

FOOD
FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

SHABBOS MENU



PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • SHABBOS NACHAMU PARSHAS VA'ESCHANAN 5783 • ISSUE 351

PAYBACK TIME?

Someone has obviously “poisoned the well” and ruined your good reputation—and you have a pretty good idea who that might be. May you transfer her from your “fellow Jew” list to your “evildoer” list?

T H E

DILEMMA

Competition was fierce to get into Camp Shemesh. Naomi applied early for her daughter, Ruthie. The camp administration checked out a list of references and they all reported back to Naomi, “I sang Ruthie’s praises. I’m sure she’ll get in!”

One day in April, an envelope came bearing the camp’s logo, and inside was a letter saying, “We are sorry, but we are unable to accept Ruthie for this summer...” When Naomi looked at the signature, she gasped. The camp apparently had a new assistant director: the wife of a man her husband had been forced to fire from his company.

“She must have told the director terrible things about our family!” Naomi concluded. “Why else would they reject a great girl like Ruthie?” Is Naomi permitted to make this assumption?



T H E

HALACHAH

Without strong circumstantial evidence, she must judge favorably, even if she hears rumors that the assistant director slandered her family. A Jew is not permitted to presume a fellow Jew is an evildoer. However, she is permitted to consider the possibility that her suspicions are true.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim,
Hilchos Rechilus 6:3*

PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

I just finished the book Live the Blessing again. I can't thank you enough for the beautiful learning and growing experience it has been for me and those who joined me in learning the book! May Hashem repay you with much brachah and hatzlachah for the light you bring into the world!!



Leah L.

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

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Don't ask only,

"Should

*I say it?" but
also, "What will*

happen
if I do?"

Rabbi Ari Bensoussan, a beloved and influential speaker, could never have imagined that his life would revolve around public speaking. That is because as a boy, he suffered from a stutter.

"If someone would have told me when I was nine, or ten, or even thirteen, that I would become a speaker, I would have laughed at the thought or cried at the hurt," he recalled. But his course in life took an unexpected turn because of someone who believed in his ability to reach a crowd.

That someone was his older brother, Avi. The boys were in camp together one summer when Ari was about fourteen. Color war had started, and part of the competition was a comedy skit.

Ari had a talent for imitating accents. Scottish was his best, and his sense of humor made his impressions all the more entertaining. "You have to do your voices!" Avi urged him. But Ari couldn't imagine speaking on stage. It was hard enough to speak in a one-on-one conversation. It could only end up in total humiliation, he was sure.

"Ari, this is your time!" his brother urged. "You know you don't stutter when you do your impressions. You have to do it. I've never seen anyone else with your talent. Everyone will love it!"

Rabbi Bensoussan remembers the impact of those words. "I got up on stage and never looked back," he says. In the career that unfolded, Rabbi Bensoussan has reached thousands of Jewish students and adults seeking inspiration. He receives numerous emails each day from people looking for advice or thanking him for helping them. None of that would have happened, he says, if his brother hadn't convinced him that he could overcome his stutter.

THIS IS YOUR TIME!

This, he says, is the power of words. They can tear out someone's heart, or they can heal it.

sage advice

A Series on Growing Our Emunah

HOLDING UP THE WORLD

The story is told of a psychiatric patient who would awaken each morning, rise from bed, and stand in one spot all day with his hands turned upwards. No amount of coaxing could motivate him to move. Finally, one psychiatrist visited the man and offered to take his place. The man gladly relinquished his position to the doctor.

The patient, it turned out, believed he was holding up the world. Only when he found someone to take over his job was he able to walk away. It seems crazy, yet most people engage to some degree in exactly this form of insanity. People believe that their worry, concern, planning, and striving create the success they achieve. In the process, they lose track of the fact that man does not run the world. The gift of serenity comes to those who let Hashem hold up the world, believing wholeheartedly that He will never drop the ball.

TALK ABOUT IT

What are practical ways to "pass the ball" to Hashem? Does this mean one may neglect the details of one's life or business?

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TALK ABOUT IT

Can you think of an instance when you doubted yourself, but someone encouraged you to try something new?