and has a detrimental effect upon the spiritual development of the child which could lead the child to go off the Derech.

Chizuk - Inspiration

Rav Shmuel Rozovsky זי"ל, whose Shiurim (Torah classes) on the Talmud have been studied and admired throughout the Yeshiva world, would often visit an empty beach in Israel in order to admire its beauty and appreciate Hashem’s creation.

Rav Shmuel’s dedication to Emes was legendary. He would constantly review his Shiurim to ensure that every insight that he said was the truth and had no elements in them that even remotely could be construed as a falsehood.

Rav Shmuel’s dedication to Emes in his everyday life was equally legendary. There was one occasion where a student drove him to the beach (to admire Hashem’s creation) and the student was stopped by a security guard who asked that they park in a certain location and walk the rest of the way to the beach. The student who drove him stated that Rav Shmuel was the Chief Rabbi and out of respect for the Rabbi, should be allowed to park closer to the beach. Rav Shmuel gently scolded the student that he was not the Chief Rabbi. The student responded that he was the Chief Rabbi of the Yeshiva. Rav Rozovsky kindly responded that it was

still considered a lack of truth if the security guard was not aware of his intent and could readily misinterpret it. He asked his student to park as directed by the security guard and to walk with him the rest of the way to the beach.

On The Parsha

“And Yeshurun grew fat and rebelled; You grew fat (שָׁמַן), thick (עָבִיר) and gross (כָּשִׁיר). The nation forsook Hashem who made them and spurned the Rock of their support.” (Devarim 32:15).

The word “עָבִיר” is translated above as “thick.” However, the Talmud Yerushalmi, the Targum Unkeles, and the Targum Yonasan all translate this word differently. They translate the word to mean “acquired possessions” and comment that the Torah is discussing the acquisition of numerous and expensive possessions.

Accordingly, the verse above implies that acquiring possessions of this nature is a sin. The question arises, however, that this is not a sin!

Rav Henoch Liebowitz ZT”L, the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Chofetz Chaim, explained that the Torah is not telling us that acquiring possessions is a sin. However, it is telling us that it can cause us to rebel against Hashem as it did for Bnei Yisrael, as explained in the verse above. Apparently, the acquisition of significant possessions is a factor in preventing us from seeing the truth and our mission in life which is to serve Hashem and glorify His Name. Not only that, but it can even cause us to rebel against Him (Heaven forbid).

There are different ways that acquiring possessions and amassing wealth can blind one to certain truths. One way that wealth can be used to blind one to the truth, is that one can use their wealth to amass fortune and fame and build an empire. One does so with the goal of creating an everlasting legacy and to be remembered long after one has passed away. However, the truth is, that no matter what one does with the wealth one has acquired, one is ultimately forgotten after one passes away.

We find this idea in the Seforno’s comments on Tehillim 49:10-12. The verses state, “Will he live yet forever and not see the Pit? For he sees that wise men die, together

a fool and a boorish man perish, and leave over their possessions to others. In their heart, their houses are forever, their dwellings are for every generation; they call by their names on plots of land. Their grave is their eternal home, the dwelling place for all generations of those once famous on earth.”

The Seforno explains that man, in his nature, desires and yearns for an everlasting life or legacy. This desire should cause him to seek Dveikus b’Hashem (clinging to Hashem) and to fulfill His Mitzvos to earn true, everlasting life. However, some individuals go in a different direction and tragically seek to establish an everlasting legacy through their possessions. They think that if they acquire enough possessions or name their buildings or their progeny after themselves, that they will be immortal. However, sooner or later, they will be forgotten with time.

We find regarding Pharaoh and Nevuchadnetzer, that the possessions that they acquired blinded them to the truth. In Shemos (10:1), Rabbeinu Bachya points out that all of the references to Pharaoh’s magnificent dwelling and palaces are the key to understanding how Pharaoh was blinded and could not see the truth. The same is true with Nevuchadnetzar, who stated in Daniel 4:27, “There is great Babylon, which I have built by my vast power to be a royal residence for the glory of my majesty!”

We are not Pharaoh of course, and our wealth will likely not blind us to the extent that it did for Pharaoh. However, we are still at risk. If we are not careful, our wealth can blind us to the true reason we are put in this world - to serve Hashem and glorify His Name.

*“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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