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SHABBOS MENU

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • SHABBOS PARSHAS MATOS-MASEI 5780 • ISSUE 401

YOUR LOSHON HORA IS IMPORTANT TO ME!

You might have good reason to listen to someone's negative report. But does he have good reason to say it? Does that matter?

THE DILEMMA

Your neighbor tells you about the young new assistant at his warehouse. He's not impressed; he complains about the boy's intelligence, work ethic and mode of dress. What he doesn't know is that this information is important to you, because this same boy has been suggested as a *shidduch* for your daughter. May you keep listening?



THE HALACHAH

If the speaker isn't speaking for a constructive purpose, his words are loшон hora, and the listener may not listen. That's because by providing an audience, the listener is "putting a stumbling block" in front of the speaker, encouraging him to go on talking. It's possible, however, to stop the speaker and let him know that you have a constructive purpose for listening. Then, if he meets the other conditions of *to'eles*, he may relate negative information.

Sefer Chofetz Chaim, Hil Loshon Hora 4:11; Be'er Mayim Chaim 6:3

A TASTE OF PLEASURE

The yetzer hara tries to lure people into seeking pleasure by promising instant gratification. Yet doing the right thing, though it may be a long, hard road, brings far greater pleasure in the end. Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshis'cha once commented that if the baal taavah only knew how much pleasure the tzaddik has, he would become a tzaddik overnight!

There is a way to taste the tzaddik's pleasure without the long wait, and that is with the Shabbos Table Machsom L'Fi kabbalah. The moment you decide to abstain from loшон hora, your whole family is surrounded by a happy atmosphere. Take a taste and you'll see... it works!

--Rabbi Avraham Neuberger

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

"If only I could love
 the biggest

Tzaddik
 in Klal Yisrael as much
 as Hashem loves the

biggest

rasha."

– Baal Shem Tov

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

THE CHOFETZ CHAIM SENT HER AN EMAIL

The members of a shul were bitterly divided over the question of renewing the rabbi's contract. Prior to their vote on the issue, the shul president sent out a letter advising against renewal. On the same day that the letter went out, a woman who learns Shmiras Haloshon Yomi from *The Chofetz Chaim: A Daily Companion* received her daily email containing a lesson called "Playing with Fire," which discussed *loshon hora* about rabbis. In the lesson the Chofetz Chaim explains the grave danger of this type of *loshon hora*, as it defames someone who represents Hashem, and furthermore, it rips apart communities.

COMPOSE

Inbox (6)

Starred

The woman immediately copied the email and distributed it to the shul members. The timing was not lost on them: On the same day that the president sent out his derogatory letter, the *sefer* carried the Chofetz Chaim's words of warning about that exact form of *loshon hora*. "It was as if the Chofetz Chaim were crying out from his grave to our community," said the woman. "And

TALK ABOUT IT

If this woman had been against renewing the rabbi's contract, do you think she would have seen the email as a message from the Chofetz Chaim?

sage advice

GIVE YOUR TWO SELAS' WORTH

A beautiful dove is flitting among the rocks of a cliff. It flutters in front of a narrow cleft in the stone and then, tempted by something it sees inside, it squeezes into the tight space. When it finishes feasting on the seeds and insects it finds within, it tries to fly away. But it can't. It's stuck. It has been caught inside the cleft, a hostage to its own appetite.

Shir Hashirim uses this metaphor to describe Klal Yisrael: *Yonasi b'chagvei hasela* – "My dove, in the clefts of the rock" (*Shir Hashirim* 2:14). What drew us into the trap? Our appetite for *loshon hora* was the lure. **Rabbi Ephraim Shapiro** echoes the words of the **Chofetz Chaim**, who taught that if *loshon hora* is the cause of *galus*, then Shmiras Haloshon is the catalyst for *geulah*.

He adds another insight as well:

The word *sela* means "rock" in Hebrew, "coin" in Aramaic. The Gemara (*Megillah*) teaches that a person's speech is worth one *sela* (the coin), while his silence is worth two of them.

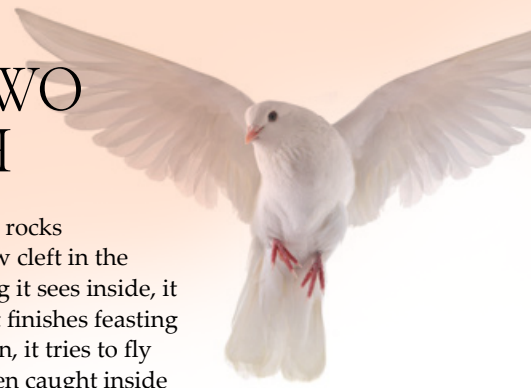
"Why are we caught in *chagvei hasela*, the cleft of the rock?" Rabbi Shapiro asks. "Because of a *sela*'s worth of negative speech," he answers. By internalizing the value of silence – two *selas* – we can finally set ourselves free from the puny one-*sela*'s worth, the *loshon hora* that keeps Klal Yisrael trapped in *galus*.

TALK ABOUT IT

People often think of silence as awkward and anti-social. What are some ways we can help our relationships by using silence constructively?

the rabbi did win."

Sometimes, all it takes is a sudden burst of awareness to nip the noxious weed of machlokes in the bud.



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