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THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION



SHABBOS MENU

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WRONG WORDS ARE NEVER RIGHT

You stumble into a situation in which someone is being spoken about. No one is saying he's committed an aveirah or displayed any bad trait; it's just information that isn't positive. Is it wrong to listen?

THE DILEMMA

Shimmy is at it again, making fun of his wife's family from Atlanta. He says it's "all in good fun," but the impression he creates is that his wife's father, who never went to yeshivah, is ignorant. He loves to quote his father-in-law's mispronunciations, said with a thick southern accent.

He brings up this pet subject at his family's Chanukah party, getting loud laughs from his siblings and a mild, "Oh, Shimmy, stop it. It's not nice!" from his wife.

"You know I love your father," Shimmy replies. "I'm not saying anything bad about him. It's amazing what he's accomplished all on his own. It's just funny, that's all."

If Shimmy isn't actually criticizing his father-in-law, are the others allowed to listen and accept what he's saying?



THE HALACHAH

Shimmy's words fall under the category of general derogatory statements, which are not permitted. This includes comments on a person's physical strength, intelligence, family background and sins for which a person has repented. Words that are forbidden to be spoken are also forbidden to be heard and accepted.

Sefer Chofetz
Chaim
Hilchos Loshon
Hora 6:8

PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

I had to let you know what an amazing book Master Your Words, Master Your Life is.

It's easy reading, relevant, well written and practical – it really speaks to me. It leaves me empowered and with a lot of food for thought.

Thank you for all the wonderful CCHF publications and programs!

C.M.R.
Lakewood, NJ

LAKEWOOD

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

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"One who habitually

refrains

from loshon hora
will eventually be

free of all

transgressions between
man and his fellow."

- Sefer Shmiras Haloshon,
Shaar HaZechirah Ch. 1

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





One year at Camp Simcha, a camp for children who are suffering from serious illness, two boys from different communities found themselves together in one bunk. Yoeli came from the Chassidish community in Williamsburg, and Danny came from the Modern Orthodox community in Teaneck, NJ.

United by their desire to forget their year of sickness and treatments, the differences mostly fell away. However, one night Yoeli decided to play a trick on Danny. While Danny was out, Yoeli poured a bottle of Pepsi on his mattress. Danny soon got under his covers and felt the cold liquid soaking into his pajamas. Yoeli was already up and running. From then on, the two boys avoided each other.

Many years later, Yoeli had recovered from his illness and become a successful businessman. Danny, however, never quite regained his strength. He depended on a wheelchair to get around. He wanted to purchase a wheelchair-accessible car, but finding that the price was out of reach, he contacted Chai Lifeline for help. The organization sent out an email seeking donors.

Yoeli saw the email and knew right away what he wanted to do. He went to the Chai Lifeline office and handed over a check for \$60,000, the full price of the car. "Don't tell him who it's from," Yoeli said. "Just tell him it's payback for the soda."

Some time later, Danny fulfilled a life-long dream and went to Eretz Yisrael. However, while there he became sick with pneumonia. The hospital would only release him if he had an oxygen machine to use at the home where he was staying. Once again, the price was too high. And once again, Yoeli came to the rescue, asking to remain anonymous except for the message, "Payback for the soda."

Danny's health improved, but the doctor told him he was not strong enough to fly back to America. He would have to stay in Eretz Yisrael awhile to continue recovering. But where would he stay? He got a call from

PAID BACK WITH LOVE

someone informing him that a penthouse had been reserved for him. As he opened the door to the luxurious apartment, he was greeted by a fantastic array of food, fruits, snacks and lots of soda. On the wall hung a big sign: "Payback for the soda."



TALK ABOUT IT

Why did Yoeli go to such great lengths to appease Danny?

sage advice

MAKE SURE TO INVITE MOSHIACH

In the times of the Judges, there was a tremendously wealthy man. He had 30 sons and 30 daughters, and when each of them got married, he made them lavish weddings. In fact, he made two weddings for each child – one for his family and friends and one for the in-laws' side. All told, this man made 120 weddings; by the time he was done, "everyone who was anyone" had attended at least one of these events.

However, one man had been excluded. This man had no children. The wealthy man, knowing that the childless man had no way to return his hospitality, decided not to invite him to any of the weddings he made. This insensitivity, perpetrated by a man who had been blessed by Hashem in every way, aroused Hashem's attribute of justice. All 60 of the wealthy man's children died.

The Gemara tells this story to explain the words of Naomi to Rus in *Megillas Rus* (3:1), after Rus tells her that Boaz has shown her special kindness. "I seek security (*manoach*) for you," she says. Naomi was referring to an episode from Boaz's younger years in which he excluded the childless Manoach—who eventually became the father of Shimshon Hagibbor—from his children's weddings. Fearing that a union between Rus and Boaz would result again in the heartbreaking death of Boaz's offspring, Naomi told her daughter-in-law to make sure to "seek Manoach." Find him, invite him to the wedding, and let him know he's wanted.

The message of this story is that ignoring or excluding those who, for whatever reason, are difficult to invite to our *simchos* or our home, is a destructive act that generates destruction. However, there's a beautiful "other side of the coin." The offspring of Rus and Boaz was the root of the family tree leading to Moshiach. When we invite others into our circle and show them that they count, we invite redemption into the world.

TALK ABOUT IT

What are some other ways to acknowledge and appreciate people who are not part of our inner circle?

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