

FOOD FOR  
THOUGHT  
TO SPARK  
CONVERSATION

# SHABBOS MENU

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS VAYIGASH 5781 • ISSUE 222

## WANT TO KNOW THE BACK-STORY?

*Some people go with the program. Some take more time and effort to get there, but they eventually find the proper path in life. How much of their past history and background is open for discussion?*

### THE DILEMMA

Looking at Leah today, her friends would never guess that this happy, productive mother of five was once Priority Problem #1 for her parents, teachers and principal. They'd never be able to imagine her clothes, haircut, the music she listened to and the people she spent her time with.

One day a former high-school classmate of Leah's, visiting Yerushalayim, comes to see Leah. On the way into Leah's small apartment building she meets a neighbor. "Where is apartment 4?" the classmate asks. "Leah Stein?"

"Oh, are you a friend from America?" the neighbor asks. "Everyone loves Leah. She is so sweet, so calm."

"Well, she must have really worked hard to get there," said the classmate. "When I knew her, she was the class rebel. Amazing how people can change." Are these words *loshon hora*?

### THE HALACHAH

When someone has abandoned his erroneous ways, mentioning his past or any negative detail of his past, his family or background is prohibited.

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



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.

## PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

Hi!

*We love the Shabbos Menu!  
Every week our father reads a  
different part at every meal and  
we enjoy it so much! We discuss  
it and look forward to it. (Even  
the Participants Speak!)*

*Good Shabbos!*

Chaya, Cheryl, and Freidy T.  
Lakewood, N.J.

LAKEWOOD

### FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

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

"Peace is  
*essential*  
for the common  
good of  
*mankind*,  
which (by nature) needs  
relationships and friends."

— Akeidah, Bamidbar 6:24, Shaar 74

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MALKA BREINDEL A"H BAS SHMUEL FISHEL YLCH"Y

# COULD IT BE ANY CLEARER?

**B**ecause of Coronavirus restrictions, this wedding was going to be very different from anything the young *kallah* had imagined. Still, her parents, Rosh Yeshivah Rav Avrohom Yonah and Rebbetzin Scheinberg, did their best to create a joyful, beautiful occasion.

Before the wedding Rav Scheinberg summoned the police to inspect the arrangements. Otherwise they might barge in and shut the wedding down. The police approved of the set-up, and the celebration began.

In the midst of it all, a different group of police arrived and declared the wedding a violation of the Covid regulations. They shut it down and brought the Rav and Rebbetzin to the police station. The *kallah* dissolved into tears. Her parents were being hauled away and her wedding was suddenly over.

"Don't worry," her father reassured her. "It's *min haShamayim*." She knew it was true, but at the time this was not quite enough to soothe the sorrow in her heart.

Three months later, Rav Scheinberg got a phone call from a young man in his Neve Yaakov neighborhood. Choking with tears, he confessed that he had reported the wedding to the police. "I didn't mean to ruin it," he said. "I just thought that it was dangerous. Can the Rav forgive me?"

"I'm *mochel* you," he said, "provided that you undertake learning five minutes of *mussar* a day, and that you ask *mechilah* directly from the *chassan* and *kallah*."

The humiliated young man went to the couple to personally admit his wrongdoing and ask forgiveness. The *kallah* knew that *mechilah* was the right answer, but her heart did not feel it. After working to arrive at a sincere feeling of forgiveness, though, she finally told the young man that she was *mochel*.

Two days later, the *kallah* was in a terrible three-car accident. She had to be extricated from her car by a Jaws of Life mechanism. Amazingly, she emerged without a scratch. Now it all made sense. "There was a *gezeirah* against you," her father

## TALK ABOUT IT

Not knowing that her life was on the line, what thoughts might have motivated the *kallah* to forgive the man who ruined her wedding?

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## sage advice

### WHEN WE CAN'T BE FRIENDS

Sometimes we cannot create a positive relationship. This may be the case when the other person has personality or mental-health issues that skew his thinking. Because the interactions are so draining, we may be forced to limit the relationship.

In such situations, we are in danger of wallowing in negative emotions toward that person. "He does nothing but insult me," a person might think. "He's horrible."

But these negative emotions cause us harm. The hatred pumps its toxins into our emotional life, damaging our sense of well-being. Furthermore, we're violating the Torah's injunction of, "You shall not hate your fellow Jew in your heart" (*Vayikra* 19:17). People often use these feelings to justify *loshon hora* ("I just need to vent") or hurtful actions ("Why should I do him a favor?").

Fortunately, there's an antidote. Rav Eliyahu Dessler prescribes doing something kind for that person, because "You are giving the other person part of yourself and will therefore feel love for the recipient of your acts of kindness because you will find yourself included in his being."

Dr. David Lieberman explains the psychological basis for this idea: People cannot believe two contradictory things at one time. On the negative side of this phenomenon, we tend to justify our unkind deeds by finding fault in the victim and thinking, "He deserved it." However, our minds also tend to justify the good deeds we do. When we invest ourselves in helping someone, we validate our actions by focusing on the person's worthy qualities.

Sometimes, when we cannot have a relationship with someone, the only kindness we can do is a mitzvah in his *zechus*. The person will not even know you are doing this, but the benefits are very real. You'll free yourself from feeling victimized by the other person, because after all, you're healthy and whole enough to be giving to him. Secondly, by investing in his welfare, you will foster the feeling that this other person, despite his flaws, is worth the investment.

## TALK ABOUT IT

What conversation would you have to have with yourself before you would begin learning, davening or doing a mitzvah as a *zechus* for a difficult person in your life?

explained. "But instead of letting you come to harm, Hashem allowed your wedding to be ruined. Then when you granted the boy *mechilah*, the *gezeirah* was annulled." A wrongful act destroyed the wedding, but forgiveness saved the bride.

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