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SHABBOS MENU

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS NASO 5782 • ISSUE 294

CAN WE CHANGE THE SUBJECT?

We don't always know ahead of time what kind of conversation will sprout up around us. What can we do when we discover, too late to go elsewhere, that it's rife with loshon hora?

T H E

DILEMMA

After her old carpool disintegrated, Brachah was delighted to find a new carpool to her job in the city. She was to share the driving with three other women, all IT specialists like herself.

Her delight turned to dismay, however, when on the first morning of the new arrangement, as the car settled into cruising speed on the highway, the conversation turned to a sound bashing of the principal of a local girls' high school. She wondered: Should she speak out against the loshon hora flying around the car?

Realizing that if she didn't speak up she'd be stuck with this toxic situation for the next 45 minutes and forced to launch a search for another carpool, she decided to offer her rebuke. "Hey," she said, "why don't we think of something else to talk about? I'm uncomfortable with loshon hora."

Was Brachah right to speak up?

T H E

HALACHAH

Yes. She is obligated to rebuke them if there is a possibility that her words will stop the loshon hora.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim,
Hilchos Loshon Hora 9:4*

PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

There is SO much siyata diShmaya in the work that is done by this wonderful organization! Every single video, talk, etc. is informative, inspirational, clear, and easy to understand. Yasher koach!

A grateful participant

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

"A gentle

reply

turns away
wrath, but a

galling
word
incites anger."

– Mishlei 15:1



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"Y

YANKY'S BAR MITZVAH GIFT

Yanky's parents, divorced four years, made a bar mitzvah for their son. The simchah had all the right touches – music, a bountiful meal, a festive décor, and a roomful of guests. However, the guests were divided into two camps: his mother's side and his father's side.

The time came for Yanky to deliver his *drashah*, which he had worked hard to perfect. After all, he was the grandson in two well-respected families and he wanted to make them proud. When he finished, instead of folding up his speech and leaving the podium, he looked up at the audience and continued.

"Mommy, Tatty, Bubbys, Zaidys, aunts and uncles, you've all asked me what I wanted for my bar mitzvah, and I kept saying I don't need anything. But I changed my mind," he said. "What I want is for my father, both Zaidys, and my uncles from both sides of my family to dance with me in one big circle."

The room was stone silent. The rift in the family was revealed in all its ugliness. The ruse – for each side to have its own circle, ostensibly as a Covid precaution – was unveiled. Yanky turned to the keyboard player and said, "Please play." As the lively tune began, Yanky went to one grandfather and took him by the hand. Then he went to the other and grasped his hand as well. With no other option, they reluctantly joined their grandson in a circle. Then the ice began to melt. Soon the father joined, and then the uncles on both sides.

As the joy radiated ever more brightly from Yanky's face, it washed over the adults as well. They began to see the bitter pettiness of the *machlokes* they had each deemed so righteous. The break-up, the disagreements, the hard feelings – never did they realize that the weight of it all sat on their beloved grandchild's shoulders. The dancing grew livelier, and the women rushed to the *mechitzah* to see the miracle unfolding. If *Moshiach* had walked

sage advice

DON'T TALK TO THE HORSE



You're in a fender-bender and it's your fault, because your attention was snagged by a grand new house going up to your left. How were you to know that the traffic would come to a standstill at just that moment?

The driver whose car you hit opens his window and signals frantically to you to pull over in an upcoming parking lot. Being a good citizen and honest Jew, you do.

"What kind of idiot are you!" he screams when you pull up behind him and get out of your car. He's wearing a yarmulka and you're hoping that means he won't hurt you, but his verbal attack is long and furious.

You're becoming infuriated yourself. People make mistakes and you made one. Insurance will cover the damage. No one was hurt. Who is this guy to abuse you?

When someone rants and raves at us, we might be provoked to rant and rave right back. However, Rav Eliyahu Quedoshim offers an on-point *mashal* that shows us just how ineffective a strategy that is:

Two men are riding their horses together. One man begins to lose his focus and drift off, and the horse can sense that he's no longer under the man's control. The horse begins kicking and harassing the other horse, which becomes agitated.

"What should that rider do?" asks Rav Quedoshim. "Should he yell at the other man's horse or maybe even strike it? If he does, he'll only provoke it further. The smart thing for him to do is wake up the other rider and get him to take control of his horse."

Likewise, when people become upset and their *yetzer hara* detects that it's no longer being controlled, they lash out; their animalistic side runs rampant. If the other person addresses that animalistic side, he will only provoke it. Instead, he has to talk to the human – the thinking, feeling, holy Jew who sits atop the "horse" – and get him to take control. But he'll only be effective if it's the rider, not his horse, doing the talking.

TALK ABOUT IT

How does this *mashal* help us understand other people's – and our own – anger?

through the door at that moment, no one would have been surprised.

Retold by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair on a CCHF Shalom Challenge 2 video as heard from Rabbi Ron Yitzchok Eisenman

TALK ABOUT IT

How did Yanky accomplish something no one else had been able to achieve?

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