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Chizuk - Inspiration

The biography of the Klausenberger Rebbe ZT"l paints a stark picture of the Rebbe's first years in America, when he was laboring to rebuild his shattered institutions from the ashes of Europe. In the early 1950s, his poverty was so crushing that one Purim he did not have even the three half-dollar coins customarily given for Machatzis HaShekel before the Megillah reading. Only after tremendous effort—when an early Shalach Manos arrived which he was able to sell—was he able to fulfill his obligation. That poverty forms the backdrop to the remarkable story that follows.

A wealthy philanthropist, renowned throughout America for his generous support of Yeshivos, was brought before the Rebbe. Those who arranged the meeting hoped—perhaps desperately—that he would extend his largesse to the Rebbe's She'eiris HaPleitah institutions as well. The Rebbe received him with warmth and dignity, inquiring after his health and affairs. The man, speaking innocently, described how successful his business had become: it now demanded almost nothing of him, leaving his days free for travel, vacations, and playing cards.

At that moment, when every practical instinct seemed to demand deference, the Rebbe did the opposite. He rebuked him. He reminded this seventy-five-year-old man that one who believes in Hashem, in reward and punishment, must surely think about his Neshamah (soul) and the final accounting that awaits every person. As the Rebbe spoke, his words grew sharper and more urgent: the man must not imagine that generous donations to charity would escort him into Gan Eden while he spent the last chapters of his life in emptiness. The benefactor left wounded and angry—and the desperately needed donation vanished with him.

The Rebbe's followers were stunned. To them it seemed incomprehensible: how could the Rebbe drive away a Jew whose

wealth might have sustained struggling Torah institutions? Seeing their distress, the Rebbe explained. He had no personal need for money. He accepted funds only to increase Kavod Shamayim (the honor of Heaven) and to glorify Torah. But how could he worry about the Yeshivah's balance sheet while ignoring a lost Jewish soul standing before him, drifting toward the end of life in spiritual danger? He did not expect one rebuke to transform the man overnight. But until that moment, the philanthropist had been nearing the end of his years convinced that his philanthropy alone had secured him a straight path to Gan Eden. Perhaps now, towards the end of his life, a tremor of regret might stir within him; perhaps he might yet do Teshuvah (repent). And that single awakening, the Rebbe declared, was worth more to him than every dollar the man could ever have given.

On The Parsha

In this week's Parsha, Moshe warns that if the people corrupt themselves in the land of Israel, they will be exiled from it. Hashem embeds (in Devarim 4:25) a hidden number in the word "V'Noshantem" — "and you grow established" — whose Gematria (numerical value) is 852, hinting at the year of the exile - 852 years after Bnei Yisrael entered Israel.

Rashi tells us that the exile in fact came two years early, in year 850. Why? "So that the threat 'you will utterly perish' (stated in the next verse) would not be fulfilled regarding them." Rashi then cites Daniel: "Hashem hurried the evil and brought it upon us, for Hashem, our G-d, is righteous" — Hashem acted with kindness by bringing the exile ahead of schedule.

This Rashi requires careful analysis. Had the people remained in Israel the full 852 years, they would have crossed the threshold from exile, into the harsher decree of "you will utterly perish." By triggering the exile two years early, Hashem removed them from

the Land before the graver punishment would need to be fulfilled. The early exile, in other words, was an act of mercy — a lesser consequence deployed to push off a greater one.

But let's take note of what Hashem did not do. He did not simply cancel the decree nor wave away the word He had given. The word had been spoken — the exile would need to occur, and a harsher decree would need to occur if exiled in year 852. What Hashem does is find, within the constraint of His own word, the most merciful way to fulfill it. He keeps the promise of exile precisely, and bends only the timing — accelerating it — so that the words of "you will utterly perish" do not need to be fulfilled.

It may have been "kinder," in a shallow sense, to nullify the warning of "you will utterly perish" altogether. But a warning nullified is a word rendered empty. Rather, Hashem honors the word He gave — and then works within that honored word to extend the maximum compassion that His word allows.

Issuing warnings that one does not follow through on, may feel generous and kind in the moment. But it corrodes the very foundation of trust, for a person whose threats are hollow can often be a person whose assurances are hollow too.

Halacha – Jewish Law

QUESTION: There is a 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.

*"May I back out of a school carpool that
I have already committed to?"*

"Should I report a co-worker who is acting dishonestly?"

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