

TRACKING DOWN AN UN-CASHED CHECK

by Rabbi Yisroel Belsky ztl

QUESTION 95:

I once bought an item from a store and paid by check. The check was never cashed, and the company never contacted me for the money. Am I obligated to contact the company to pay for the item? If the company passed the check to another party, am I obligated to track it down?

RABBI BELSKY

Yes, you are obligated to call the company you gave the check to. You paid with a piece of paper and you got something in return. If the check was never cashed, it's as if you never really paid for it. Of course there's an obligation to pay.

But if the merchant used the check to pay someone else, and that person did the same, the check can just circulate. There are times when somewhere along the line something happened to cause the check to be lost. Perhaps someone lost it, or maybe something else happened to it. To track down the person who lost it is a Herculean effort, and often it's just impossible. People have told me that after a couple of weeks of searching, they ran into a brick wall. Nobody remembered what happened to the check, or even who they gave it to.

You did your part and called the person you gave the check to. Whatever the merchant did with the check was his responsibility. That is not your concern. If the check is circulating, you are not responsible anymore to find out what happened to it.

NEXT WEEK'S QUESTION 96: EXTRA DRINKS INSTEAD OF FOOD

My company offers free breakfast and lunch for employees. Since the food isn't kosher, I can only take soda or juice. Am I allowed to take extra drinks to compensate for the fact that I'm not eating any food? If so, would I be able to take extra drinks for another day, or maybe take the extra drinks home? Do the workers in the cafeteria have the authority to say that this is permitted?

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