



SHABBOS MENU

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS VAYEILECH 5783 • ISSUE 310

NOT GUILTY

Something goes wrong. A mistake was made or a misdeed was committed, and you are a prime suspect. If you know who is responsible, may you clear your name by relating that information?

T H E

DILEMMA

Before Pesach, Gittel's Gifts and Judaica is packed with customers. Bella, a young woman Gittel hired for the season, is retrieving a \$500 hand-made ceramic seder plate for a customer. As she removes it from its display rack, a running child jostles her and causes her to let go of the plate. It crashes to the floor and Bella quickly walks away, believing she's unseen.

Later in the day, Gittel arrives at the store and notices that the seder plate is no longer on display. "Wow! It sold!" she enthused. "I wasn't sure if it was too unusual."

Before she went any further, her manager told her, "Sorry, Gittel, it didn't sell. It broke. I found it in pieces on the floor in aisle 5. I'm not sure how it happened."

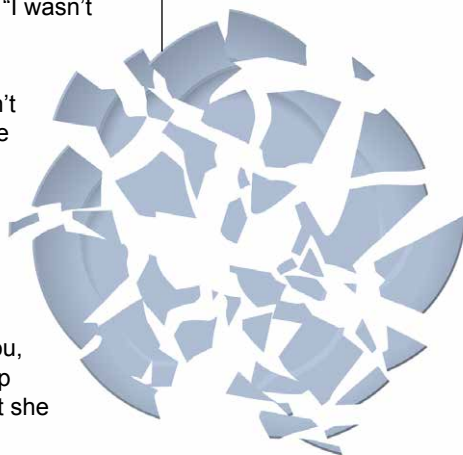
Gittel's eyes settled immediately on Rivka, a long-time employee who, in her older years, seemed to be having more than her share of accidents. "Who dropped it? Was it you, Rivka?" she asked, trying hard to tamp down her ire. May Rivka tell Gittel that she saw Bella drop the plate?

T H E

HALACHAH

In an effort to clear herself, Rivka may not implicate anyone else. She may only say, "I didn't do it."

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim,
Hilchos Loshon Hora 10:17*



PRESS THE RESET BUTTON

Whatever obstacles appear in our path are there to spur us on to meet a challenge. If that challenge is negative words that are straining to get out of our mouth, Hashem is giving us a golden opportunity.

Hashem is pressing the reset button, allowing us to go back to our pure state, before we did or said the things that clog up the works. Once the lines are clear again, we gain strength and inspiration to keep them that way.

So this Shabbos, if your machsom becomes a bit challenging at times, don't despair; give it your all and gain the best reward you can ask for—a chance to start over with a shiny clean slate!

— Rabbi Fishel Schachter

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

"If his

Tendency
was to judge people
favorably, (the
Heavenly Tribunal)
will judge
him
favorably."

— Shmiras HaLoshon / Shaar HaTevunah ch. 4
citing Shabbos 127b

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

He wasn't famous, but Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Polatsek was a humble man who lived to uplift other Jews. A Holocaust survivor who had seen it all, he well understood that when a person doesn't feel alone in his struggles, his struggles become more bearable.

In a conversation with a divorced mother who relied on him for advice, Rabbi Polatsek revealed the life lesson that taught him the value of alleviating others' pain.

In his *shtetl* in Poland before World War II, one Yom Kippur night before *Kol Nidrei* began, the *rav* took his *shamash* and left the shul. While the congregants sat waiting and wondering, the *rav* and *shamash* made their way to the home of the tailor. They knocked on the door and the tailor's sickly 12-year-old daughter answered. She was home alone, unable to join her family in shul.

The *rav* asked the girl how she was feeling. The girl complained of her pains. Then the *rav* asked if she had gotten any new clothing for Yom Tov. The girl said that she had a new dress, but it didn't matter to her because she was too ill to enjoy it. Then the *rav* asked her to describe the dress.

As she described it, the life came back to her face. "Can I see it?" the *rav* asked. The girl ran off with newfound energy and brought the dress. "I can't remember seeing a dress this beautiful!" the *rav* exclaimed. He then blessed the beaming girl with a good, healthy and sweet year,



JUST LISTEN!

and set off to shul.

The *shamash* asked the *rav* to explain this odd errand.

"When a Jew cries out to Hashem, his cry pierces the Heavens," said the *rav*. "But

when someone helps to alleviate that cry, taking

away the sorrow from a troubled Jew, that reaches all the way to the Heavenly throne. Now I'm ready for *Kol Nidrei!*"

Not only on Yom Kippur but on any day, we can tip the scales toward blessing by lifting a fellow Jew's burden. It might take nothing more than a listening ear.

Adapted from *Stories for the Jewish Heart* by Rabbi Binyamin Pruzansky

TALK ABOUT IT

The *rav* didn't cure the girl; he only improved her state of mind. Why is that valuable?

sage advice OWNING UP

There is an instance of *loshon hora*—the first recorded in the Torah—that brings one of the root causes clearly to the fore. The scene is Gan Eden. A terrible sin has been committed—the first sin in the one-day history of mankind—tasting of the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. But no one is stepping up to take responsibility. Instead, Adam claims that Chava was at fault. Chava blames the snake, since it was he who lured her into the sin.

In the rush to shirk responsibility, *loshon hora* played a vital role, as it has ever since. A person desperate to save his own self-esteem and reputation often thinks that besmirching someone else is the easiest way to do it. But someone willing to say, "I made a mistake. What can I do to fix it?" has a far better chance of finding his place in Gan Eden.

As we make our way from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, this idea rises to the top of our spiritual agenda. *Al cheit* doesn't come with footnotes, such as "because he provoked me," or "I was born with a temper." It's just a confession, because only that pure admission of our wrongdoing can clean our slate and clear a path to a year of *brachah*. It's the way to find forgiveness Above, below, and within.

TALK ABOUT IT

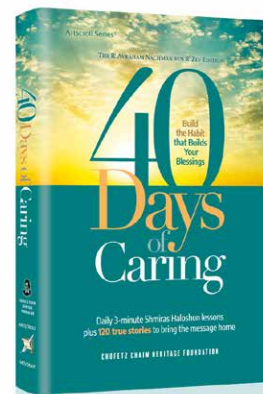
Can other people make us sin (in normal, non-violent circumstances)?



"This year I will stay calm when I'm triggered."

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