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Chizuk - Inspiration

Rav Yisrael Salanter ZT"l went to visit the

house of an acquaintance who was a wealthy banker. The banker was sitting in his house at his table counting money when he looked out the window and saw Rav Yisrael in the distance. Realizing that Rav Yisrael would soon be at his doorstep, the banker went to change his clothes so that he would be able to greet the Rav with the honor that he deserved. When Rav Yisrael arrived, the banker was still changing his clothes, so his servant greeted Rav Yisrael and invited him into the house. Seeing the large sum of money on the banker's table, Rav Yisrael waited outside of the house.

Several minutes later, the banker entered the room and saw that Rav Yisrael was standing outside. The banker invited him in and asked why he didn't wait inside for him. Rav Yisrael explained his behavior with the following Gemorah. The Gemorah (Bava Basra 165a) states that a minority of people engage in illicit relationships (Arayos). Nevertheless, the Torah forbids a man to be secluded with a woman because he may succumb to temptation. The same Gemorah states that most people transgress in monetary matters. It should be obvious to us then, that if the Torah prohibits a man to seclude himself with a woman when only a minority of people succumb to temptation, all the more so a man should not seclude himself with another's money – a monetary matter where the Torah says that most people transgress. Therefore, when I was invited inside initially, and saw your money on the table and that you were not present, I decided to wait outside until you returned.

Halacha – Jewish Law

QUESTION: There is a new type of printing called "Perfect Printing" which is now used in the production of hardcover books. Using this process, a book is bound by having its pages glued together in

spots where in the conventional process, stitching would be used instead. It is known that the Perfect Printing method is more efficient but is of a lower quality than the conventional process. Accordingly, at the end of the Perfect Printing process, the book binders make the binding look as if it was bound using the conventional process. Is this permitted or is this a violation of Geneivas Daas (deception)?

ANSWER: This is an excellent question and one should consult his Rav. It is also possible that the answer to this question may change over time. The downside of a "Perfect Printing" hardcover book is that when opened, the pages of the book may not lie as flat as a book bound with the conventional process.

There is a Smah in Choshen Mishpat (228:16) that states that when everyone (or perhaps most people) know that butchers add white color to meat to make it appear fattier (and of higher quality) then it is permitted to do so. It is not considered deceitful, because then it becomes the Minhag HaSochrim (the common way of the merchants). In other words, once most people know that merchants often present their merchandise in a certain way, it is not deemed to be deceitful as the buyer should have known that merchandise is commonly presented in this manner.

Now, back to your book binding question. In this author's view, most people know that Perfect Printing is used for paperback books. However, at the current time, few know that it is also used for hardcover books. It is therefore recommended that if measures were used to make it appear as if the conventional process of book binding was used, you should state in the promotional materials of such books, disclosure such as, "Hardcover book produced using Perfect Printing technology". However, as more people become aware that this

process is used for hardcover books as well, there may come a time when this disclosure is no longer necessary.

On the Parsha

The Midrash Tanchuma on Parshas Tzav (2) states as follows: "And in the future, when the Holy One, blessed be He, comes to exact retribution from Eisav, what [will] Eisav do? Wrapped in a prayer shawl like an elder, he will come and take his seat beside Yaakov. It is so stated, (Ovadia 1:4), 'and though your nest is set among the stars.' [The 'nest' refers to Eisav] and 'stars' can only mean Israel (Yaakov), since [Hashem told Avraham as] it is stated (Bereishis 15:5), 'Look towards the heavens and count the stars... so shall your seed be.'

Yaakov responds to Eisav, 'My brother, you shall not be like me.' Accordingly, it is stated (Hoshea 13:14), 'My brother, your words are death; my brother, your descent is to Sheol.'" The Midrash then continues to explain how Eisav's words are "words of death" to Yaakov.

The message that the Midrash conveys is that Eisav dresses, "in a prayer shawl, like an elder" and thinks of himself as a righteous person, when in reality, he is evil. The Rebbe of Lublin in his Sefer, "Zichron Zos" (Vayishlach "Katonti") explains that there are times that the Yetzer Hara (evil inclination) attempts to convince a person that a given course of action is a Mitzvah – when in fact, it is an Aveirah (sin). If a person becomes convinced by the Yetzer Hara that he is doing a Mitzvah, this is a most difficult situation because the person has no knowledge of his Aveirah. Therefore, he does not realize that he needs to do Teshuvah (repent). This is one of the explanations of the prayer of Yaakov, "Hashem, save me please from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Aisav." Why does the verse say, "from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Aisav"? We already know that Aisav was Yaakov's brother so the verse should have just said, "from the hand of Aisav"? The understanding is that the verse is emphasizing that Yaakov is praying to Hashem to be saved when the Yetzer Hara appears to him "as a brother",

pretending to look out for his benefit but, in reality, looking to cause him to sin.

In a similar vein, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Hager ZT"l, the first Vishnitzer Rebbe (1830-1884) writes in his "Tzemach Tzaddik" that the future event described in the Midrash above, regarding Eisav dressing up and appearing to be righteous, is quite prevalent today when falsehood has become so prevalent in our world. Like Aisav, everyone wishes to appear as a great Tzaddik, and the Holy One blessed be He removes him from there.

We see from the Vishnitzer Rebbe's words that we all have, to some degree or another, an internal Aisav that strives to sow sin within us and make it appear as if it is the highest form of a Mitzvah. If Yaakov, despite his righteousness, still felt the need to pray fervently to Hashem to give him the strength to overcome this tendency of the Yetzer Hara, then all the more so, we should do the same.

Rav Michel Twerski Shlita suggests (and we do not recall whether he said this suggestion on his own or cited another), that the way to determine whether a given course of action is the Yetzer Tov (good inclination) speaking and honestly trying to convince you to do a Mitzvah or whether it is the Yetzer Hara using his tendency to convince you to sin, but making it appear to be a Mitzvah is by using the following litmus test. When it is really the Yetzer Tov speaking, he advises you once, and in a straightforward manner, e.g. "This is something that should be done, period." When the Yetzer Hara speaks, he advises you on the merits of a course of action repeatedly. He tries to convince you from differing angles, using differing rationales. He pushes you and he prods you. Then you know that you are being, "worked on" by the Yetzer Hara.