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SHABBOS MENU

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS SHOFTIM 5782 • ISSUE 306

HIT THE BRAKES

What if there are only two choices in front of you: Someone who is speaking *loshon hora* continues to do so until everyone in town knows the story, or, you warn everyone that this person is a slanderer so that his words lose their clout?

T H E

DILEMMA

Yaakov lost his job. His boss made the excuse that Yaakov's services were no longer needed, but Yaakov knew his boss had not been happy with his performance. He had survived two years of constant criticism only to be shown the door.

When Yaakov later heard from a former coworker that the business was being audited by the IRS and his former boss seemed extremely nervous about it, he wasted no time telling people that the boss was obviously cheating on his taxes. "Guys like him think they can get away with everything... until they can't," he ended his story whenever he told it.

One of his listeners, Mordechai, had his own business and sympathized with the boss. "You shouldn't spread stuff like that," he told Yaakov. "The IRS makes everyone nervous. It doesn't mean he did something wrong. You can really cause him trouble right now if you start spreading suspicions."

"Don't tell me what to think," Yaakov replied. "I worked for this guy for two years. I know his type." Mordechai realizes that because of his anger at his ex-boss, Yaakov is going to keep telling this story. He wants to go let others know that Yaakov's words are slander, driven by his anger. May he do so?

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

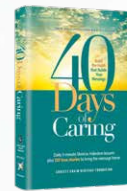
Even though the boss does not yet know Yaakov is slandering him and is bound to find out if Mordechai tells others, Mordechai is permitted to speak in order to delegitimize Yaakov's story and prevent the boss from further damage that would ensue if the story is spread and believed. This is true only if the seven conditions of *to'eles* are met.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim,
Hilchos Loshon
Hora 10:6*



I'd love a second edition of Master Your Words Master Your Life! Is this in the plans for the future? Thanks so much for all your amazing, life-changing work! I am truly grateful that I have caught on.

Chayalit Gottesman



Ed.: If you are looking for a second edition of Master Your Words, our newest book, published by ArtScroll, 40 Days of Caring: Build the Habit that Builds Your Blessings, is the perfect sequel. It has a similar daily learning style PLUS 120 true stories. Visit cchf.global/shop to get your copy or call our office at 845.352.3505 ext. 5

**FOR QUESTIONS AND
COMMENTS, EMAIL**

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

*"The more one accustoms
himself to judging others*

*favorably,
the less he will
transgress
the sin of loshon hora."*

*- Sefer Shmiras HaLoshon,
Shaar HaTevunah ch. 4*

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MALKA BREINDEL A"H BAS SHMUEL FISHEL YLCH"Y

Rachel's father had a custom. Every morning when he joined his family at breakfast he told them which *gadol* had *yahrtzeit* that day. Then he would ask each child, "What are you going to do today as a *zechus* for his *neshamah*?" Each child would dedicate a mitzvah to the *gadol*'s memory.

When Rachel started her own family, she continued the custom with her children.

Eventually her father passed away. One day she realized that she could do for her father's *neshamah* what he had taught her to do for so many others. She introduced the idea to her children and joined in the effort herself.

As time went on, she often found herself muttering a few short words as she went about her daily routine. "I'm cooking breakfast so my children can learn well today as a *zechus* for my father." "I'm going to work so we can give more *tzedakah* as a *zechus* for my father." She saw her words as small gifts for her father in *Shamayim*.

One pre-dawn morning, Rachel's phone rang. It was her sister. "What's wrong?" Rachel cried.

"Nothing," her sister said, "but I just had the strangest dream! Abba came to me. He was glowing like a *malach*, and he said, 'I know you're not planning to go to shul to say *yizkor* this Yom Tov.' I told him that I'm expecting to give birth any day. But he said, 'You don't know what a *zechus* it is when children go to shul to say *yizkor*. Please go.' I said that of course I would. Then he told me, 'Your sister

Rachel sends me gifts every day.' What did he mean?"

Rachel realized that her few passing words as she went about her day were the "gifts" her father had mentioned. She had thought they were small gifts, when in fact, they were

sage advice

ABOVE REPROACH

The idealized American stereotype is the rugged individualist. He may be a brave cowboy or a social revolutionary, but his hallmark is that he follows his heart. "What will people say?" He doesn't care, as long as he's true to himself.

But the Torah doesn't put much stock in such rugged individualism. It tells us, in fact, that we are obligated to consider what others might think, even when we know in our hearts that we're right.

"You must be 'clean' in the eyes of Hashem and in the eyes of the people of Israel," the Torah tells us. This gave the Chasam Sofer cause to comment: "... it is more possible to fulfill the first obligation, that is, the requirements of Heaven, than to fulfill the requirements of other people... because people have strange thoughts."

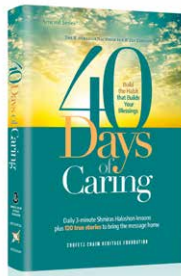
How can the Torah demand that we take into account people's "strange thoughts"—their baseless suspicions and faulty conclusions? Why isn't it good enough to be 'clean' in the Eyes of Hashem, especially when Jews are obligated to give each other the benefit of the doubt? Because arousing people's suspicions—even when unjustified—erects barriers between people. It makes it impossible to live together in peace and unity. And that, in Hashem's accounting, is too high a price to pay.

TALK ABOUT IT

How can you evaluate whether your words or actions will arouse suspicion in others? Do you have to be able to read minds?

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priceless treasures, lifting her father's soul higher and higher even though his time for accruing merit on

his own had passed. Just a few words attached to her ordinary deeds made an eternal difference.

Adapted from a story recorded for CCHF by Rabbi Nachman Seltzer

TALK ABOUT IT

Rachel didn't do anything new; she merely added meaning to what she was already doing. What areas of your life could you uplift with a new resolution?



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Dedicated by Daniel and Diana Cohen

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