



CONGREGATION TORAS CHAIM

An intimate space...Grow at your pace.

January 4 – 5, 2018 ▪ 28 Teves, 5779 ▪ Shabbos Vaeira
Mincha: 5:15P / Candlelighting: 5:16P ▪ Shabbos Ends 6:24P

KIDDUSH this Shabbos is sponsored by Yerachmiel Martin: “In honor of my Eishes Chayil, Shira, whose quiet and constant mesiras nefesh inscribes on my heart the famous words Rabbi Akiva: שלי ושלכם שלה, Whatever is mine and yours is really all hers.”
SHALOSH SEUDOS this Shabbos is sponsored by Shalosh Seudos is sponsored by Ehoud & Shoshana Wilson on the yahrtzeit of Shoshana’s father Yoseif ben Meir. Please contact Rabbi Yaakov Rich at 972-835-6016 if you are interested in sponsoring kiddush or shalosh seudos in the future.

■ SHABBOS SCHEDULE

Friday Night, January 4th

- » Mincha/Kabbalos Shabbos/Maariv–5:15P
- » Shabbos Candle Lighting–5:16P

Shabbos Day, January 5th

- » Mishnayos shiur with Rabbi Reuven Wortrich–8:00A
- » Shacharis followed by Kiddush–8:30A
- » Beis Medrash Learning for Men–4:35P
- » Mincha/Shalosh Seudos for men–5:05P
- » Maariv/Shabbos Ends–6:24P

■ WEEKDAY SCHEDULE

- » Sunday Shacharis–8:00A
- » Weekday Shacharis–6:40A
- » Weekday Maariv–8:15P

■ REFUAH SHELAIMA

Men

- » Matan Rafael Nasanel ben Esther (Matan Elfenbein)
- » Yehoshua Yisroel ben Rivka Devorah (Brother of Gail Bacharach)
- » Itai ben Shoshana (Son of Ehoud & Shoshana Wilson)

Women

- » Leah Bracha bas Yosefa Eshka (Daughter of Irwin & June Harris)
- » Tikva bas Salima (Tikva Zbolon)
- » Rivka Basya bas Devorah (Rebekkah Bodoff)
- » Necha bas Leah (see Irwin Harris)
- » Leah Esther bas Yenta Leah (Lori Jarmel)
- » Yenta Leah bas Shayna (Mother of Lori Jarmel)

■ WHAT’S NU

- » **New Shiur for Women:** 8:30P at home of Ariella Bush, She’arim B’Tefillah (Gates of Prayer) by Rabbi Shimshon Pincus with Rabbi Yaakov Rich. Meaningful discussion that will inspire.
- » **CTC Professional’s Kollel:** Reminder to men for CTC Professional’s Kollel, a program of skills-based learning for men with careers. Monday through Friday, 9-11 AM, the daily schedule includes mussar, Mishna Berura and Gemara with Rishonim and Achronim. If this program sounds like the opportunity you never had, but wish you did, or, has piqued your interest, please email Rabbi Yaakov Rich at rabbi@toraschaimdallas.org or call (972) 835-6016 .

■ SOMETHING AS FLUID AS THE NILE RIVER: RABBI LABEL LAM

So said HASHEM, “With this you will know that I am HASHEM.” Behold, I will smite with the staff that is in my hand upon the water that is in the Nile, and it will turn to blood. (Shemos 7:20)

And it will turn to blood: Because the no rain falls in Egypt and the Nile rises and irrigates the land, the Egyptians worshipped the Nile River, and therefore their deity was hit first and then afterwards they were hit. – Rashi

Rashi explains why the Nile River was chosen as the first target for Makos. Because the Egyptians relied on the Nile River and worshipped it, it was stricken first. This gives a window into an important dynamic that affects each of us and in every part of our lives.

The Chovos HaLevavos spells out the mechanics of how BITACHON- trust in G-d works. There are three important steps. Firstly, he states that it is impossible for a person be free from worry unless he relies upon HASHEM.

Secondly he explains that if someone doesn’t trust in

HASHEM he is by default trusting in something else, be- it wealth, good looks, a glib tongue, brains, brawn, popularity, or even Uncle Sam.

