

GENEIVAS DAAS PART 5

by Rabbi Yehonasan Gefen

In the previous weeks we have developed a basic understanding of the prohibitions involved in geneivas daas. Now we proceed to some examples to help further our understanding of how geneivas daas applies.

The Gemara says that one may not pressure a person to eat by him, when the asker knows that the other person does not eat by other people. To do so would be geneivas daas, in that the other person will feel grateful towards him, because he thinks that he genuinely wants him to come, but in truth that's not the case. Similarly, it is geneivas daas to offer someone many gifts, when he knows that the person will not accept them. (Shulchan Aruch, 228:6).

Therefore, one is not allowed to constantly invite a person to his home when he really doesn't want the person to come. However, some authorities write that it is permissible to invite him a single time if the offer is being made for the sake of the honor of the other person. For example, it is sometimes considered polite to invite someone to a meal, therefore that is permissible, (and it could well be a mitzvah). However you should not invite them many times, only once.

The reason for why one is allowed to invite someone in order to honor him is as follows: The definition of the prohibition of geneivas daas is to make someone feel indebted to you for no valid reason. However when the intention is to appease the person for a specific reason such as to make him feel good, then there is no prohibition. For the same reason, if the person genuinely wants his fellow to eat by him, but he knows that he will refuse, nonetheless it is permissible to invite him because his goal in inviting him is not that the other person will be unjustly grateful towards him.

1. This article is based on a talk given by Rabbi David Genish, Shlita, Rabbi of Kehillat Meam Loez.

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