

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION



SHABBOS MENU

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS PINCHAS 5781 • ISSUE 247

“YOU’VE GOT IT ALL WRONG!”

The story your friend wants to tell portrays another person in a negative light. You don’t have any purpose for getting involved in this conversation except for one: you know another side to the story, and these facts change everything. Is this reason enough to hear your friend’s tale?

T H E

DILEMMA

“I’m shocked that Levi bought that country house,” Reuven tells a few friends. “He’s in debt way over his head. He owes the yeshivah thousands of dollars. I heard his suppliers have been threatening to cut him off, too. His business is probably holding on by a thread. Some people will do anything to keep up the pretense of success. It’s sad.”

The group of listeners includes Shimon. He hates hearing his friend Levi’s name being besmirched. He knows he should walk away and refuse to listen to these words. On the other hand, he also knows that the situation isn’t what Reuven is making it out to be.

Shimon decides to speak up. “Listen, that country house was left to him by an uncle! Levi didn’t spend a dime on it!”

Was Shimon allowed to take part in this conversation and hear the loshon hora?



Sefer Chofetz Chaim
Hilchos Loshon
Hora 6:4

T H E

HALACHAH

In this case, it is a mitzvah for him to do so because he is able to justify Levi’s actions and thereby neutralize the negative impact of Reuven’s words. However, if there are facts in the negative report that Shimon didn’t know – such as Reuven owing money to the yeshivah – he may not accept them as true, even though, under these circumstances, he is allowed to hear the loshon hora.

PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

I just wanted to thank you ever so much for the Daily Companion emails I get every day.

I just recently joined the email group. Now when I sit down to work at my computer, I have the email waiting for me to learn, and I am so happy that I am managing to do it religiously, every day!

Thank you is not enough for your amazing organization. I have benefitted in so many ways, including hearing your “Shalom Challenge” on Torahanytime previous Tisha B’av videos, etc.

What zechusim you have in olam haba for all the people who are careful with their speech because of you.

Tizku l’mitzvos

Mrs. Hepner
Eretz Yisrael

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

“The Satan is

powerless
to prosecute where there is
peace.”

– Sefer Chareidim, Mitzvos Asei
Hateluyim B’Dibbur Ch. 4

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.

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MALKA BREINDEL A”H BAS SHMUEL FISHEL YLCH”T

ERETZ YISRAEL



Yossi Steinberg* tells his story as an awakening to anyone who has convinced himself that bullying and teasing are harmless.

My life was perfect: I was married to Sarah, a wonderful wife. My business was thriving, and I was the proud father of three-year-old Dovi and 14-month-old Esti. It all changed one day when Sarah and I sat in the pediatrician's office and heard that our precious Dovi had a rare, life-threatening disease. Our doctor directed us to Dr. Green in Boston, the only doctor who had successfully treated this disease. However, when I entered Dr. Green's office, he gave me a hard stare and refused to help my son. After much urging and pleading on my part, he said, "Yossi, look at me. Do you remember me? Do you remember my son Reuven?"

Reuven Green had joined my class in 7th grade. He had charisma; I feared losing my place as class leader. I began taunting him and my friends joined in. Reuven was crushed. The family moved to Boston the next year, but Reuven never returned to yeshivah. At this point, Dr. Green hadn't seen him in five years. "All I know is that he calls himself Robert. You killed my child and I will not save yours," said the bitter father.

That night, still in Boston, my grandmother came to me in a dream and urged me to travel to Maine. I woke up early and made the 5-hour trip, not knowing what I was looking for. I pulled into a gas station and asked if there were a synagogue nearby. "I don't know," said the attendant. "Let me ask the mechanic. Robert!" he shouted, and a long-haired, grease-smearing man emerged from the garage. I froze when I heard the name. Robert took one look at me and his eyes turned fierce. "Get out of here before I kill you," he said.

I was face-to-face with the dire outcome of my harassment. I had created a monster. It took a return trip with my wife and limp son in tow, tears, apologies, and much begging to break through to Robert. In the end, he came back



A HARD LESSON

to Boston with us and reunited with his father. And, Dr. Green was Hashem's messenger to save our son. But I

will never forget the incredible pain I caused. One 13-year-old boy and his cruel bullying brought down a family.

Adapted from *Stories That Awaken the Heart*, Binyamin Pruzansky

*All names have been changed.

TALK ABOUT IT

How could Yossi's classmates have helped Reuven instead of making matters worse?

לע"ג חיים יחיאל מיכל בן
רפאל פייוועל שניאור ז"ל
נלב"ע ערב שבת קודש
י אלול תשע"ז
ה.נ.צ.ב.ה.

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sage advice

THE LIONESSE AND THE DOG



A Persian king became ill. His doctor pronounced that the only cure was for the king to drink the milk of a lioness. But who could procure it for him without being killed in the process? One servant volunteered. He devised a plan that enabled the lioness to gradually become accustomed to him until she allowed him to touch her and, at last, to milk her. Flushed with success, the servant headed home with his prize.

One night en route, he dreamed that all the parts of his body were claiming credit for his achievement. When the mouth claimed credit, the other body parts scoffed. The servant awoke, pondered the strange dream and moved on. Arriving at the palace, he handed the milk to the king proclaiming, "Here is the chalev kalbah (dog's milk) you requested." The king cried out in anger. "Hang him!" he demanded.

Within the poor servant's mind, a new conversation broke out. The tongue chided, "Do you doubt now that success is in my hands?" The rest of the body conceded that he had been correct and pleaded with him to beg for the king's mercy. The tongue did as they asked. He told the king that "kalbah" was, in his native language, the word for lioness. The servant was forgiven.

Mrs. Rena Tarshish points to this *Midrash* as an elucidation of the *Mishlei's* words, "Life and death are in the hands of the tongue." Speech is what brings out the potential of any idea or event to make its impact on the world, whether for life and good or for death and destruction.

Dibbur (speech) and *devar* (thing) share a root because speaking of something makes it a thing – an existent reality. Often, the way we assess a situation and speak of it determines which side of life and death it will land upon.

"The milk did not change," says Rebbetzin Tarshish. "All that changed were the words used to describe it." That is our power of speech.

TALK ABOUT IT

Imagine that someone carelessly breaks an item that is precious to you. How would you speak of this event on the "side of death," and how would you speak on the "side of life"?

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