

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

SHABBOS MENU

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS BO 5781 • ISSUE 226

HE'LL NEVER LIVE IT DOWN

Someone commits a sin – one that every religious Jew knows is a sin. This person clearly knows better. In fact, he already deeply regrets what he did. But does that mean everyone else has to forgive and forget?

THE DILEMMA

You're an accountant for small company, and in the course of your work you discover that a trusted employee has stolen from the company. It's hard to believe; you know the man, and he's a normal, respected member of the community. But numbers don't lie.

Fortunately, you don't have to spend much time wondering what to do. The managing director of the company calls and says, "You're going to see some discrepancies with Mr. Reichenberg's records. He's already spoken to me about it and it's all straightened out, so don't worry about it."

Well, it may all be worked out between the boss and Mr. Reichenberg, but that doesn't mean that people shouldn't know who he really is. Isn't stealing enough to make him a *rasha*, against whom people should be warned?



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

I read a great story that belongs in *Shabbos Menu*. It's from a book by Ruchoma Shain.

Vicky Credi
Mexico City, Mexico
Editor: Thanks, what a great story! We've included it in this week's newsletter.

MEXICO

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

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"Even if someone bears you

ill will,

extend a greeting of

peace

to him."

- Sefer Shmiras Haloshon,
Shaar HaZechirah Ch. 11

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MALKA BREINDEL A" H BAS SHMUEL FISHEL YLCH" T



sage advice

WHAT ARE YOU PLANTING?

WORDS CREATE THE TONE OF OUR LIVES

You can't get roses if you plant poison ivy.

"What a world," Matti told her husband as she hung up the phone. "Why are people so dense? How does Chavi not see that our brother Dovid is trying to take control of my mother's medical care? Why does she go along like a sheep with everything he says? I told her a million times to stand up to him and demand to be in on these decisions. Just because he's a doctor doesn't mean he's in charge. He's all ego and she just doesn't care," she concludes.

Matti's life is a garden of poison ivy. Everything she touches leaves her blistered and burning. That is because she has nothing positive to say to or about anyone.

The words we speak are the seeds we implant in our lives. What we see sprouting up all around us is the result of what we plant. So the Torah gives us this simple advice: To avoid a lifetime of misery and irritation, refrain from planting it. With Shmiras Haloshon, life comes up roses.

It's a story from decades ago, but the human inclination the story illustrates is timeless:

Ruth and her husband were returning late one night from a wedding. Emerging from their car, Ruth noticed a couple walking on the other side of the street, deep in discussion. On closer scrutiny, Ruth realized with a jolt that the girl was her neighbor's teenage daughter, Tibby, with a young man she had never seen before. Could it be? Sweet, refined Tibby, sneaking around in the dark with a boy while her parents were away for the weekend?

On the spot, Ruth decided, "I will take the high road and keep my mouth shut."

However, Ruth's "high road" did not include the Torah's commandment to judge others favorably. Though her tongue kept the secret, her mind viewed Tibby with suspicion. This distrust hadn't faded when, two years later, Ruth's relative made a brilliant *shidduch* suggestion for Ruth's son. "That sweet, refined girl Tibby, who lives right in your neighborhood, would be perfect for him!"

Ruth said her son was not available. However, the would-be *shadchan* persisted, coming back to the suggestion over the course of two years while both young people remained single. Finally, Tibby's mother confronted Ruth directly. "Is there some reason you don't want your son to meet Tibby?" Having no alternative, Ruth revealed what she had seen. Tibby's mother went straight to her daughter to find out what had

JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS IS DANGEROUS

uncle's door. When he arrived, Tibby explained that her parents were away, so he couldn't stay in her house. She called a neighbor, who graciously agreed

happened.

The dark secret turned out to be completely innocent: Tibby's cousin Joel, who was traveling from Eretz Yisrael to Chicago, had missed his connection in New York. He decided that his best option was to show up at his aunt and

to host him. The "shocking scene" Ruth had witnessed was Tibby walking her cousin to the neighbor's house.

Naturally, Ruth was horrified at the mistake she had made. Tibby forgave her. Ruth's son and Tibby dated and were soon engaged. Forever grateful that her mistake was repairable, Ruth adopted an iron-clad rule: Don't jump to conclusions.

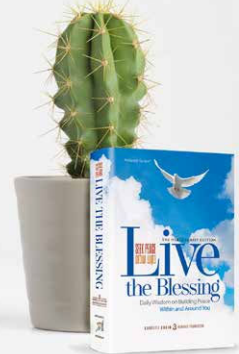
Adapted from *All for the Best* by Ruchoma Shain

TALK ABOUT IT

Should Ruth have ignored what she saw? What was the right response?



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