

GENEIVAS DAAS PART 9

by Rabbi Yehonasan Gefen

This week we continue our discussion of certain situations where geneivas daas may be permitted. There are even times when it is a Mitzvo to flatter people, and praise them, attributing qualities that they do not have, or to lie in order to encourage them. This can be the case with one's students or children, in order to encourage them in their learning, and performance of Mitzvos, and so that they will listen to his rebukes. This is discussed in the famous ethical work, 'Orchos Tzaddikim'. Also, the Gemara in Shabbos (31a) tells of how Hillel converted a non-Jew who wanted to convert on condition that he would then be the Kohen Gadol, or that he would just learn the written Torah, because Hillel knew that after he would convert, he would change his attitude. The Gemara in Bava Metsia (85a) tells of how Rebbe praised the son of Rebbe Elazar and called him 'Rebbe', so that he would return to the correct path. This strategy succeeded.

Therefore, it is proper for a Rebbe to give more credit to a student's question, than it really merits. The same applies for a father with regards to his son. We see this with Hillel (Shabbat, 31a) who responded to stupid questions saying, "you have asked a good question". Similarly, every teacher and parent should show the strengths of their student or child. Usually, in order to do this, one must praise him more than he really deserves at this point in time.

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