

CURRENT TALMUD PASSAGE

"A TALMUD TALE" PREMIERED FEBRUARY IN HOUSTON, TX!

The musical was an enormous hit! If you'd like a dvd of the show, please send a [contribution](#) of \$18 for an enjoyable, entertaining and inspiring look at the world of the Talmud!

Posted February 11, 2009, by Rabbi Judy Abrams. Please refer to Maqom's home page for information about previous passages.

BH

A TIMELY THEME: YERUSHALMI AND ABSOLUTE HONESTY IN BUSINESS

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The headlines these days are full of examples of people who weren't scrupulously honest, even to the point of honesty beyond the strictest letter of the law. The following two stories of sages show that they went beyond the absolute letter of the law to maintain another person's property. These are the role models we are to emulate.

Rabbi Shimon bar Kahana was leaning on Rabbi Eliezar. They passed by a fence. He said to him: Bring me a chip for a toothpick. He retracted and said: Don't bring me a thing, for if you do, everyone will do the same and ruin the man's fence.

Rabbi Haggai was leaning on Rabbi Zeira. They passed someone carrying a load of chips. He said to him: bring me a chip for a toothpick. He retracted and said: Don't bring me a thing, for if you do, everyone will do the same, and the man's load of chips will be lost.

A comment: It's not that Rabbi Zeira was so punctilious (kasheir) a person, but rather, he wanted to teach us to properly observe the ways of our Creator (Y. Hallah 4:5)

Discussion Questions:

1. Is it possible to be like Rabbi Eliezar and Rabbi Zeira and understand the long-term consequences of our smallest actions? What would be the upsides and downsides of everyone following this level of righteousness?
2. What should we expect of ourselves and our public officials in terms of complying with tax laws and business ethics? Should we go beyond the letter of the law, or demand that our leaders do so?