



SHABBOS MENU

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JUST BETWEEN ME AND ALL OF YOU

How much can we count on people to keep information confidential? If the speaker of loshon hora tells three or more people not to repeat what he's telling them, do we still assume that word will get out and the information is destined to become "public knowledge"?

THE DILEMMA

Leah works in a customer-service department with four other women. Everyone notices that Leah hasn't been her usual friendly self over the past few weeks. One day, her coworker Esti asks her if everything is all right.

Noticing the other women's ears tuned to the conversation, Leah decides to be open with them. "I'd rather give them the real story than have them guessing and talking to each other about me," she thought.

"I'll tell you, things aren't all right. But not a word of this can be repeated. I'm trusting you all to keep this to yourselves. The truth is that my older brother-in-law talked us into lending him \$10,000 and now he's pretending it wasn't a loan but an 'investment' in his business. We don't know what to do!"

May the women who heard Leah's story retell it, since it was said in front of three people and is thus considered certain to spread?



THE HALACHAH

If the listeners have been urged not to repeat what they heard, we assume they will keep it confidential. If any of them repeats the information, it is loshon hora. Even if one or two people slip up or disregard the warning, we cannot assume that three people will do so.

Sefer Chofetz Chaim, Hilchos Loshon Hora 2:7

WEEKLY WISDOM

To connect with our neshamos and with Hashem, we need time to think. But our yetzer hara keeps us running, assuring us that we're being wildly productive when effectively we're running in place.

As we begin the month of Tammuz, let's take the time to realize that we have to stop running and start thinking, connecting, moving up—and before long we'll be ready to be free once again. In Yerushalayim habenuyah!

Good Chodesh!

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

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"Those who desecrate Hashem's Name

publicly, those who degrade their fellow with their words, and those who fuel arguments—their

end will be like Korach's."

— Sefer Shmiras HaLashon, Shaar HaZechirah, ch. 8

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THAT WAY

Parents work all their lives to support their families. If they manage to amass some wealth, they hope that it will someday be divided among their children. It will make their lives easier and be a lasting reminder of their parents' love and care.

That's the hope. However, all too often, an inheritance turns from a boon into a battle. With a sum of money dangling before their eyes, the siblings begin to think about the problems that money would solve, the opportunities it might open, the goodies it could buy. They count up their share before it's even distributed. But if another sibling has a different idea about who gets what, a formerly loving family can quickly disintegrate into warring factions.

That's the usual path of inheritance *machlokes*. Each person carefully calculates what should be his and self-righteously defends it. Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman bemoaned the fact that many such cases came before him. He often advised people that even if according to *halachah* they had the right to what they were demanding, they would never lose by being *mevater*.

He pointed to Rav Chaim Kanievsky as a perfect example of this approach. Rav Chaim was an only son who was entitled to the entire inheritance, and yet he left some of his father's property to his sister. "Do you think he lost anything as a result?" Rav Shteinman asked. "No. He only gained from it."

Rav Chaim once explained his decision to share the inheritance with his sister: "I took what I needed and left the rest to my sister. I have nowhere to keep it." He said that he gave his sister the rights to sell their father's *sefer*, *Kehillos Yaakov*, because he had his own *sefarim* to sell.

Also, he felt she deserved the profits from the *sefarim* because their father lived with her



sage advice

SOMETIMES IT'S NOT THAT COMPLICATED

When our rights conflict with someone else's rights, we have a dispute on our hands. And as Jews, we know enough not to adjudicate the situation for ourselves. Rather, we turn to a rav or a dayan to examine the situation with all its details and apply the halachos to determine the correct outcome. But to Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman, that procedure was not the end of the story.

A man came to Rav Shteinman with a complicated question in *halachah* involving a neighbor with whom he was at odds; he wanted to find out what he should do.

Rav Shteinman took the complicated situation apart piece by piece, until he had a full understanding of it. Then he delved into the *sefarim* to fully flesh out his response. Finally, he explained it all to the man.

As he finished the conversation, Rav Shteinman added one last piece of advice. "I want you to know," he said, "that there is a way to solve all the situations that arise in *Choshen Mishpat* (the *Shulchan Aruch's* section dealing with legal matters)."

"What is that?" the man asked.

"Be *mevater*," Rav Shteinman answered.

He always maintained that when people yield to others rather than engaging in *machlokes*, they come out ahead, and many people who followed his advice saw this with their own eyes. "Nobody can deprive a person of anything that is designated for him even by a hairsbreadth," he would say.

Yet we can certainly deprive ourselves of a great deal—friendship, family, peace of mind, and even the money it costs to wage a battle—when we're unwilling to give in and trust Hashem to work out the details.

Adapted from an article in *Yated Ne'eman*

TALK ABOUT IT

How can you know when your efforts to claim what is yours go beyond *hishtadlus* and into the realm of *machlokes*?

for many years.

None of these issues would have interfered with Rav Chaim's right to take the entire inheritance if he had wanted to do so. But he knew that by making his sister's welfare his business, he could only prosper.

Adapted from an article in *Yated Neeman*

TALK ABOUT IT

What did Rav Chaim gain by sharing the inheritance with his sister even when he did not have to do so? What does a person lose by fighting others for everything he is entitled to?

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