



SEFAS TAMIM
FOUNDATION • Emphasizing Everyday Emes

The Emes Parsha Sheet

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On The Parsha

"When you sell property to your neighbor, or buy from the hand of your neighbor, you shall not wrong one another." (Vayikra 25:14)

The Ramban (Nachmanides) explains that when the Torah says not to "wrong one another," it is referring to the prohibition of "Ona'ah" – overcharging one another – which is typically overcharging someone for a sixth or greater than the going market price. However, this prohibition applies specifically to the buying and selling of movable objects (Metaltilin). It does not apply to the purchase and sale of real estate such as fields or houses (Karkahos).

However, regardless of whether we are discussing the purchase or sale of Metaltilin or Karkahos, the Torah commands us to conduct our business with complete honesty. The next verse after the above referenced, discusses Karkahos and that the price of Karkahos must be calculated based on the number of harvest years remaining until the Jubilee year when the land returns to its original owner.

One may say that the seller is entitled to say to himself, my purchaser knows that the land I sell to him today will return to me at the Jubilee year. Therefore, I can charge him what I want and he can decide for himself whether it is worth it for him to pay my price. Not so, says the Torah. The number of harvest years that are left until the Jubilee must be disclosed and the price to be paid must be commensurate with how many harvests are yet to be produced before the land reverts to its original owner.

The above Ramban emphasizes the importance of full and fair disclosure and pricing during a business transaction – the purchaser likely knows about the upcoming Jubilee year and its reversion back to the owner, nevertheless

this still must be disclosed during the sale and the pricing of the field must be set commensurate to how many harvests are left until then.

The message for us today is clear: Honesty in business is not just about avoiding a lie. It is also about fully disclosing the information a buyer needs to make an informed decision.

Chizuk - Inspiration

Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv ZT"l's father, Rav Avrohom, originally had a different last name. It was "Orener" and Rav Avrohom had it changed shortly after he arrived in Israel.

After many years, the Chiddushim (Torah insights) of Rav Avrohom's father, Rav Moshe Orener were prepared for publication. The family had researched his illustrious family background and had prepared the Haskama (approbation) for the publication which his grandson, Rav Elyashiv was to sign. Included in the Haskama were remarkable descriptions of Rav Moshe's righteousness and erudition. To the family's shock, before Rav Elyashiv signed the approbation, Rav Elyashiv crossed out the majority of the remarkable descriptions of his grandfather. When asked why did so, Rav Elyashiv responded, "It is not Chas V'Shalom (Heaven forbid) that the descriptions are false, however, since I do not have first-hand knowledge of these descriptions, I am concerned that they may not be completely true."

Halacha – Jewish Law

QUESTION: In the arcade that I frequent, I like to play Skee-Ball. For the uninitiated, in Skee-Ball, a player rolls a small ball down a miniature alley with a small ramp at the end of it. The ball travels down the alley and up the ramp which launches it towards a series of holes. The object of the game is to get the ball into the holes. Each hole has a



different value depending on the size and placement of the hole. The game is timed, and the more balls a player gets into the respective holes, the higher the score and the more tickets the Skee-Ball machine spits out. The player then takes the tickets and redeems them at the arcade counter for a prize.

To maximize the number of tickets that I may receive, may I pay for 2 Skee-Ball machines that are situated side-by-side to run simultaneously? Now that I have the two machines going at the same time, I have a total of 10 Skee-Balls to use (5 from each machine). I will use all 10 Skee-Balls on one machine and rack up points faster which will lead the machine to issue more tickets. The arcade does not have a stated policy that prohibits this, so is there anything wrong with this creative approach to getting more tickets or is this considered "gaming the system" and not permitted?

ANSWER: Wow! This is a very clever hack! To do so without asking permission from the arcade would require at least a significant minority of people who have already engaged in this practice. This is because there is a Smah in Choshain Mishpat 228:16 on Shuchan Aruch 228:6 that states that when everyone knows that a particular sales practice is occurring and there are no complaints about it, then it becomes the Minhag HaSochrim - the customary practice of sellers and is permitted. Extending the concept of Minhag HaSochrim to mean the customary practice of a buyer or consumer as in your case, since you are playing Skee-Ball in a way that is not common, you would need to ask permission from the arcade to engage in this practice. You may ask permission from the cashier or salesperson at the front desk and do not need to seek out the owner since these employees have been empowered to make decisions of this nature.

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.

"...So too, regarding the sacrificial burnt offering of a bird, the text states (Vayikrah 1:16) 'He (the Kohein) will remove its crop together with its feathers.' Since birds take flight and fly throughout the world and eat anything that they hunt and steal wherever they go, therefore do not bring them onto the Mizbayach (alter). Accordingly, the

Torah instructs us to remove its (the bird's) crop (where it would store food that it presumably stole) together with its feathers (which helped the bird fly to the food that it stole). However, regarding a grazing animal, since it only eats the food that it is in its master's trough, it can be brought in its entirety onto the Mizbayach, as the Pasuk states (Vayikra 1:13) 'and the Kohein will bring all of it onto the Mizbayach.' Now, this concept is so astounding that it wakes up people from their sleep. This means to say that whoever has stolen goods in his possession cannot approach Hashem's Mizbayach. He may not offer up any sacrifices and may not appear before Him. In fact, to the contrary, he remains despicably disgusting unless he returns the theft.

Moreover, in this world, and in the end, he will be left with nothing because of this. Because of his theft, Hakadosh Baruch Hu will send against him a man who is even more evil, who is even more powerful than he is, through whom punishment will be exacted (i.e. who will steal from him what he stole). As Chazal have taught, everything that man steals or cheats during his lifetime, he will not leave this world until other people steal it from him. Regarding this more powerful robber who looted the initial thief and who believes he can stand up against anybody, when his 'sack' becomes 'full,' Hakadosh Baruch Hu will send against him even more evil men who are even stronger than he is (to steal from him what he stole) as the Tanna teaches, 'He saw a skull floating on the surface of the water and said to it: They have drowned you because you have drowned others, and those who have drowned you will themselves be drowned.' (Mishna Avos 2:6)"

*"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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