



Volume VII Issue #2

Written by Rabbi Yair Hoffman

Parshas Noach, 6 Cheshvan, 5787

October 17, 2026

– Sponsored anonymously for the Refuah Shleimah of Yair Nissan Ben Sara –

To sponsor a week of the Emes Parsha Sheet in honor of a loved one email us at info@everydayemes.org.

Chizuk - Inspiration

Rebbetzin Esther Mindel A'H, wife of the Telz Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Mottel Katz ZT'L, noticed that someone had left a pair of rain boots in their home after a Hanhala (yeshiva faculty) meeting. Suspecting that the boots belonged to one of Telz's other Roshei Yeshiva, she first called Rav Chaim Stein ZT'L and then Rav Boruch Sorotzkin ZT'L. Neither recalled leaving boots there. She then called Rav Mordechai Gifter ZT'L.

"I did not leave my boots at your house," Rav Gifter said. "But I distinctly remember Rav Mottel telling me that he had two pairs of boots. Perhaps the boots you found are his second pair."

"My husband has only one pair of boots. I am certain of it," the Rebbetzin replied.

"That is odd," Rav Gifter said firmly. "I distinctly remember the Rosh Yeshiva telling me that he had two pairs."

They went back and forth, debating how many pairs of boots Rav Mottel owned.

Finally, the Rebbetzin asked, "Did Rav Mottel tell you that he owned 'two pairs of boots,' or did he simply say that he owned 'two boots'?"

Rav Gifter paused. "Now that you mention it, you are correct. He said that he owned two boots, not two pairs. But who speaks that way? Surely, when he said 'two boots,' he meant 'two pairs of boots.'"

"Not so," said the Rebbetzin. "Let me explain. Rav Mottel lost his right boot, so he bought a new pair. After wearing the new pair for a while, he lost the left boot. Instead of buying yet another pair, he combined the left boot from the old pair with the right boot from the newer pair. That is why Rav

Mottel told you he had 'two boots'—because that was precisely the truth. He would not describe them as a pair, which could imply that they were a matching set, since doing so would not be 100% Emes."

On The Parsha

The Midrash in Bereishis Rabbah 31:4-5, quotes Rabbi Levi who explains that the generation of the flood committed every type of transgression, but their decree was not sealed until they stretched out their hands in theft.

This is a striking statement. Consider what Rabbi Levi is teaching us. In a generation that the Torah itself describes as corrupt and filled with every type of transgression, it was specifically the transgression of theft that sealed their fate. The Gemora in Sanhedrin 108a elaborates on the nature of the generation's specific, insidious type of theft. The people of the generation would steal tiny amounts from each other, less than the value of a Perutah - the smallest unit of currency. Because the value was so small, this made it impossible to bring any single thief to justice as the Gemora in Eiruvim 62a indicates that anything worth less than a Perutah cannot be subject to Halachic repayment.

This teaches us the nature of their corruption. It was not theft on a grand scale that destroyed their society. Rather, it was the small, seemingly insignificant incidents of dishonesty that each person could rationalize to himself or herself. The dishonesty and corruption was systemic, ubiquitous and not subject to legal recourse.

Hashem had Noach respond to this corruption by having him build in public, a Teivah (ark) for 120 years as a public act of protest and warning on what was to come. This extended timeframe teaches us about the importance of giving persistent Tochacha (reproof) in the face of widespread

corruption even if the odds appear to be slim that the Tochacha will affect a change of behavior.

It is also important to realize that the Midrash is not merely recounting a dark chapter of ancient history; it is providing us with important information to consider in our own generation. By tolerating even minor dishonesty, we risk recreating the conditions the Midrash identifies as the final step that sealed the destruction of the generation of the Flood.

Halacha – Jewish Law

QUESTION: There is college professor who is known to

bully his graduate school students. His students conduct research and publish papers in pursuit of their PhDs. The professor thinks of an idea for a research paper and then directs them to research and write the paper. He concludes his instructions to his students by saying, “You will add my name to the paper as a co-author, correct?” So essentially, the students do all the research and the writing, and the professor takes much of the credit. If the students balk at his request, he responds with, “The topic of the paper was my idea and I will help edit the paper.” On the rare occasion that he does edit the paper, his edits are superficial and typically consist of a review of the paper’s grammar and spelling. I assume the professor’s behavior is problematic from a Halachic perspective. What specifically are the Halachic concerns?

ANSWER: It would appear that taking the credit for another’s research paper is comparable to the case of one who takes the credit for the Torah Chiddushim (novel Torah ideas) of another. The author of the Machane Efraim (responsum CM 49) writes that taking the credit for another’s Torah Chiddushim is a violation of Genaivah (theft) and Hasagas Gevul (encroachment on the domain of another) because one is stealing their ideas and encroaching on the domain of another by taking credit for their intellectual property. The Maharam Shick (responsum YD 156) writes that one would transgress Midvar Sheker Tirchak (distance yourself from a lie) and Gneivas Daas (do not deceive). The Maharam Shick does not believe that it is forbidden on account of theft, because he believes that one cannot steal an intangible (i.e. a Torah Chiddush).

However, in the case of the research paper, there is an additional consideration. The “H-Index” is a metric that measures how many articles a person has published and how many times their articles are cited by others. Since people in the science fields are often hired by their H Index scores, the practice of taking credit for other students’ research papers may increase one’s H-Index score. If one were to be hired due to an artificially inflated H-index score, the employer may be paying his new hire based on a false pretense. Therefore, in our case, the Maraham Schick may agree with the Machane Efraim that taking credit for another’s research paper may be full-fledged theft.

This is akin to Rav Moshe Feinstein ZT”L’s responsum (Igros Moshe CM Vol. I #30) that cheating, in effect, steals from a student’s future employer since that employer assumed he earned his grades and passed his courses honestly and would therefore be paying his new hire under false pretenses.

*“May I back out of a school carpool that
I have already committed to?”*

“Should I report a co-worker who is acting dishonestly?”

Call our **Emes Halacha Hotline**
with your Everyday Emes questions at: **718-200-5462**.

To subscribe to this weekly, free newsletter or for further
information about our Foundation, please visit us
at **www.everydayemes.org**
or contact: **info@everydayemes.org**.