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## Chizuk - Inspiration

In the 1960s, while serving as the Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Tiferes Yerushalayim (MTJ) in New York City, Rav Moshe Feinstein ZT"l received his regular paycheck from the Yeshiva. This time, however, he noticed that his paycheck was significantly higher than usual. Upon investigating, he discovered that the Yeshiva board had decided to give him a raise due to his growing prominence as the Gadol HaDor (eminent Torah authority) whose Halachic decisions were sought by Jewish people worldwide.

Rav Moshe could have certainly used the extra money, and the Yeshiva was Boruch Hashem, in a position to pay him the extra money. Nevertheless, Rav Moshe immediately returned the extra money. He explained that when he had initially taken the position, he had agreed to a specific salary. While the board had the right to offer him a raise, he felt that accepting additional money without him having explicitly negotiated it beforehand in the customary way, could be seen by donors and others in an unfavorable light.

He further explained that since people donated to the Yeshiva to support Torah, every dollar needed to be used exactly as the donors intended. Even though the board had approved the raise, he felt that donors had given with the understanding of the existing salary structure and changing that without their explicit knowledge wasn't appropriate in his view.

## On The Parsha

Reb Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik ZT"l ("Reb Velvel") raises the following question on this week's Parsha: "The brothers bought food from Yosef in Egypt during the famine in Eretz Yisrael. Yosef detained Shimon and sent the rest of the brothers on their way back to Yaakov with a request to bring Binyamin to Egypt. Why did Yosef then place the money back in the brothers' sacks that they rightfully used to pay for the food that they bought?" Reb Velvel answered, "Because Yosef

wanted to ensure sure that the brothers would return to Egypt."

Someone present at Reb Velvel's Shiur asked him, "Wouldn't Yosef's brothers come back to Egypt anyway? Considering the famine, their need for more food would surely cause them to return. And besides, wasn't their brother Shimon taken captive? They would surely return to redeem him?"

Reb Velvel answered that the brothers, who were to be the future forebearers of the tribes of Israel, had an unfathomable level of faith in Hashem (Bitachon). Yosef knew this and thought that perhaps the brothers would not return to Egypt and decide to ride out the famine, using the great level of Bitachon that they had to trust that Hashem would save them. Similarly, they would use their Bitachon to trust that Hashem would bring about Shimon's release from prison. However, Yosef was certain of the honesty and integrity of the brothers and knew one thing for sure: They would certainly come back to Egypt to return what they believed to be an ill-gotten gain. Therefore, he placed the money back in their sacks to ensure their return.

We also find later in the Parsha (42:13-14) the following exchange: "And they [the brothers] said, 'We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan, and behold, the youngest is with our father today, and one is gone.' And Yosef said to them, 'This is just what I have spoken to you, saying, 'You are spies.'"

The Siach Yaakov (Rav Blau) quotes a Rashi who cites the Midrash Rabbah (91:7) and says that there was additional dialogue between Yosef and the brothers as follows: Yosef said, "And if you were to find him [the one that was gone], and his captors would demand an extraordinarily high ransom to release him, would you pay it? They answered, "Yes." Yosef continued, "And if his captors would respond, 'We shall not return him for all the money in the world,' what would you do?"



The brothers responded, “We would either kill or be killed [to get him back].”

Yosef responded, “This is what I have been telling you. You have come to kill the residents of this city. I have divined with my magic cup that two of you alone [Shimon and Levi] have destroyed the entire city of Shechem.”

The response of the brothers is rather perplexing. Why would the brothers tell the governor and ruler of Egypt what they had planned to do, “Kill or be killed?” Such a response would quite likely cause them to be further suspect in the eyes of Egypt’s governor to prove his allegation that they are, in fact, spies (and this is indeed what happened). Why did the brothers need to admit their true intentions?

The brothers were holy individuals, and the Middah (character trait) of Emes (truth) permeated their very essence. Although they must have assuredly tempered their words to Yosef with, “You seem to us to be a just ruler who would not do such a thing,” they would not lie and therefore continued with, “...but if we were to encounter such a situation, we would either kill or be killed.” The brothers felt that they had to be truthful despite the subsequent consequences that would occur with revealing their true intentions.

### Halacha – Jewish Law

**QUESTION:** I have a sensitive question to ask, and I am changing some of the details of what actually happened so as not to upset or embarrass anyone. The Board of Directors of a charitable organization is planning a fundraiser and one of its board members suggested that an item that the company needs to purchase should be purchased from his own company. It appears that this purchase is likely going to happen, and I know that this board member’s company stands to make a significant profit on the deal. This bothers me and I do not think very highly of this charitable organization anymore. Am I overreacting or am I right to feel the way that I do?

**ANSWER:** The situation you describe is problematic and you are right to feel the way that you do. There is a fascinating Aruch HaShulchan that writes (Choshen Mishpat 9:1): “Not only is a judge forbidden from accepting bribes, but also all appointees and all those who deal with public needs, even though their decisions are not Torah law, are forbidden from tilting matters due to love or hate, and certainly through accepting bribes.”

Board members and executive directors have a fiduciary and Halachic obligation to place the institution that they are entrusted to represent, ahead of their own interests. One could possibly argue that, in the long run, it is better for the organization not to alienate the wealthy and influential board member and therefore permit the sale to go through to his company, but the question should be raised to a competent Posaik (Halachic authority) for a definitive ruling. Certainly, the board member himself should not engage in this behavior and use his board seat to steer purchases to his own company.

### Mussar – Introspection

This week, we continue with translating the Chofetz Chaim’s Sefer entitled, “Sefas Tamim.” Sefas Tamim, from which our foundation takes its name, focuses on the importance of honesty in word and in deed.

“It is practically crystal clear, that these lies were spoken needlessly (for no gain), because if the seller wanted to, he could have simply said, ‘I am selling it for such and such, and I cannot sell it for any less,’ and that would have been the end of it. ‘What can he attain or gain from deceiving words? – Oh, deceiving tongue.’ (paraphrasing Tehillim 120:3) Even if one thinks he will profit more by lying, the Torah warns us to stay far away from a lie because truthfully, he will lose much more than he will gain. One who trusts in Hashem and transacts his business honestly will be surrounded with Hashem’s kindness, and Hashem’s blessings will enrich him. One who conducts his business honestly, with absolute certainty will not lack any of his bread (i.e. will not lack any of his needs), and his livelihood will be earned honestly, pleasantly and respectfully.”

*“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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