

And add its fifth to it. (5:24)

One who unlawfully has his fellow Jew's money in his possession, but cannot be compelled to pay, because the plaintiff lacks sufficient proof – and who (compounds his guilt) swears falsely that the money is rightfully his – must (after it is discovered that he lied) pay the principal plus an added fifth, followed by a korban *asham*, guilt offering. No one has a right to someone else's money – even if he intends to replace it eventually. The added fifth applies even if the thief has decided to finally come clean and repent his erroneous ways.

The *Talmud* (*Berachos* 6b) states: "Whoever knows that his friend is accustomed to greeting him (he) should precede him in greeting." (In other words, do not wait for your friend to greet you. If he is in the habit of greeting you – greet him first.) "If one greets his friend and his friend does not return the greeting, he is considered a *gazlan*, thief." Obviously, receiving a return greeting from someone is very important. The *Melitzer Rebbe, Shlita*, explains that a *gazlan* is one who steals the *simchas ha'chaim*, joy of life, from someone. When I greet someone, I expect to be greeted in return; when I smile to someone, I expect a smile in return. To be ignored, to be shunned, is to be deflated, humiliated, to have my bubble of life punctured. That, says the *Rebbe*, is *gezeilah*, theft.

Horav Leizer Brody, Shlita, adds that ignoring someone's greeting is bad, but it can be worse. *Misaleim*, one who conceals himself in an attempt to avoid meeting the other fellow, sends a deplorable message: "I do not think very highly of you." "You mean very little to me." "You are not worth my time." Such messages destroy a person's self-esteem. The individual wonders, "What about me offends him so? Why does he refuse to greet me?" One who refuses to return a greeting offends not only the other person – he also offends Hashem! His display of arrogance is insidious. Hashem despises any kind of arrogance in people.

Therefore, when this individual finally acknowledges his opprobrious behavior and seeks to repent, he must add a fifth. In addition to a greeting and talking to the other person like a *mentch*, decent person, he must reach out to him with all five fingers – give him his hand. A simple hello is insufficient. He now must give a handshake. As far as offending Hashem, let the offender devote himself to a higher degree – to Hashem's Five Chumashim. Let him learn Torah. That should do it.