

PAYING FOR WATER, GETTING LEMONADE

by Rabbi Yisroel Belsky ztl

Question 92:

I went to a restaurant where you first pay at the register for a drink that you want, and then get the drink by yourself. I paid a small amount of money to have water. Then accidentally, I pressed the wrong button and got lemonade. Since I am a senior citizen, I'm entitled to a certain discount. This time, I forgot to ask for the senior discount. It just so happens that the senior discount makes up the difference in price between the cup of water and the lemonade. In other words, they cancelled each other out. Should I offer to pay for the lemonade and mention the senior discount, or should I just forget about it?

RABBI BELSKY

You should absolutely forget about it. There's no need to confess to the owner of the store, and tell him all your mistakes. Who cares! The only interest that you have is to see that he gets the money that he's supposed to get. If he gets his money, what's the difference? Honestly, does he have to know what went on in your mind? Do you really have to confess to him that you made this mistake, and another mistake, and so on?

Telling him these things will only cause him consternation. He'll become suspicious, and start thinking that maybe you are telling him all this because you want him to think you're telling him the truth. But really, you are lying. Maybe he'll think you owe him a lot of money, or even the other way around. It will only cause confusion and hurt, which is meaningless and unnecessary. If it actually cancels out, let it go, and let that be the end of it.

NEXT WEEK'S QUESTION 93: LAWYER BILLING CLIENT FOR NON-USEFUL TIME

As an attorney, due to certain circumstances, there are times when a client won't benefit from the time I spend on the case. Can I still charge the client for this time, or do I have to absorb the lost time?

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