

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

SHABBOS MENU

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS TERUMAH 5781 • ISSUE 230

KEEP IT KOSHER

You need information about someone for a constructive purpose and it just so happens that you meet someone who can tell you what you want to know. If the conversation fulfills your useful purpose, is it automatically permitted?

T H E

DILEMMA

Devorah's son is in *shidduchim*. A girl from a small out-of-town community has been suggested. She sounds perfect for her son, but Devorah is nervous. She doesn't know anyone in that community and worries that she won't be able to get accurate information about the girl.

She attends a wedding, and at her table is a woman who just moved into town from that community. "Oh, do you know the Nussbaums?" Devorah asks.

"Do I know them? Sure!" the woman replies. "In fact, their daughter Miri and my daughter are best friends. They went through a lot together..." The woman shakes her head and laughs, indicating there's more to the story.

At this point, Devorah has a choice. She can let the woman keep talking, perhaps prodding her with a few more questions to find out exactly what the girls went through together, or she can interrupt and say, "I'm interested in what you have to say because Miri has been suggested as a *shidduch* for my son." What should she do?



T H E

HALACHAH

She should certainly let the woman know that there's a constructive purpose to the conversation. In fact, she should have let her know before the woman offered any information at all. In this way, Devorah makes it clear that her intention is not simply to hear information that disparages the girl.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim,
Hilchos Loshon Hora 4:5*

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

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Live the Blessing
it makes me proud
to belong to Am
Hashem,*

Hashem's nation!

Mrs. Miriam Horowitz

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"Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says,
"The world

endures on
three things:

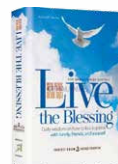
justice,
truth, and peace."

- Avos 1:18

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MALKA BREINDEL A"H BAS SHMUEL FISHEL YLCH"Y

LIVE THE BLESSING



WHEN GOODNESS GOES VIRAL

Chani was not home from seminary very long when she began missing the atmosphere and inspiration of learning in Eretz Yisrael. She decided to return to seminary for a pick-me-up. While she was there, she became friendly with a girl named Michal – an especially refined young woman to whom all the girls were drawn.

Michal was engaged. Although her family could not give her much money to make the wedding, she put away money bit by bit and tried to buy some of the things she would need as she went along.

Chani eventually went back to America and prepared to take a teaching job. One day, she got an email from a seminary friend informing her that the dormitory had been broken into and all the girls lost money, jewelry and other valuables. Worst of all, Michal lost everything – her *kallah* jewelry was gone, along with \$11,000. “Could you raise money for her?” the email asked.

Chani decided to call a wealthy woman she knew. The woman listened to the story sympathetically but told Chani to consult the rabbi who guided the family in their donations. Chani spoke to the rabbi, who said he would look into the matter. Chani felt that the prospects were uncertain. She decided to compose an email describing the situation and send it to all her contacts.

From the moment the email went out, contributions came flowing in. By the time Chani went to bed that night, \$4,000 had been raised; she woke up to dozens more contributions. Within two days, she had the \$11,000 and money was still coming in. Ultimately, Michal received \$30,000, which covered the entire wedding and paid for her to set up her apartment, with some to spare.

On the night of the wedding, many of Michal’s supporters came to celebrate with her. Overwhelmed with joy and gratitude, she broke out of her reserved nature and danced the night away.

“The money would have come from somewhere,” says Chani. “I’m just grateful that Hashem gave



sage advice

MACHLOKES: A RABBI'S VIEW #3 KEEP THE PEACE AND MAKE A LIVING



The Torah has no shortage of *mitzvos*. It gives the Jewish people 613 ways to fulfill G-d’s will, and one of these is the command to stay out of feuds and *machlokes* with our fellow Jews. “And there shall not be [that which is] like Korach and his assembly,” the Torah warns us (*Parashas Korach*).

So seriously does Hashem take this *mitzvah* that, according to *Chazal*, during the time of Korach’s *machlokes* no *mann* fell. In contrast, when *Bnei Yisrael* committed the cardinal sin of making the *eigel* to worship, Hashem still provided them with His miraculous “food from heaven.” Why did the *machlokes* of Korach stop up the flow of blessing from Heaven? It is simple cause and effect: when there is no *shalom*, there is no *kli* – vessel – into which Hashem can pour His blessings, as the *Midrash* tells us, “Hashem says, ‘I have found no other *kli* for blessing other than *shalom*.’”

When we’re involved in our own petty squabbles we might not think of Korach. We’re not exactly conducting a rebellion against G-d’s hand-picked prophet and the leader of the generation! All we’re doing is snubbing someone who snubbed us, or fighting for our opinion about something... That’s not the kind of *mann*-stopping, earth-opening battle that Korach stirred up.

Even so, we must not imagine that our mini-battles are exempt from the Torah’s rule against following Korach’s example. The *Shelah HaKadosh* says that a “little” *machlokes* is nothing less than the seed of a large *machlokes*. If we don’t uproot it the moment it settles into our life, it will grow, it will take over, it will choke off everything good and productive, just as weeds spread out and destroy a garden.

It’s not just Korach’s actions, but his mindset as well that the Torah warns us against. Whenever we think, “Why him and not me?” or “Why should I listen to him?” we’re making room for Korach in our life. The sooner we recognize him and root him out, the more health, wealth and happiness will pour into our life.

As heard from Rabbi Eli Mansour in a CCHF Tishah B’Av lecture

TALK ABOUT IT

How do small arguments turn into *machlokes*?

me the idea to write this email and that I was able to be the one to raise it.” The merit of her deed became obvious when, a few weeks later, Chani became a *kallah*.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think made Chani’s email so effective?

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