

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

SHABBOS MENU

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS YISRO 5781 • ISSUE 228

IS IT REALLY FOR HIS OWN GOOD?

There's no doubt; you've seen a person doing something wrong and nothing you can say will move him. Now you want to get a Rav or relative involved. Are you the right one to convey the story?

THE DILEMMA

When you see Liba Levy walk into your office as a newly hired customer service rep, you want to quit on the spot. This is the same Liba Levy who made your high school years a misery. She joined the school in tenth grade, stole your friends, and turned you into an outcast. However, it's ten years later. For your own dignity, you at least pretend to be over it.

Sitting a few desks down from Liba, you notice that she does a lot of personal business on company time. Right from the first day, she is busy with her personal phone alongside the office phone, keeping up a conversation of texts and jokes with her friends while she juggles customer calls. She shops on her computer all day, letting customer emails pile up. You are still in touch with your old high school principal and you think she would be able to set Liba straight regarding her lax attitude. In fact, nothing would make you happier than to tell her.

May you? After all, Liba will only benefit from having her wasteful habits curtailed sooner rather than later.

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.

THE HALACHAH

When seeking another person's involvement in rebuking someone, our purpose in reporting the wrong must be purely for the sake of Hashem, purely to prevent His mitzvos from being ignored. If you have a personal dislike for the person, you should not be the one to convey the information.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim Hilchos
Loshon Hora 4:5*



WEEKLY WISDOM

Yisro merited having a parashah called by his name. One reason given is that when he saw a problem, he didn't just criticize; he thought of a solution. We would do well to keep this in mind when we notice something that is not to our liking.

**FOR QUESTIONS AND
COMMENTS, EMAIL**
Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

"Better a dry

crust

of bread [eaten] in peace
than a house full of

contentious
celebration."

– Mishlei 17:1

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YOUR OWN VOICE IN YOUR EARS

"I can't wait to have a daughter-in-law," Zehava used to say. The mother of seven boys and no girls, she was looking forward to finding that yearned-for mother-daughter bond when she would finally merit to walk her oldest son, Shmully, to the *chuppah*.

Her dream seemed to be coming true when Shany and Shmully became engaged. Everything she heard about Shany painted the picture of a warm, caring, outgoing girl with values that closely matched Zehava's own. But as the engagement and then the newlywed months progressed, Zehava began to wonder, "Is this the girl everyone told us about? Is this really the girl Shmully adores?"

Shany's taste in clothing was too loud, but her personality seemed far too quiet. When the couple came for Shabbos, Zehava couldn't help notice that the girl slept in until shortly before *Kiddush*. Engaging her in conversation was like hacking away at thick ice; a weak smile and a brief comment was all that was forthcoming. And there was much more.

Fortunately, she had a confidante, her sister Ruchama, who was always there to empathize with her woes. Ruchama would validate her complaints and add a few observations of her own, such as, "Oy! You don't deserve such aggravation! Girls these days are just spoiled."

Then, as Chanukah approached, Ruchama called to discuss the family party. "I'm sure Shany and Shmully won't want to come," she asserted. "It's too much family for her." Zehava felt a bit shaken. Of course they would come! Why would Ruchama say that? As the conversation progressed to the menu and who would prepare what items, Ruchama again denigrated Shany: "She's not going to be interested in cooking or baking. She'll just want to sit in a corner and nibble on her latkes."

"Wait a minute," Zehava objected. "She does cook. In fact, Shmully says she's a great cook."

When Zehava hung up the phone, she was filled with remorse for her constant *loshon hora* about her daughter-in-law. Hearing her own complaints echoed in Ruchama's ugly comments alerted her to just how wrong she had been. From that day on,

she made up her mind to look for every positive point in her son's beloved wife, and at last the closeness she sought began to bloom.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why did the criticisms of Shany sound worse to Zehava when she heard them from her sister?

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MACHLOKES: A RABBI'S VIEW #1

STAY OFF THE SLOPE!



If you like to ski or snowboard, the faster the slope, the quicker the descent and the more exciting the experience. However, if you like other people and want to live with them in peace, there's one slope you should never take on: The one called "*machlokes*." Hurling yourself down that slope always ends in pain.

At last, six years after her first date, Hadassah was engaged. She had dreamed of this moment, and a big part of the dream was the hug she would get from her closest friend, Batya, at her vort. Although Batya had been married for four years already, she always made time to spend with Hadassah. They were as close as sisters.

The night of the vort arrived. As Hadassah greeted her excited family and friends, she kept a look-out for Batya. The night wore on, but Batya never came. Despite all Hadassah's happiness and gratitude, this missing piece left a sore spot in her heart. How could her best friend do this to her?

First thing in the morning, Batya called. She cut directly to the issue. "I'm very sorry, Hadassah, that I missed your vort. I had to be at PTA. A first-grade teacher can't be absent from PTA. But I thought for sure I would still be able to get to you. PTA just went on and on forever and I couldn't leave."

"What if your sister got engaged? Are you telling me you wouldn't have been at her vort?" Hadassah asked angrily.

"I don't know what I would have done. Maybe I would have figured out a way to go. Maybe I did the wrong thing, but in any case, I'm very sorry I wasn't there," Batya said. "I hope you'll forgive me."

Hadassah is now standing at the top of the slope, deciding whether to take the first step onto the downward trail. One interpretation of the root of the word *machlokes* is "*chalak*," which means slippery. While the root is usually identified as *chaluk*, meaning to divide or separate, *chalak* provides an important layer of meaning. It tells us that the moment we step into *machlokes*, we've stepped out onto a slippery slope. Once we get involved, the situation takes on its own momentum. A hard fall may be the only thing that stops us. The far better choice is to stay off the slope.

Heard from Rabbi Eli Mansour at a CCHF Tishah B'Av lecture

TALK ABOUT IT

How might a *machlokes* between Hadassah and Batya have "gone downhill?"

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hour as a z'chus for
our aunt who
needs a shidduch."**



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