



SHABBOS MENU

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS VAYEILECH 5781 • ISSUE 257

SILENCE IS NOT A CONFESSION

The subject of the story is standing right there, listening to his misdeed being relayed in a colorful, dramatic tale. He doesn't deny it. May the listener therefore assume that it is true?

T H E

DILEMMA

Naama and Miri, two sisters, were spending a Chol Hamoed afternoon with their cousin Ahuva at a park. The three women and their children were enjoying the fresh air and open space, when Ahuva was suddenly reminded of a story.

"Naama, did Miri ever tell you the crazy story about the year we were in seminary together in Eretz Yisrael, and she got us lost on the way to some random *moshav* we were going to for Shabbos? She insisted she knew where to go – good old 'I'm never wrong' Miri. I kept telling her it was the wrong direction, but she was so stubborn. The buses stopped running for Shabbos and if it wasn't for some nice old bubby driving by on her way to the same *moshav*, we'd have been stuck!"

"Miri, you never told me that story!" Naama said.

"No, I never did," she replied.

May Naama believe the story?

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.

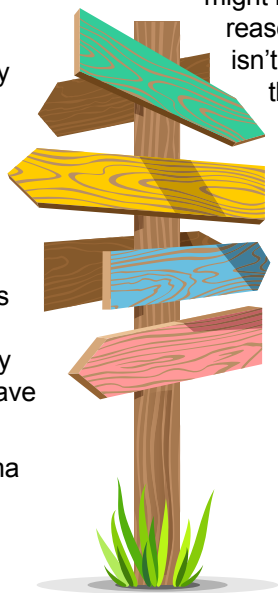
T H E

HALACHAH

Unless Miri admits that the story as told is true, Naama cannot accept it as true. There might be a

reason that Miri isn't contesting the story at that moment.

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



Tefillah Zakkah, which many people recite before Yom Kippur, expresses our regret for misusing the body Hashem has given us to serve Him. In the final paragraph, we declare our forgiveness of anyone who has hurt us, and pray that nobody suffer punishment on our account. We also ask to be forgiven for any hurt or damage we may have inflicted on others. So vital is this to our personal welfare and that of Klal Yisrael that the Chofetz Chaim requested that the last paragraph be moved to near the beginning of the prayer, so people would be less likely to forget or omit it.

Open up the stream of forgiveness and let it wash away your grievances against others, while others cleanse their hearts of their grievances. Help a new year begin with a wide-open channel of blessing.

To bring this message to your shul, email: tefillahzakkah@cchfglobal.org

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

"When one restrains

himself,
sealing his lips
from speaking
negatively
about his fellow...
in Heaven too, the

prosecutor
cannot open his mouth to
speak negatively about him."

– Sefer Shmiras Haloshon,
Shaar Hazechirah, Ch. 3

MAKING AN ENEMY INTO A FRIEND

The secular Jews in Rochel's new neighborhood were not pleased to see the influx of Orthodox families to their street. Before she even moved, Rochel was receiving complaints from the town about the height of her grass and the litter left by her construction workers.

On moving day, her grouchy 70-year-old next-door neighbor dropped by to tell her that she wasn't happy with the change and Rochel should not even think of trying to influence her. Matters went downhill from there. The neighbor called the police if a ball rolled into her yard. Rochel's family lived in fear of the woman.

One day, Rochel's husband suggested a new tactic: Overwhelm the neighbor with kindness. It started with Shabbos flowers, followed by an elaborate *shalach manos*. They invited the woman to their family *simchos* as well and, little by little, the angry neighbor began to see with her own eyes the joy and wholesomeness of a Torah life.

She began asking questions, and Rochel worked hard to make sure she had knowledgeable answers to give. The woman and her husband began coming for Shabbos meals, and eventually she would drop by Thursday evenings to enjoy the aroma of the challahs and the food being prepared.

The neighbor, whose Hebrew name was Chaya Leah, became attached to Rochel's children, inquiring about this one's *shidduch*, another's new Shabbos dress, their school experiences and achievements. Then one day, Chaya Leah became ill. She called Rochel to visit her in the hospital, because "I don't know who else to call."

Rochel came. When Chaya Leah got home, Rochel brought her meals. But more than food, Chaya Leah wanted to know more about Hashem and His



sage advice

MECHILAH – IT'S WORTH EVERYTHING

In the third verse of *Shema*, Hashem gives us one of the six mitzvos we are obligated to keep on a constant basis: "And you shall not turn away after your heart or after your eyes..." This teaches us not to allow what we see, think and feel to lead us astray. We might wonder, why not? Aren't what we see, think and feel the most important clues we have as to what we should be doing?

Chazal tell us throughout the Gemara, by the names they give this world, that we're not seeing reality. It is called *olam hadimyon*, the world of imaginings; *olam hasheker*, the world of falsehood; *olam hanisayon*, the world of tests; and *olam hachoshech*, the world of darkness. Only Hashem's world is called *olam ha'emes*, the world of truth. We might wonder then, what are we doing here?

One moment of *teshuva*, say *Chazal*, is worth the entire trip. So precious is that moment that we will do virtually anything to ensure that a person has the opportunity to experience it. If someone is dying on Shabbos, we are allowed to commit all 39 *melachos* to give him just one more moment of life. If someone is dying at any time, we are allowed to commit all but the three cardinal sins to buy him one more moment of life.

There is almost nothing a person can accomplish with that moment – except *teshuva*. He can take those last moments of life and forgive anyone against whom he holds a grudge. He can drop any grievances he holds against Hashem for the disappointments he's suffered in his life. He can forgive himself for being less than perfect. For that one luminous moment, 610 mitzvos must stand aside. There is nothing Hashem wants more.

Torah. The women learned *parshah* together and discussed a whole world of Jewish concepts.

The relationship grew until Chaya Leah became ill again, and this time did not survive. Rochel said *Shema* with her before she passed away.

The lesson Rochel learned from this woman, who started out as an enemy and became a beloved friend, was this: "See past their anger and sarcasm. Reach out to them." Her advice was aimed at those dealing with an antagonistic secular Jew, but it's advice that applies to anyone. If we look for the opening in another person's heart, we almost always find it.

Based on a story by Rochel Feld, *Aish.com*

TALK ABOUT IT

What would you do if you were in Rochel's position?

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