

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

SHABBOS MENU

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WHAT WILL YOU CAUSE?

You have constructive reasons for sharing negative information about a minor, and so it would seem you are free to speak. Do you need to be concerned about the consequences for the child?

T H E

DILEMMA

In Rabbi Bernstein's third-grade class, Ari won himself the reputation of "space cadet." Despite the *rebbe's* best efforts, the boy's mind was rarely on the learning. When the *rebbe* called his name to get his attention, it was as if he were waking him up from a dream.

At the end of the year, Rabbi Stein, the fourth-grade *rebbe*, asked his colleague if he had any advice or guidance to offer regarding the class. Is Rabbi Bernstein permitted to tell Rabbi Stein that Ari is an inattentive student?



T H E

HALACHAH

If negative information is necessary for the upcoming *rebbe* to know, it may be imparted. However, if the information might undermine the child's chance to start with a fresh slate in the new school year, it is considered harmful and is therefore *loshon hora*. Pegging Ari as a "space cadet" could prejudice his new *rebbe* against him.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim,
Hilchos Loshon Hora 8:3*

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.

PARTICIPANTS SPEAK



Thank you very much for these well written and much-needed words of chizuk. They are very much appreciated!

Continued hatzlachah with your avodas hakodesh!

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*Editor: To bring Impressions,
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"The

longer
one persists
in guarding his
tongue, the
easier
it becomes."

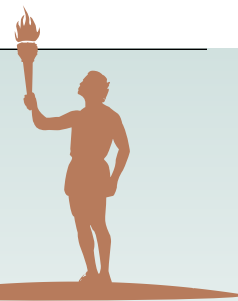
— Sefer Shmiras HaLoshon, Preface

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TORONTO





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THE TORCHBEARER'S JOB DESCRIPTION

A Loshon Hora Test

Wanted: Torchbearer. Looking for a team player to join several million others to shed light in a dark world. Help reveal the good.

This is the job description of a Jew: to carry our spark of Divine light and shine it wherever we go. Success requires teamwork.

Little Yaakov loved his rebbi, Rabbi Davis.

"He's a true tzaddik!" he told his mother. "He does all the mitzvos every day!"

One night, Yaakov repeated to his father a story his rebbi had told. It was a "fish tale" involving unlikely miracles performed for Rabbi Davis's ancestor, a shopkeeper in Prague. Yaakov's father was disturbed by the mixture of fact and fiction.

"Nice story!" said his father. "But maybe your rebbi made up part of it to make it more exciting."

"Rebbi lied?" the child asked, crushed.

"No! He just..."

The brilliant light Rabbi Davis shone into Yaakov's world was now dimmed. Whenever we talk about another person, we either help his light shine stronger, or cast a shadow over it. If we're wondering whether we should say something, we can use this simple test: Will our words form a cloud or a magnifying glass over our fellow torchbearer's light?

TALK ABOUT IT

How can a person live in a way that brings peace between *Klal Yisrael* and Hashem?

In downtown Brooklyn where Mrs. Rubin worked, the only readily available parking was in a somewhat secluded area under the train tracks. Every day she would park her car there and walk to her office. On most days, she would encounter a homeless man who seemed to camp out among the cars.

In his ragged clothes, with the smell of alcohol often surrounding him, the man's presence at first seemed threatening to Mrs. Rubin as she swiftly passed him on her daily walk to her office. However, as she became accustomed to seeing him there, she began to give him a quick, friendly hello, which he returned.

Gradually, she lost her fear of him. He was down and out, that was certain. But he was a human being who seemed to appreciate a moment of recognition.

One evening, Mrs. Rubin returned to the parking area and as she made her way toward her car, she was shocked to discover that the windshield of every car had been smashed. The cars had all been burglarized. Only one car had been left untouched – hers.

As she examined her car she saw her homeless friend looking on, nodding and smiling.

"That's right, lady," he said. "I told them, 'Don't you touch that one!' They could do what they wanted with the others, but this car was not going to be touched."

This is the power of "hello." Acknowledging another person's humanity can bring out the humanity in him. Rav Yochanan taught this when he declared that he was always the first to greet others, whether they were Jews or non-Jews. Greeting another person doesn't just change the way he sees us, promoting our image as a friendly person; it also



WHY SAY HI?

changes how we see others. If we stop long enough to look at a person and say hello, we can't help but notice that he's a human being with a human heart.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do people sometimes feel awkward greeting others on the street, for example to say "Good Shabbos" to a passerby?

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