



SHABBOS MENU

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JUST SO THERE ISN'T ANY DOUBT...

You've received a legitimate request for information from someone who has a constructive purpose in asking. You want to make sure that he absolutely, positively understands that the person about whom he is inquiring is the wrong choice. May you exaggerate your information to make the message clear?

T H E

DILEMMA

Dani grew up next door to you. On the outside, he looks like a mainstream yeshivah boy, but you are certain that there's more than meets the eye. You've seen the friends he spends his time with, and they don't appear to be the cream of the crop.

Now Dani is in *shidduchim* and you are on the list of references. The father of a young lady calls you to inquire about Dani. "We were told that he is a serious yeshivah boy and one of the top learners in his *shiur*," the father says, "but it always pays to ask a few more questions. Is there any reason he wouldn't be suitable for a nice Bais Yaakov girl?"

"He is a sweet boy," you begin. "And he's always done well in yeshivah. My only reservation is that his group of friends are not the finest. There's a lot of drinking and smoking that goes on, and I can't say firsthand, but I wouldn't be surprised if some of them are involved in drugs as well. They're certainly the type."

Your last comment is intended to scare off the girl's father, just in case he considers alcohol and cigarettes "par for the course" for boys. Your purpose is to prevent an unsuitable *shidduch*, but is your method permitted?

T H E

HALACHAH

Even if a person is conveying negative information for a constructive purpose, the information must be accurate; no exaggeration is permitted. Several other conditions apply as well.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim,
Hilchos Loshon Hora 4:11*



WEEKLY WISDOM

Parshas Ki Sisa begins with the mitzvah of machatzis hashekel.

The mitzvah is to give half a shekel—as opposed to a whole shekel—as part of the census process, and reminds us that we need each other to be whole. Reminding ourselves of this helps us value the people in our lives.

Good Shabbos

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

"Only when
everyone
longs for
real spiritual goals can there be
true unity and peace, because
spirituality is
infinite,
so no one infringes
on his neighbor."

— Michtav MeEliyahu,
Vol. II p.107

Years ago in Yerushalayim, 17-year-old Rafi sat on a bus, heading home from yeshivah. As the bus driver's radio played in the background, Rafi pondered a question: What was the mission Hashem had sent him into the world to accomplish?

Suddenly a voice on the radio interrupted his thoughts. It was a young boy with a tearful plea: "I am one of five children. My father died and we have no money. We owe the electric company 1,100 shekel and they shut off our power. Can anyone help us?" Then the announcer gave a phone number for those who could help.

Rafi jumped off at the next stop, found a payphone and called the radio station. "I will raise the money," he told the announcer. He went to his family and friends and then from store to store along the street. Everyone gave, but the donations were small.

Then he walked into a furniture store. The owner was so moved by the story that he donated 700 shekels. Rafi had reached his goal. He ran to the radio station and delivered the money. "Who are you?" the announcer asked him. "It doesn't matter," Rafi replied.

"But what's your name?" the man persisted. "Rafi," he said on his way out the door.

Ten years later, Rafi was married and learning in Kollel. Money was tight. As he was getting his morning coffee, he confided to a friend that he owed the electric company 3,800 shekels and his power had been turned off. Another young man overheard his story and stepped out of the room for a moment. When he returned, he said to Rafi, "I want to help you, but I'll need your account number." Rafi took the dreaded bill from his pocket and handed it to the young man. Moments later, the young man returned with great news. "Your bill is paid. Your power is back on!"

He explained that his Doda Shoshana had a special passion for helping people pay overdue electric bills. She had paid Rafi's bill.

That evening, Rafi called Doda Shoshana to thank her. She explained that years ago, when she was a poor widow whose power had been cut off, "Some angel came along and paid the bill for me. I decided that when I was in a better position, I

THEY REALLY DID SPREAD THE LIGHT

would pay it forward." "Who paid your bill?" Rafi asked.

"He didn't give his full name," she answered. "He just said he was Rafi."

"That was me," he said softly. Both Rafi and Shoshana cried as they realized how the loving care of one Jew for another deeply touched their lives and their hearts.

TALK ABOUT IT
What inspired Rafi to be "the one" to solve the orphan's problem?

sageadvice

GIVE IN AND WIN

Many years ago, on a gravestone in a non-Jewish cemetery, the following limerick was inscribed:

Here lies the body of William Jay
He died maintaining his right of way.
He was right, dead right, as he sped along,
But he's just as dead as if he were wrong.

Rabbi Yisroel Reisman sees in this bit of dark humor a stark illustration of the key to peaceful relationships. That is the willingness to give in, to be the first to apologize even when you are certain that the other side bears some – or perhaps most – of the responsibility for the conflict.

Defending our "right of way," when it means plowing full-speed ahead into someone else's dignity or self-image, most often ends in destruction. The relationship might survive, but it will certainly be weaker than it was before. It might survive one or two such crashes, but eventually it will be as over and gone as poor Mr. Jay.

"When you're wrong, of course you say you're sorry," says Rabbi Reisman. "But even when you're right, say it anyway. *Vatranus* is what makes a person happy in this world and the next." He quotes a short and sharp observation from Rav Chaim Kanievsky, *shlita*: "It's always far better to give in than to win." That's because there's no long-term gain in a victory that costs us a relationship. (Note: Where anger or mental health issues exist, seek professional guidance.)

When we are focused on preserving the peace, we look at a situation from a different perspective. We realize that the other person's needs are as real to him as ours are to us. And we respond, "I'll do it your way because I value your happiness." We enjoy our journey through life far more when the traffic flows smoothly, no matter who has the right of way.

TALK ABOUT IT
If you give in to keep the peace, how do you prevent yourself from feeling angry that the situation is unfair?



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