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# SHABBOS MENU

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • SHABBOS PARSHAS NITZAVIM-VAYEILEICH 5780 • ISSUE 207

## HE DIDN'T EXACTLY SAY IT WAS A SECRET

*Speaking in front of three people, a person imparts negative information about someone. In the middle of talking he mentions, "He'd better not find out that I said this." Should listeners consider his words to have been said in confidence?*

### THE DILEMMA

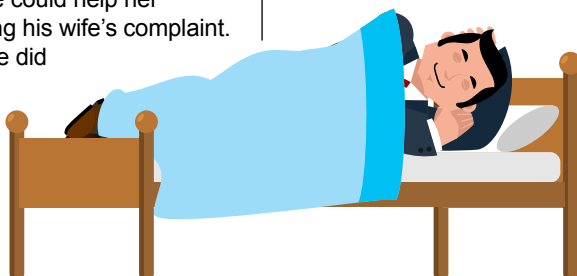
Leah is sitting with her three sisters-in-law, her husband's sisters, one Shabbos afternoon. The young mothers are watching the children together while their husbands are napping.

"As soon as my husband wakes up, it's my turn!" says one of the sisters. "*Baruch Hashem*, he's great with the kids."

Another sister nods in agreement. "Yup, soon it's Daddy fun-time!"

Leah, whose husband had no patience for children, comments, "Well, I guess you know your brother's at a total loss with kids." Suddenly aware that her listeners might take exception to her criticism of their brother, she quickly adds, "Of course he's got lots of other talents, so I don't mind being the hands-on parent. He'd feel bad if he knew I complained."

One of the sisters thought she could help her brother's marriage by revealing his wife's complaint. However, Leah hinted that she did not want her listeners to repeat her complaint to her husband. Are they bound to keep it confidential?



### THE HALACHAH

The listeners' responsibility to keep the information confidential doesn't rely on the specific words the speaker uses to convey that desire. Leah's sisters-in-law could easily infer from her words that she didn't want her complaint repeated to her husband.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim,  
Hilchos Loshon Hora, Klal 2:8*

## PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

*Thank you for continuing this publication. In addition to reading it at our table, my wife reads the stories to her first-grade class at Politz Hebrew Academy and they love it! Is there any way we could have some of those machsom l'fi cards mailed to us again? Ours have gotten worn out since we used them every Shabbos.*

Jarred Nisenfeld  
NE Philadelphia, PA

### FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

[Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org](mailto:Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org)

"Hashem is called  
*Peace!*  
He is Peace,  
His Name is Peace,  
and *everything*  
in the world is bound  
together by peace."

— Zohar, Vayikra 1467a

Reviewed by Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Lowy. For discussion only; actual halachic decisions should be made by a rav or halachic expert on a case-by-case basis.

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PHILADELPHIA

**C**hazal reveal to us a fascinating formula built into the mechanism of *tefillah*: "If a person *davens* for his friend, and he needs that very thing, he is answered first." Based on this principle, many people make "*tefillah* pacts": "We both need a *shidduch* – you *daven* for me, I *daven* for you, and Hashem will answer us both." But if I am *davening* for my friend just so that my own need will be filled, isn't that actually synonymous with *davening* for myself?

Rav Yitzchak Ezrachi explains: "If a person *davens* for his friend, and he *needs that very thing*, he is answered first." When does the person who is *davening* for his friend merit a *yeshuah* for himself? Only when, **in spite of his own neediness, he focuses genuinely and sincerely on "that very thing" that he is *davening* for – his friend's *yeshuah*.** For this mechanism to work, the person *davening* should feel his partner's pain so acutely that he cries out on his behalf from the depth of his heart and with every fiber of his being, as if that is the very thing he himself needs. Only then is he awarded Hashem's gracious fulfillment of his own desires.

According to this interpretation, the two *tefillah* partners do not even have to share the same difficulty, since the words "he needs that very thing" do not intend to identify the supplicant's need, but rather to describe the sincerity with which he is asking for his friend's lack to be filled.

Riva's\* daughter Chanie had

been married over three years and was still waiting for the sound of a child's cry to fill her empty home. Riva's neighbor Yehudis, also a member of the local Machsom L'Fi, had a wonderful daughter, Nomi, in her mid-20's, who needed a *shidduch*. Both names had previously been submitted to the Machsom L'Fi for a *yeshuah*, but the two friends decided to do an extra bit of *hishtadlus*. They agreed that Riva would *daven* for Nomi to find her *bashert* very soon, while Yehudis would say a special *tefillah* each day for Chanie and her husband to be



## DOUBLE PRAY

the *tefillas* were uttered consistently and with genuine sincerity.

A few months passed. The entire neighborhood rejoiced to hear that Nomi was engaged to a fine *ben Torah*. At the wedding, a few people were surprised to see Riva, a good friend of the *kallah's* mother, leaving rather early. Their

wonderment was dispelled the next morning, when they woke to hear that Riva's daughter Chanie had given birth to a healthy baby boy – on the very same Hebrew date as that of Nomi's wedding! Mazel tov!

\*Names have been changed.

## sage advice

### DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

There's an interesting paradox we see with some parents and teachers. They project an air of dignity that arouses children's or students' respect. Such a parent or teacher might not be particularly stern or strict. They just believe in themselves and their own authority, and therefore never have to fight for it. Confidence in our inherent value makes us essentially "bulletproof." People's slights or insulting words don't penetrate. And as Jews, this inner dignity is part of who we are.

We read in *Parashas Yisro* that when Moshe Rabbeinu ascended Har Sinai prior to receiving the Torah, Hashem said, "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and [how] I bore you on eagles' wings, and I brought you to Me."

Why, asks Rav Shimshon Pincus, was this Hashem's choice of an introduction? After all, He wasn't telling the nation anything they hadn't seen with their own eyes. Rav Pincus explains that Hashem wanted the Jewish people to know that they were His precious, chosen nation and that those who harmed them would come to harm. The *parashah* then goes on to identify Klal Yisrael as "a nation of *kohanim*, a holy people."

This is the first thing Hashem wanted us to know before we entered into the covenant of the Torah with Him. As a nation and as individuals, we must keep in mind that we are members of the royal family. No one can make us anything less.

#### TALK ABOUT IT

How does keeping this in mind help us treat others better?

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