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SHABBOS MENU

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • SHABBOS SHUVAH PARSHAS HA'AZINU 5781 • ISSUE 209

AN INTERESTING PAST

Thanks to the power of teshuvah, there are many Jews keeping the mitzvos – even learning and expounding Torah – who started off their lives on a different, and sometimes colorful, path. If you happen to know such a story, may you disclose it?

THE DILEMMA

Rabbi Zev is a respected *rebbe* in a prestigious *beis medrash* in Yerushalayim. Thousands of students have sat in his *shiurim* over the years, and today you are meeting one of them – a new neighbor who has moved to your block. He walks over and introduces himself as you stand talking with two neighbors in front of your house.

After a while, the conversation turns to Eretz Yisrael, where your son is now learning. "It's a great experience," he says. "I learned in Eretz Yisrael for four years. I was in one of Rabbi Zev's first *shiurim*, back before he was THE Rabbi Zev."

Your mind flits back four decades to when you and Rabbi Zev lived on the same block. His parents were hippies from the '60s. His father had a ponytail and his mother played guitar on the front porch of their little house. No one was allowed to play with their son, then known as Zeke, or enter his house. "Who knows what's going on in there?" your mother would say.

You'd love to share some colorful vignettes with your new neighbor. May you?



THE HALACHAH

Your story will be disparaging an upright person by dredging up a past he has long left behind. You may not tell your stories.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim, Hilchos
Loshon Hora, Klal 4:1*

STOP THE SPREAD!

If you have a contagious disease, you try not to give it to others.

Why cause others to suffer? Yet with *loshon hora*, we rarely consider the fate of those who come in contact with our words. But *loshon hora* is contagious. By definition, *loshon hora* hurts at least three people—the speaker, the listener, and the subject of the words. Realizing this can help motivate us to keep the toxic words to ourselves.

Gmar chasimah tovah.

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

"Whoever refrains
from exacting his

measure

[of revenge] will have
Heaven refrain
from exacting

punishment
for his sins."

– Rosh Hashanah 17a

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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MALKA BREINDEL A"H BAS SHMUEL FISHEL YLCH"Y

Another person's thoughtless or mean-spirited action can inflict a deep wound. Over time, however, we may see that the actual harm done was negligible. The episode might even have led us to a good result. Eventually, we might forget exactly why we dislike this person. So many of our broken relationships stem from old wounds: the girl who "snobbed you out" in high school; the rebbi who just didn't "get" you; the friend who dropped you for someone more popular; the one who broke the shidduch that you thought was leading to the chuppah. We can give ourselves an enormous gift this Yom Kippur by extending our forgiveness and clearing the slate of old grudges. It's truly a new lease on life.

The Levin* family was planning a celebration for Zeidy Levin's 80th birthday. Who, they wondered, should they invite? How about all those cousins of his who show up at weddings?

Shoshana, one of the granddaughters, and her husband Chezky took charge of locating the long-lost members of Zeidy's family. One evening she reached Zeidy's older cousin Benny, who lived a few miles away in Queens.

"I'd love to come," Benny told her. "I haven't seen your Zeidy in years!"

"That will be great," Shoshana replied. "Do you know of anyone else I should invite? Who would be a real surprise for him?"

"Well, there's our cousin Yankel," Benny replied. "He and your Zeidy haven't seen each other in decades."

But then he began to backtrack. "No, maybe not. He, um, he probably won't be able to come. He's in an assisted living home in Lakewood. Better not to mention it to him."

But Shoshana wanted Zeidy to have before him every person he knew and loved. She and Chezky drove to Lakewood to personally invite Cousin Yankel to the party. He seemed surprised at the invitation, but agreed to attend.

On the day of the party, as the crowd began to fill the room, Zeidy was overwhelmed. "All this, for me?" he asked. Moments later, Yankel walked in with his aide.



DOES IT MATTER ANYMORE?

Zeidy's face registered shock. He was sweating and trembling. Clearly, the two cousins were not just distant, but estranged.

"It's been too long," Yankel told Zeidy. Slowly, Zeidy nodded.

"I don't even remember why we stopped talking," Yankel said wryly.

"Me neither," Zeidy replied. "Who cares?" They tearfully embraced and sat together at the head table, laughing and talking like old friends.

*Names have been changed.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why was no apology necessary for the two cousins to restore their friendship?

sage advice

Essential for Klal Yisrael's favorable judgment is our forgiveness of each other, which is contained in Tefillah Zakkah, recited on Yom Kippur night. If you cannot say the entire tefillah, you can still open your life to the gift of forgiveness by sincerely reciting the abridged version below.

TEFILLAH ZAKKAH

Behold, I forgive completely anyone who has sinned against me or harmed me, whether physically or monetarily, or who has gossiped about me or even slandered me – except for money that I wish to claim and that I can recover by law, and except for someone who sins against me and says, "I will sin against him and he will forgive me."... And just as I forgive everyone, so may You (Hashem) grant me favor in every person's eyes so he or she will grant me complete forgiveness.

וְהִנְנִי מוֹחֵל בְּמַחִילָה גְמוּרָה, לְכָל מִי שֶׁחָטָא נִגְדִי, בֵּין בְּגוֹפוֹ וּבֵין בְּמָמוֹנוֹ, אוֹ שֶׁדָּבַר עָלַי לְשׁוֹן הָרַע, וְאָפְלוּ הוֹצֵאת שָׁם רַע, וְכֵן לְכָל מִי שֶׁהִזִּיק לִי בְּגוֹפִי אוֹ בְּמָמוֹנִי, וְלְכָל חֲטָאת הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר בֵּין אָדָם לְחֵבְרוֹ, חוּץ מִמָּמוֹן אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי יְכוּל לְהוֹצִיא עַל פִּי דִין, וְחוּץ מִמִּי שֶׁחָטָא בְּנִגְדִי וְאוֹמֵר, אֲחַטָּא לוֹ וְהוּא יִמְחַל לִי, וְחוּץ מֵאֵלּוּ אֲנִי מוֹחֵל בְּמַחִילָה גְמוּרָה; וְלֹא יַעֲנֵשׂ שׁוֹם אָדָם בְּסִבְתִּי. וּכְשֶׁם שֶׁאֲנִי מוֹחֵל לְכָל אָדָם, כֵּן תִּתֵּן אֶת חַנּוּי בְּעֵינֵי כָל אָדָם שֶׁיִּמְחַלּוּ לִי בְּמַחִילָה גְמוּרָה.

HEAR THE POWERFUL TESHUVAH DRASHAH

BY RABBI EPHRAIM WACHSMAN

מוציא שבת שובה
SEPTEMBER 26
9:30 PM
EREV YOM KIPPUR

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