

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

SHABBOS MENU

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LEAVE ROOM FOR DOUBT

It's stated as a fact. It's stated in front of a whole group of people. You'd think that the speaker wouldn't dare tell anything but the whole truth. May you make that assumption?

THE DILEMMA

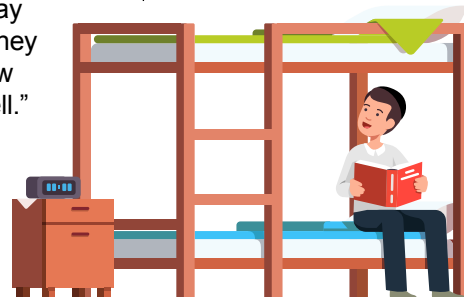
Gershon's dorm room is the gathering place for the nine other boys on his floor. They spend some of their spare time there, schmoozing and testing out the latest-flavor taco chip.

One night, Gershon's roommate Tzvi announces in front of the entire gang, "I heard Aaron got booted out of yeshivah."

"Nah, he had to go home because his grandmother's very sick and he wanted to see her. He's afraid she won't be around much longer," counters another boy.

"That's his cover story. I'm telling you. I heard it from Aaron himself," Tzvi insists. "He said the *menahel* told him that he can't stay here if he can't get himself in gear. They set him up for an interview in that new yeshivah for guys who can't learn well."

Tzvi sounds convincing and well informed. Gershon thinks, "He'd never make up something like this." May Gershon and the other boys believe him?



THE HALACHAH

Even if information is said in front of a group of people, the listener is not allowed to believe that it is true.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim.
Hilchos Loshon Hora, 7:1*

The most important tool we use during the Yamim Nora'im is the mouth. From Maariv at the beginning of Rosh Hashanah through Ne'ilah on Yom Kippur, we use our mouths to beg for forgiveness, health, parnassah, children, life itself! How can we dare not do our best to make sure our mouths are clean, pure and in optimum working order? Shmiras Haloshon is not just the key to our relationships with others; it safeguards our most precious tool for connecting with Hashem and bringing His bounty into our lives.

Kesivah vachasimah tovah

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

"Whoever

refrains
from exacting
his measure

[of revenge]
will have

Heaven
refrain from exacting
punishment for his sins."

- Rosh Hashanah 17a

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"Y

One Friday night in 1953, a Jewish soldier came to his chaplain, Rabbi Shrage Zev (Philip) Zimmerman, with a serious problem. Rabbi Zimmerman was the chaplain at Fort Gordon in Augusta, Georgia.

The soldier had just been informed that he was to be deployed to Korea, where a war was going on and the casualties were horrific.

He told Rabbi Zimmerman that he was the only son of Holocaust survivors. Furthermore, each of his parents had a heart condition. If they heard he was going to the warfront, he said, they might not survive the shock and worry.

Feeling that the situation was one of *pikuach nefesh*, Rabbi Zimmerman set out on Shabbos morning to visit General James, the chief officer at Fort Gordon. He undertook the 6-mile trek on foot, hoping to secure a transfer for this soldier and a reprieve for the soldier's parents.

The general adamantly refused to reconsider. To drive home his unbudging position, he took hold of Rabbi Zimmerman's lapel, which bore an insignia depicting the *Aseres Hadibros*.

"You see these tablets?" the general thundered. "They are made of stone. Why? Because stone can't be broken. My orders are like stone. They can't be broken. There will be no transfer."

Rabbi Zimmerman thanked the general and began his 6-mile walk home. The general, who was

AHAVAS YISRAEL THAT'S STRONGER THAN STONE

standing by the door, called to him, "Chaplain, where's your jeep?"

Rabbi Zimmerman replied, "I have no jeep."

"You have no jeep?" General James said. "How did you get here?"

"Today is our Sabbath, sir, and we are not permitted to drive a car. I walked here this morning."

The general was stunned.

sage advice

OUR ONLY ARGUMENT

The Day of Judgment. The name conjures up images of fear and trembling, of standing as a lone defendant before the Awesome Judge, so overwhelmed by our own flaws and errors that we can barely hold up our heads. Do we have a chance to be inscribed for a year of life, health, prosperity, and good fortune? Will Hashem have compassion for our weaknesses? Will He give us credit for our inadequate efforts?

But where are the lawyers to present the case?

On Rosh Hashanah, the words we recite after the *shofar* is sounded tell us exactly how our case is presented to the Heavenly Court. "*HaYom haras olam* – Today is the birthday of the world. *Hayom ya'amod b'mishpat* – Today they [all the creatures of the world] stand for judgment..." In reality, *ha'yom* – the day, and every day of the year – acts as both the prosecutor and the defense. **The lives we live speak for or against us.**

The day filled with kindness and positive words stands before the Heavenly Court and pleads for a year of life for its worthy client. On the other hand, Heaven forbid, days filled with cruel, heedless comments also come before the Judge, arguing against the person's continued existence. No matter how we justify such comments, "**the day**" provides its own testimony.

Therefore, we can see for ourselves the impact of every kind word and positive judgment, and the vast negative impact resulting from careless speech. In the Heavenly Court, there's no lawyer to spin the truth: Every day of our lives bears witness to the sincerity of our belief in the Torah and the *mitzvos* by which it commands us to live.

"You walked 6 miles for a soldier you don't

even know and now you're walking another 6 miles back?"

"Yes," said Rabb Zimmerman.

"Come back in here," the general commanded, and with a stroke of a pen he wrote the order to transfer the Jewish soldier to a base in New York, with the express condition that he visit his parents nightly.

The power of the Rabbi's *ahavas Yisrael* broke through the general's "heart of stone." The sincere love of one Jew for another, simply because he is a brother, redeemed the young soldier, and it can redeem us too.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why was the general moved by the Rabbi's efforts on the soldier's behalf? What changed in the situation to make him reconsider?



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