

ENDORSEMENT

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

One of the time-honored techniques employed by the advertising industry to sell product is called the "endorsement". A famous personality is paid by the advertiser a fee to publicly speak the praises of his product. Football players sing the praises of laser surgeons. Television stars tell of the quality of an automobile. Rich, successful entrepreneurs advise the public as to where to shop for paint. The public has learned to trust the veracity of a rich and famous person's endorsement.

Does this make sense to you? If you needed to investigate the credentials of a surgeon in a life-threatening situation would you seek the advice of a major league all-star catcher? If you had large sums of money to invest would you ask an Olympic Gold Medal ice skater where you should put your money? Probably not! But let's face it -- the advertisers would not be spending their client's dollars in a way that has not been proven to yield bottom line sales. So we must conclude that most people -- at least -- do accept the endorsements of the rich and famous as true and reliable.

Today when you are offered advice by one not expert in that exact subject you are investigating -- stop. Consider that idol worship is o.k. for children but can be harmful to the decision making of mature adults. Mature people should judge an issue on its merits. Wisdom is found by consulting the wise not the rich or the famous. (Someone once said, "Once a person gets some money in his pocket -- he gets rocks in his head!".) It only takes a minute to turn your attention to the subject at hand -- push aside unreliable sources of advice -- and to seek out one who is wise in your area of investigation. It takes maturity and it yields success.

DID YOU KNOW THAT

Ten men over the age of bar misvah are needed for a public reading of the Torah in the synagogue. Should some of the ten leave after the reading has begun, the one who is at the Torah at the time of their departure may complete his portion and also may recite the blessing said at the completion of his portion. The subsequent readers should be sent up to complete the parashah and the haftarah but they should not say the blessings normally recited before and after their aliyah. [Source Yalkut Yosef, volume 2, Siman143:1,2]

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The Sefer Hasidim says that one should never judge another to the side of liability because a person only sees things on the surface and only G-d can see the depths of a person's intentions. In fact, on

the contrary, one should judge others favorably...One should not trespass what one considers to be light transgressions because they lead to more serious violations. For example, one should not violate the command, "Do not bear hate for your friend in your heart" because it can lead to murder. [Sefer Hasidim, Siman 77-79]

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