

## CAREFUL ACTIONS – STEALING

One who causes another person a loss utterly disqualifies himself from asking his Father in Heaven for His blessings. One rabbinic writing states that the sin of theft causes one's prayers to be rejected in Heaven. King David asks: *Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?* And answers that it is one with clean hands.

The word theft, however, has a far broader meaning than holding someone up at gunpoint or burglarizing their home. It includes more subtle forms of misusing others' property as well.

Meticulous concern for property of others may seem like a trait that is securely embedded in the world of materiality. The Torah illustrates, however, that this trait has tremendous spiritual value, and is in fact a prerequisite for closeness to the Almighty.

A person who examines his dealings with others and finds that he occasionally slips over the line can improve through two means: learning the obligations toward another's property, and understanding the gravity of theft from the viewpoint of Heaven. One sage urges each person to "reflect regularly on the gravity of the sins and punishments, and then he will be saved from them.

Among the most harmful of all of theft's consequences is that it blocks the flow of one's prayers regarding any and all needs, for oneself or for one's family and friends. "Dishonesty and deceit create a wall between us and the Creator, a wall that our prayers cannot penetrate according to one of the sages. "Only by removing the ill-gotten gains from our possession and fulfilling our obligation can we tear down that wall and open the way for our prayers to ascend to Heaven."

## POINTS TO PONDER

***The Almighty does not accept the prayers of a person who is guilty of theft in all its forms.***

***While the term theft means robbery, it applies to many subtler forms of misappropriation of others' property.***

***Meticulous care for others' property is a prerequisite from coming close to the Almighty.***

**Joshua 7:11 Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings. (ESV)**