

# When Jews Do Bad Things

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## A. Reflective Questions:

1. Name an incident that particularly affected you when a Jew in the public arena did “wrong.”
2. What feelings does this kind of behavior evoke in you?
3. What can we do to stop this kind of bad behavior?

## B. Text Sources

### 1. The Bible:

Leviticus 22:32: “Do not profane my holy name and I will be sanctified in the midst of Israel; I am the Lord who sanctifies you.”

### 2. *The Safer Ha-Hinukh*

“An individual well-known for acts of kindness should not perform an act which *appears* to be a sin in public view such that the act is not worthy behavior for such a righteous individual.”

### 3. Maimonides, Laws of Fundamental Torah Principles

“There are other things that are also counted as a profanation of God’s name, and this is the case if these behaviors are done by someone who is a public figure, well-versed in the Torah with a reputation for piety...even though they are not strictly considered sins, they are still regarded as a profanation of God’s name: one who has money but buys on credit anyway...one who is frivolous or eats and drinks

with base individuals or speaks rudely to one's fellows or fails to greet others with a smiling face and is seen as argumentative and small-minded person..."

“And so if a scholar is punctilious with himself and speaks pleasantly to his fellow man and congenially with others and greets them kindly, may be insulted by another yet does not insult others and honors others even when not respected himself and does his business in good faith and does not dwell with the ignorant and is not seen all the time but occupies himself with Torah, adorns himself with *tzitzit*, crowns himself with *tefillin* and acts in all ways above the letter of the law - and does not behave in an extreme fashion which would alienate others - such that all find him agreeable, love him and desire his actions - behold this is sanctifying God's name and of him it is said [Isaiah 49:3]: “And He said to me, ‘You are my servant, Israel in whom I glory.’”