Thirdly, he clarifies that if someone is relying on something other than HASHEM, HASHEM takes their prompt and leaves them in the limited hands of that thing that they are putting their trust in. I realize that all this needs an explanation.

What does it mean to rely on something other than HASHEM? I have a model from Jewish Law. Hallacha states that while someone is praying it is forbidden for him to lean on a table or for example a common lectern- shtender.

We see very often in shuls and Yeshivas across the planet that people who Daven have shtenders planted before them. What then is the standard for leaning on it?

The person should estimate that if the lectern would be suddenly taken away would they be able to stand normally or would they become destabilized? If the sudden disappearance would cause the person to fall down then they were relying on it. I can have money in my pocket or in the bank but I must imagine how I would function if G-d forbid it would suddenly disappear. That could be the standard for relying. We can possess all these good things but at the same time recognize that they were sent by HASHEM.

There was a wealthy fellow who helped us out a few times and each time I was careful to thank him by calling him an angel and reminding him that HASHEM always sends me angels. I am glad the blessing and support for this project came through his agency. Not him alone but through his agency.

If someone relies on something or someone other than HASHEM they are in a vulnerable situation. HASHEM says, so to speak, “Let us see how far money can get you or good looks, or an advanced degree, or a certain political party. They are limited and frail and anyone who threatens their existence is a personal threat to the one relying on it. The defense of that “thing” becomes the task of life. It takes on a form of worship! How is my 410K doing? How’s my pension? There’s the tension!

Where did the Chovos Levavos get these ideas? Were they mined from the fertile imagination of a philosophical mind or were they fished out of something as fluid as the Nile River!?

■ TORAH TOTS: VAEIRA

Hey, wait a minute! It’s Moshe’s commandment to go before Pharaoh, it’s Moshe’s staff, and it’s Moshe’s neck on the line if these plagues don’t work. So why is Aharon, Moshe’s brother, pressing the plague button on the rod?

It’s a lesson in Hakorat Hatov - showing appreciation. The first plague, the plague of DAM, turned the water to blood. The plague of TZFARDAYA, caused frogs to emerge from the Nile river. But to get these first two plagues going, Moshe would have to hit the water with his staff - the same water upon which he floated to Pharaoh’s palace in a basket some 80 years before.

The plague of KINIM, turned the sand of Mitzrayim to yucky lice! That same sand had once covered up the body of a Mitzri (Egyptian) task-master slain by Moshe.

Now, everybody knows that water and sand have no feelings! Even so, this story teaches us how much more we must show Hakorat Hatov to our friends, parents, rabbayim, teachers, and most of all, Hashem.

■ OWNERSHIP OF BUSINESS PERQUISITES (PERKS): RABBI ARI WASSERMAN

QUESTION: I work in the nursing home industry. A

vendor — a large publicly traded company, looking to do business with the corporation which employs me — sent its representatives to our offices, and I spent some time with them. But, at the end of the day we decided not to pursue the relationship.

Several days later I received an email from the vendor, offering a \$15 Amazon gift card if I completed a short survey. I did so — it took me about a minute — and the gift card was sent to me.

Is this gift card company property or mine?

I asked this question of a colleague, who said that a \$15 gift card was inconsequential to the company and that everybody keeps such small perks. However, the employee manual states: “On occasion, an employee may receive a gift from a vendor as a solicitation for business or as a gesture of appreciation for an existing business relationship. Employees should notify their manager of any gift received and give the manager the opportunity to inspect the gift. The manager will determine if the employee is able to accept the gift or if it should be equitably distributed within the department or throughout the company.”

So am I am foolish to be asking this question?

HALACHIC BACKGROUND

No, you are not. Indeed, your question is very similar to who owns the frequent-flyer points when you fly on company business, and actually concerns quite a few professionals out there.

In deciding such questions, halacha considers “national custom” (minhag hamedina). But since in a large country like the United States there is no uniform “national custom” that applies to all types of business, the deciding factor would be “industry custom” or industry standard. For a certain practice to be considered the industry standard it must be very clear and well established. When it is, it has precedence.

