



SHABBOS MENU

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WATCH OUT FOR HIM

You're not the type of person who walks around bad-mouthing others, but what if you hear something that really sets off warning bells? Are you allowed to give your friend the benefit of your information?

THE

DILEMMA

Yosef is a creative genius, filled with ideas and the talent to make them happen. However, he's an introvert and tends to be disorganized. That's why he wants Aharon, an acquaintance from shul and a successful salesman, to become his partner in his new enterprise. "I'll be the inside guy and you'll be the outside guy," he tells Aharon. "We can't lose!"

Aharon is tempted. He's been looking for some new endeavor to rev up his enthusiasm, and Yosef's idea seems promising. He talks it over with Moshe, his brother, who has known Yosef since yeshivah days and still learns with him once a week.

Moshe loves Yosef's creativity and energy, but he's heard straight from Yosef's mouth story after story of his business disasters, all due to his inability to follow through on anything. May he warn Aharon against teaming up with Yosef?



THE

HALACHAH

If he knows for a fact that the partnership will harm Aharon, Moshe is required to tell him the information. However, even if he is uncertain, he is permitted to tell him under the following circumstances:

1. He should not jump to conclusions about the partnership, but rather, consider it carefully.
2. He may not exaggerate
3. His only motivation is to protect Aharon, not to harm Yosef out of dislike for him.
4. There is no way to protect Aharon without divulging negative information about Yosef.
5. The information will not unduly harm Yosef (as opposed to preventing a perceived benefit).

Sefer Chofetz Chaim, Hilechos Rechilus 9:1-2

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 turning point in the story of Yosef and his brothers happened when Yehuda stepped up to protect Binyamin. Instead of sibling rivalry and hatred, he showed a burning love and sense of responsibility.

Yosef saw this and could not hold back from revealing himself. By working on our own ahavas Yisrael, caring and stepping up to the plate to help our brothers, and doing away with sibling rivalry on a personal and communal level, may we be catalysts for Divine revelation and the reunion of all Klal Yisrael.

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

"Better that I suspect this gossipmonger of spreading

lies
about his fellow, than I should

believe
that what he told me is true."

- Sefer Shmiras HaLoshon, Shaar HaZechirah ch. 12

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MALKA BREINDEL A"H BAS SHMUEL FISHEL YLCH"Y



An experienced yoga teacher, who could assume seemingly impossible poses with ease, slipped on the ice and severely injured her knee. She needed physical therapy for six weeks, but the damage was not nearly as bad as it might have been. "Because the muscles surrounding your knee are so strong," explained the doctor, "your knee was able to withstand the fall."

This is a true story that Mrs. Yocheved Davidowitz used to describe the power of constant reinforcement of our *ahavas Yisrael*. She was referring to *The Ahavas Yisrael Project*, an initiative that for over a decade has inspired small groups of women—*chaburahs*—to learn and inspire each other's personal growth.

The impact, says Mrs. Suri Weiss, who has hosted an *Ahavas Yisrael chaburah* in her home for the past 14 years, is life-altering. Mrs. Weiss recalled first hearing about the project from its founder, Rebbetzin Tzipora Harris, when she came to speak in her shul. At first, she couldn't see herself taking on such a commitment. "I was busy raising children and the idea of a *chaburah* for women just wasn't in my language."

However, she, like women all over the world, felt a tug to get involved. She started a small group, which over the years has brought her close to many women she might not otherwise have come to know. They share the bond of dedication to this mitzvah, and they strengthen it through emails that suggest *middos* to work on, learning from many different sources over the years, and working on "stretching" themselves in each specific *middah*. One such gem is *The Ahavas Yisrael Project*, a CCHF book

sage advice

ONE PERSON, ONE MINUTE

When we think of the challenges we face in fulfilling the mitzvah of "*Vahavta l'rei'acha kamocha*," we usually think, "Well, what about (fill in the name) who drives me crazy and makes my life miserable? Do I really have to love *him*?" If we can't think of a way to love that person, we may assume that we can't grow in this mitzvah very much at all.

However, Rav Avigdor Miller advises us to look at the matter from the opposite direction; start the path to growth by focusing on those who are easy to love.

The *Toras Avigdor Parsha Booklet* suggests that we each commit, *bli neder*, to choose one easy-to-love person, and spend one minute each day increasing our love for him or her.

For the first 30 seconds, we should train ourselves to feel love for the person simply because Hashem loves him tremendously. If Hashem loves him so much, there must be so much to love!

For the next 30 seconds, we should focus on loving the person because of one or more of his good traits, habits, or behaviors. In this way, we firm up our positive feelings; we remind ourselves that he is not only intrinsically loveable, but also has streaks of greatness in him.

Starting our path to growth in *ahavas Yisrael* in this way is realistic. It's like lifting 10-pound weights to gradually work up to the 100-pounders. Also, it's so undeniably easy to do that we would have a hard time answering to ourselves "why not?" But it's effective as well, because as we develop the right focus and the right way to see others, we will be able to do the "heavy lifting," and love even the person "who drives me crazy."

TALK ABOUT IT

What can this one-person-one-minute exercise add to your *ahavas Yisrael* for someone you already like?



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AHAVAS YISRAEL'S SUPPORTING MUSCLES

(written by Sharon Warren).

"We learn and grow and see that we can do it. We have a lot of strength together," says Mrs. Weiss.

Practically speaking, she notes that even women with small children

can become involved. "They bring a toy, and the child sits and plays on the floor. Whatever works. The group

doesn't have to be large and you don't need a speaker or a rebbetzin to lead it. It's just people sharing."

Strengthening each other in *ahavas Yisrael*, she says, is like "building the armor" before a person needs it. With that strength, she says, people respond to challenges with love for their fellow Jew, seeing each person as a whole world, each a beloved child of Hashem.

TALK ABOUT IT

What can you do to work, in a consistent way, on *ahavas Yisrael*? Why is this important to you?



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