

Must I correct Someone's Faulty Assumptions?

Question: An individual from Lakewood was making a wedding for one of his children in Chicago. A good friend of his from Lakewood happened to be in Chicago on business at that time and decided to attend the wedding. When the *ba'al simcha* spotted him, he said to his friend incredulously, "I can't believe you traveled all the way here just for the wedding!" Must the friend correct his misconception?

Answer: At first glance, this might seem like a typical case of *geneivas da'as*. After all, in the previous segment of this series, we learned that it is forbidden to mislead someone into believing that they must express their *hakaras hatov* (gratitude) to him for something he did specifically for them, if that was not actually the case. So too, in this case the guest has misled the *ba'al simchah* to believe that he traveled to Chicago exclusively to attend the wedding.

However, in truth *geneivas da'as* is limited in scope and would not apply here. The Shulchan Aruch states that if a reasonable explanation exists for the misleading actions, it is permitted for the misconception to be maintained, as it can be argued that "*ihu ateh anafesheih*," "he misled himself." In other words, the one who was misled should have been expected to consider that other motives may underlie the actions in question. If he did not consider those possibilities, then no transgression has been committed.

In the specific example brought in the Shulchan Aruch (based on the Gemara), a prominent individual is walking towards a city, and another prominent individual walks out of the city and happens to pass the first individual. When he greets the first with a hearty "*shalom aleichem*" and welcome, the first individual may believe that the second walked out of the city specifically to greet him. However, since it was quite common for people to leave the city, no violation of *geneivas da'as* has taken place, since the first individual can be expected to consider that other reasonable explanations for the second leaving may exist.

Based on this precedent, it would seem that in the case of the wedding in Chicago as well, the guest need not correct the mistake of the *ba'al simcha*, as visiting for business is certainly a common occurrence.

The *poskim* clarify that if there is no obvious explanation, then one would be required to explain the reason for the action to the one who was misled, as he could not have been expected to think of the actual reason. Therefore, had the wedding taken place in a smaller town where people do not usually travel to for business, then one would violate *geneivas da'as* by not explaining one's presence to the *ba'al simcha*.

Question: Does the halacha of "*ihu ateh anafesheih*" apply in the scenario of the wedding even if the *ba'al simcha* tells his friend he is honoring him with a *kibud* at the *chuppah*, e.g., reciting one of the *sheva berachos*, specifically because he made the effort to come?

Answer: The Talmud Yerushalmi states that if one visiting a city is honored by the residents as if he were knowledgeable in two *masechtas* when he in fact knows only one, he must inform them of their mistake. The *poskim*

explain that we cannot apply *ihu ateh anafesheh* in this case to say that it should be expected that a person may only know one *masechta*. One reason given is that this principle applies only to a case of misconstrued gratitude, but one may not take something from another based on such a false pretense.

Another reason given is that if one accepts the *kavod*, it is considered as if one acknowledged explicitly that the mistaken basis for the *kavod* was correct, which would be tantamount to lying.

According to either reason, if the *ba'al simchah* told his friend beforehand that he was honoring him with a *kibud* at the wedding because of the fact that he went to such trouble to attend, then the friend must tell him that he was already in town on business. But if the friend was called up first without an explanation and was told only afterward of the reason for the *kibud*, then he would not need to correct the misconception.