The Code of Jewish Law, the Shulchan Aruch, states that an employer is obligated to provide terms consistent with national custom/industry standard. For example, if there was no specific prior agreement between the employer and employee for the employee to work unusual hours, the employer cannot compel his worker to do so if that is not the industry practice, even if he is willing to pay for the extra time. As well, if it is the custom to provide food or refreshments to his employees, it is the employer’s duty to comply. (In Talmudic times, this meant providing dried figs or dates. In our times, it generally means providing coffee, tea and the like.)

The Aruch HaShulchan adds that if there is no prior agreement between the employee and employer and also no established practice, the employer has no obligation to provide any benefits or perks beyond basic salary. Also, it is up to the employee to prove that the employer owes him something more than his wage. In other words, in the absence of an agreement between the parties, or unless the industry standard dictates otherwise, the employer does not owe the employee any extras.

RESPONSE: Based on the above, it is clear that the relationship between the employee and employer is defined by:

1. an agreement between them
2. in the absence of an agreement, the industry is not entitled to any extras
3. in the absence of either of the above, the employee is not entitled to any extras.

In your situation, there actually is an agreement between you and your employer in the form of the employee manual, so we don’t need to analyze the industry standard. The manual clearly states: “Employees should notify their manager of any gift received and give the manager the opportunity to inspect the gift.”

Accordingly, you should discuss the \$15 gift card with your employer and let him decide if he wants it for the company (per the manual) or if you can keep it. You do not need to speak with the owner of the company. You can speak with whoever is authorized to deal with these issues, probably your immediate superior.

It is worth mentioning that keeping the gift card because “everyone does it” does not make it right, and you are to be congratulated for asking the question!

POSTSCRIPT

My brother-in-law heard the following story at a weekly halacha class in Chicago:

After an Orthodox Jew attended a number of shiurim on the topic of workplace theft, he asked his boss how he felt about personal use of office supplies like paper clips, pens and paper: What bothered him, and what did not? At first the boss thought it was a joke. Once he realized that the employee was serious, they sat down together and had a very meaningful discussion, with the boss gaining new respect for his employee.

It may very well be that your boss will act like the boss in this story, but please know that, regardless of how he responds, you will be creating a tremendous kiddush Hashem. Indeed, you already have by asking the question.

■ PARSHA Q&A: VAEIRA

1. Did G-d ever appear to Avraham and say “I am G-d”? 6:9 - Yes.
2. What cause did the forefathers have to question G-d? 6:9 -- Although G-d swore to give them the land, they never actually had control over it.
3. How was Moshe commanded to act towards Pharaoh? 6:13 - With the respect due a king.
4. How long did Levi live? 6:16 - 137 years.
5. Who was Aharon’s wife? Who was her father? Who was her brother? 6:23 - Elisheva, daughter of Aminadav, sister of Nachshon.
6. Why are Yitro and Yosef both referred to as “Putiel”? 6:25 - Yitro fattened (pitem) cows for idol worship. Yosef scoffed (pitpet) at his evil inclination.
7. After which plague did G-d begin to “harden Pharaoh’s heart”? 7:3 - After the sixth plague -- shechin .
8. Why did Pharaoh go to the Nile every morning? 7:15 - To relieve himself. Pharaoh pretended to be a god who did not need to attend to his bodily functions. Therefore, he secretly used the Nile for this purpose.
9. Give two reasons why the blood was chosen as the first plague. (a) 7:17 - Because the Nile was an Egyptian god. (b) 8:17 - Because an invading army first attacks the enemy’s water supply, and G-d did the same.
10. How long did the plague of blood last? 7:25 - Seven days.
11. Why did the frogs affect Pharaoh’s house first? 7:28 - Pharaoh himself advised the enslavement of the Jewish People.

Good Shabbos

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■ CLASSES

- » Gemara Yevamos for men (M-Fr, 6-6:40A)
- » Professional’s Kollel–9:00A-11:00A
- » Gemara Nazir for men (Sunday-Thursday 9P)
- » Gates of Prayer for Women: 8:30-9:15P at Ariella Bush’s home
- » Chumash for men & women (Shabbos: Check Schedule)
- » Beis Medrash Learning for men including “Shabbos Malkusa” Chaburah–(Shabbos: Check Schedule)