Leviticus 19:24 forbids placing a stumbling block in front of a blind person. The Rabbis interpreted this metaphorically as a ban against using words or actions to mislead those who lack relevant practical or spiritual knowledge. *Lifnei iver* thus prohibits giving self-serving advice and being an accomplice to sin.

What are the boundaries of these prohibitions? I suggest the following:

**Self-Serving Advice**

It is forbidden to use the trust engendered by or endemic to a relationship so as to create and use an information imbalance against another party in the relationship.

Salesmen/traders who talk clients into buying securities that their company was betting against are a perfect example of violators. The same is true of repairmen who advise the purchase of unnecessary parts, or insurance agents who persuade buying larger policy than needed, etc. In each of these cases X comes to Y for advice because Y represents himself as an expert whose knowledge is used to benefit clients, and Y abuses the trust created by that self-representation.

**Being an Accomplice to Sin**

We are responsible to create accountability for misbehavior, rather than simply appealing to the best in human nature.

This includes effective anti-harassment policies, independent oversight of financial transactions and salaries, and close attention to the power dynamics of hierarchical relationships.

We are responsible for clearly stating and acting on the principle that values are not subordinate to profits.

We are responsible not to engage in commerce with firms that we know, or that a reasonable investigation would allow us to know, behave unethically or illegally.

It is not my interest here to define “unethical”. *Lifnei iver* is a metaprinciple— it applies to whatever a person sees as unethical.

We are responsible not to produce products whose primary use is unethical or illegal,

unless such products are so completely integrated into the culture that failing to sell them would make a business commercially or socially unviable. For example, if one believes speeding to be unethical or illegal, one could not produce radar detectors. On the other hand, one might be permitted to sell televisions, even if one believes that a television’s primary uses are to promote the sexual objectification of women and the public humiliation of reality-show participants, on the presumption that any particular customer will use the television to watch only worthwhile shows.