

FOOD FOR  
THOUGHT  
TO SPARK  
CONVERSATION

# SHABBOS MENU



PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • SHABBOS PARSHAS KORACH 5783 • ISSUE 346

## HE WON'T LET IT GO

People sometimes bring tremendous pressure to bear on someone who has negative information they want to know. Is there a point at which we can say, "OK, you asked for it...."?

### THE DILEMMA

Yaakov recommended his friend Chaim as a counselor in an overnight camp. The director was impressed with Chaim during his interview. However, one week into camp, it was clear that Chaim had no patience for children. Parents were complaining.

The director didn't want to fire Chaim, so he met with Yaakov to brainstorm a solution.

"Maybe it didn't come out in yeshivah with his friends, but with little kids, he's got a very short fuse," the director explained. "Do you think Chaim would switch with the boy who runs the petting zoo?" Yaakov thought it was a good move.

When Chaim heard about his new job, he put it together with Yaakov's meeting with the director. "What did he say about me?" he demanded. Yaakov resisted, he told white lies, he changed the subject, but hot-headed Chaim only became more adamant.

Finally, Yaakov couldn't resist any more. "He noticed that you've got no patience with the kids," Yaakov answered in frustration. "Is he wrong?"

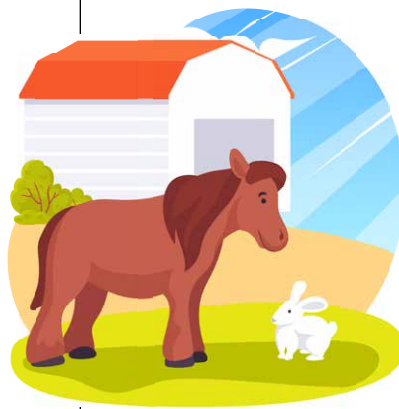
Is Chaim justified in pressing for an answer?  
Is Yaakov justified in answering?

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.

### THE HALACHAH

Pressing for *rechilus* that has no constructive purpose, and thereby forcing someone to speak *rechilus*, gives a person the highly undesirable label of "one who sins and causes others to sin."

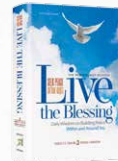
*Sefer Chofetz Chaim, Hilchos Rechilus 5:5*



## PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

We are commanded not to be like Korach, and to make sure that we are never the ones who cause a machlokes. But shalom challenges often come our way—at times through no fault of our own. Without strategies for living in peace with others, we feel powerless in the face of the obstacle course of life.

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SHALOM CHALLENGE 30

### FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

[Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org](mailto:Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org)

"He who shames a friend lacks a heart, but a man of understanding will be silent."

— Mishlei 11:12

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MALKA BREINDEL A" H BAS SHMUEL FISHEL YLCH" T

In Chava's mind, it wasn't even a question. Her former coworker's comment to someone in the teachers' room had definitely doomed a promising *shidduch* for her. Now 30 and unmarried, she still had not forgiven Shaina, the young teacher who had described her as quiet and unfriendly. Chava overheard the comment with her own two ears, and the *shidduch* had dissolved shortly thereafter.

Five years later, Chava encountered Shaina in the supermarket. Shaina had lived in Eretz Yisrael and was now back in America, a married woman with three children. Chava had her niece in the seat of her shopping wagon. She tried to avoid Shaina, having decided to never speak to her again, but Shaina was her warm, bright, and friendly self.

They spoke briefly. Chava claimed that her niece was due home and cut off the conversation. Suddenly the old wound was gaping again. How could Shaina not realize how terribly she had hurt her?

A week later, an enthusiastic Shaina called with a *shidduch* suggestion. But Chava was not about to accept a suggestion from her one enemy in the world. It wasn't until Shaina used some back-channel connections with Chava's family that she finally agreed to go out with the young man, Ben.

Ten dates later, Ben and Chava were engaged. The whole community celebrated the long-awaited *simchah*. Shaina was the first to arrive at the *vort*.

Of course, Chava had found forgiveness in her heart for her one-time nemesis.



## IMAGINARY ENEMIES

After the two teary-eyed women hugged, Chava admitted to Shaina that she had been reluctant to pursue the *shidduch* because of "what happened when we were teaching together."

Shaina seemed to have no recollection of saying or even thinking anything about Chava that could have ruined a

*shidduch*. When Chava reminded her of the time and place of the conversation, Shaina finally recalled: The conversation had been about someone else, a

young, timid special-ed teacher who, at this point, had been married for several years.

"And just like that," Chava recalls, "a giant burden I'd been carrying for so many years melted before my eyes."

Adapted from a story by C.B. Weinfeld in Yated Magazine

### TALK ABOUT IT

What could Chava have done to prevent her needless suffering?

## sage advice

# NEVER ARGUE AGAIN

Imagine a parenting or a marriage-improvement class that promised, "Learn this method and you will never have another argument!" Most people would view that promise as a prime example of sales hype or perhaps even false advertising. Arguing, we assume, is a normal part of life.

But that depends on how you define "argument." Rabbi Meir Wikler defines an argument not as a difference of opinion, but as clashing, crashing viewpoints in which neither party listens to the other.

*Pirkei Avos* (5:9) describes a *golem*—an ignoramus—as someone who cuts off the other person before he is finished speaking. This, says Rabbi Wikler, is the defining trait of an argument. "Both people have strong feelings about something. Both want to be the speaker and neither wants to be the listener," he says.

Rather than each person battering the other with his or her opinion, each one needs to actively listen to what the other is saying. Each needs to seek to understand the other's view by asking for clarification and accepting that the other person might have different needs and priorities.

With this approach, there's no feeling of being insulted and no need to be defensive. We don't feel that we're "losing" if we concede some points. That makes agreement possible. And even if we end up agreeing to disagree, we haven't argued.

By taking turns being the speaker and the listener, and even pausing for a moment before switching roles, Rabbi Wikler confidently predicts, "You'll never have another argument."

### TALK ABOUT IT

How can you remember to stop yourself on the way to an argument and use Rabbi Wikler's suggestions?

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