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Halacha – Jewish Law

QUESTION: Due to the nature of my position,

I am required to pick up all the phone calls that I receive (even the ones that my caller ID identifies as, “Scam Likely.”) Most of these calls are spam calls and waste my time. If I answer the spam caller and tell him that I am not interested in whatever he is selling, he is undeterred and just calls me back later with something else that I am not interested in. I do know, however, that these spam callers have buttons on their call consoles that they can press to quickly and efficiently place me on their “Do Not Call” list. However, when I ask to be placed on this list, I am often ignored. So here is my question. If the spam caller is led to believe that I have completely lost my mind, I am confident that he will place me on his “Do Not Call” list. Accordingly, next time I get a spam call, can I respond to the caller using the voice of an elderly person and ask, “Do you have red jello? I like red jello. Can you bring me some?” Indeed, I have used this tactic before, and it has proven to be very effective - I get put on the list, and never receive calls from the spam caller again. However, someone suggested that this tactic may not be permitted because one may be telling a lie or engaging in deceit (Genaivas Daas). What do you think?

ANSWER: To begin with, something tells me that you may enjoy this ruse a bit too much. Rabbeinu Yonah writes that smiling at a falsehood (Sheker) does not emanate from a good character trait (Middah). One should find Sheker distasteful because it is far from the Middos of Hashem. On the other hand, if you are involved in a Mitzvah and this spam caller is wasting your time, you can use your tactic, because it is not really lying in the literal sense, i.e. you said that you liked red jello which is not a lie assuming you really do like red jello.

On The Parsha

In Parshas Tetzaveh, the Torah provides very detailed instructions for the Kohain's clothing (Bigdei Kehunah), with great emphasis on the Kohain Gadol's vestments. Among these sacred garments is the Choshain Mishpat—the breastplate of judgment—which contained the Urim

v'Tumim, instruments of divine truth-telling. When they were consulted regarding a particular course of action, they would light up and provide the Kohain Gadol with Divine guidance.

The Torah states in this week's Parsha: "And you shall place the Urim and Tumim into the Choshen Mishpat, and they shall be on Aharon's heart when he comes before Hashem. Aharon shall bear the judgment of Bnei Yisrael on his heart before Hashem, always." (Shemos 28:30).

Commenting on this verse, the Ramban offers a profound insight about the connection between these sacred objects and the concept of truth:

He says that the meaning of אֲוִרִים, is derived from the word אור – light. This means that they would illuminate the true course of action to be taken. The meaning of תְּמִימִים is derived from the word תם – completeness, because the guidance provided was not only true, but also completely true without any omissions or deficiencies.

We see that the very names that the Torah chose for these objects—Urim from the Hebrew word for "light" and Tumim from the word for "completeness" or "perfection"—reveal their very essence. The Urim illuminated the truth, making things clear, while the Tumim represented the completeness and integrity of that truth.

This understanding teaches us that truth in the eyes of the Torah is not merely about factual accuracy. To be considered truth, there must be an integrity to the truth – a truth told without any omissions or deficiencies.

The placement of these truth-bearing instruments, "on Aharon's heart" reminds us that integrity isn't merely an intellectual exercise but must be felt deeply and carried with us always in our hearts.

Chizuk - Inspiration

The following story was shared by Daniel Kravitz to Rabbi Shraga Freedman, author of “Living Kiddush Hashem” and Sefer “Mekadshei Shemecha”. The Sefas Tamim Foundation feels that the readers of its Emes Parsha

Sheet believe strongly in the importance of living a life of Everyday Emes, and they may also be interested in related stories of Kiddush Hashem. Accordingly, please enjoy the story below and email LivingKiddushHashem@gmail.com for a free download of Sefer Mekadshei Shemecha and to subscribe to their weekly emails for more wonderful stories.

Daniel Kravitz, the owner of a secondhand furniture shop in Denver, was taken aback by the customer who entered his store. The young man was dressed like a hoodlum, with a shaved head that clearly marked him as a neo-Nazi. His bare arms were covered with tattoos with the venomous message, "Kill Jews!" Fortunately, Daniel's Yarmulke was concealed beneath a cap.

Daniel spent the next hour assisting his customer. He took the man on a tour of the shop, helped him select a decent array of furniture, granted him a generous discount, and helped the young neo-Nazi load his purchases into a waiting pickup truck. Then, after looking the man over carefully to make sure he was not carrying any weapons, Daniel began to speak.

"Tell me, he said cautiously, "Do you really believe what all those tattoos say?"

"You bet I do," the man replied.

"Have you ever hurt anyone?" Daniel pressed.

"Yep!"

Daniel paused, then asked, "What do you have against the Jews?"

"They are thieves and liars" the customer launched into a tirade, spewing out every imaginable anti-Semitic stereotype.

Daniel listened patiently until the man had finished speaking. Then he removed his cap to reveal his Yarmulke and said, "Are you aware that you have just spent an hour with a Jew? Haven't I been honest, kind, and generous this whole time?" The neo-Nazi gaped in disbelief, "No way! No, you're not a Jew, man!"

Daniel motioned to the Mezuzah on the door, then showed the man a Siddur on his desk. "You can see very clearly that I am Jewish, and I'm not at all like the image you have of Jews. You have been brainwashed. I can't believe that your parents raised you with this kind of hate. You must

be estranged from them," Daniel surmised. The neo-Nazi grimly confirmed his suspicions, he hadn't spoken to his parents in ten years. Just then another customer came in and Daniel wished the neo-Nazi a good day and turned to assist the other customer.

Six months later, the man returned to the store, this time with a full head of hair, decent clothes, and long sleeves to conceal his tattoos. To Daniel's surprise, the man embraced him warmly. "I need to apologize to you and thank you," he said tearfully. "You really made me reassess all of the ideas I had believed. Thanks to you, I now know what a Jew is, and I've decided to turn my life around. I've even reconnected with my parents."

We *can* make a difference. We cannot give up. We can bring light to the deep darkness.

Mussar – Introspection

This week, we continue with translating the Chofetz Chaim's Sefer entitled, "Sefas Tamim." Sefas Tamim, from which our foundation takes its name, focuses on the importance of honesty in word and in deed.

"If we begin to think about the reasons why people commit this sin of speaking deceitfully, and why these men have ignored / trivialized this sin, we will conclude that there are many, many reasons. I will assemble the main reasons that bring a person to commit this sin.

First, at the very outset, the sin of stealing and the sin of lying become meaningless to this person. By virtue of this disregard, he will inevitably also trivialize the sin of speaking deceitfully, which is an outcome of the combined sins of theft and lying. When one wants to cleanse oneself from the stain of the sin (deceit), he should constantly think about the enormity of the sin and the punishment for stealing and lying, and in so doing he will be saved from committing it."

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

Call our **Emes Halacha Hotline**
with your Everyday Emes questions at: **718-200-5462**.

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