

Interactive
Questions
for Your
Shabbos
Table

Be aware!

When discussing shmiras
haloshon issues, using personal
examples may lead to unintended
loshon hora. Keep it general
to keep it kosher.

ISSUE 34

SHABBOS PARSHAS ACHAREI MOS - KEDOSHIM 5785

Please do not read during
davening and krias haTorah.

What Is the School Secretary Allowed to Know?

I'm a secretary in a Bais Yaakov. As part of my job, I enter the students' grades into the computer system. This means that I can see which students have low grades or behavior issues.

Am I allowed to see all this information?

—Tamar

What's the **Psak**?
Do you know the halachah?

- A **No**, it's the same as listening to loshon hora.
B **Yes**, that's your job.
C **Yes**, but if you can avoid it, you should.

The Answer

The halachah is C.

You should try to
avoid it if possible.

Reviewed by
Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Lowy

Rav Pam, zt"l, advised great caution when presenting halachic scenarios to the public, as each situation is unique. This *shailah* is for discussion only; actual halachic decisions should be made by a *rav* or halachic expert on a case-by-case basis.

The Shmiras Haloshon Shailah Hotline:
718-951-3696 2-3PM / 9-10:30 PM

Handling Inside Info

For someone who has no constructive reason to hear about a student's low grades and/or behavioral issues—even another staff member—such reports are loshon hora.¹ According to that rule, Tamar is not allowed to see this information. However, there's a *to'eles*; the school needs the computer input to keep track of the students' performance and monitor their progress.

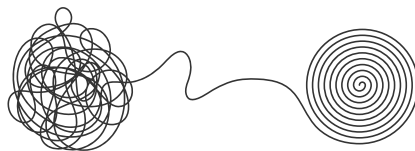
Tamar is allowed to see the reports for two reasons. Firstly, it's her job to act as an "extension" of the teachers, like a secretary who types a letter for the boss that might include negative information. Secondly, the parents and students know that this is the system in the school.

However, Tamar should first find out if there's a way that she could do her job without seeing the students' grades.² One option is to use numbers or initials instead of names, so that Tamar won't know whose grades she is entering. If no reasonable option is possible then she can use the names, but she must not believe that the negative information is true.

An employee must not repeat or even hint at confidential information to which he or she is privy. Not only can this violate secular law, but it violates halachah as well. Even a seemingly minor comment like, "Oh, your sister-in-law was at our office last week" is a breach of privacy. It can cause the person discomfort or hurt and betrays his or her trust.

My **אדרבה** moment

My little sister wanted to
help clean up. I was about
to say, "It always takes
longer when you help!"



Then I thought,
"How would
I feel?" and I
said, "Sure!"

See the
good
What's the
Real
Story?

Morah Katz* was an experienced teacher who loved her students and was dedicated to helping them do their best. One morning, while the class was settling down and the students were taking out their books, one of the girls, Rochel, shyly came forward and handed the teacher a note.

The writing was childish. The letters, written in marker, were all different sizes. The name signed on the bottom was just a squiggle. But Morah Katz, who had been reading elementary-school kids' writing for years, figured out what it said: "Dear Morah: My daughter Rochel has a sore throat. Please let

How Can She Tell Such a Lie?

her suck candies in class. Thank you."

It looked like Rochel had written the note, but Morah Katz decided to think more about it. She gave Rochel permission to quietly suck

on the candies. But now what? She wondered how Rochel thought she could get away with faking a note from her father. Did she think her teacher wouldn't notice? Should she demand that Rochel admit the lie and apologize?



Adapted from
a true story
told by Rabbi
Yissocher Frand



**Know an unpublished
Crack the Case story
that belongs in
this Aderaba?**

*Tell it to us so that we
can inspire thousands.*

Send a brief outline of your story
to aderaba@cchfglobal.org

Can you Crack the case?

Later in the day, the teacher was walking up and down the aisles, checking on the students as they did their work. When she came to Rochel's desk, Rochel called her name softly. Morah Katz bent a little lower to listen. "You know, Morah, my father is blind," said Rochel. That explained everything. Morah Katz was so grateful that she had not jumped to conclusions and accused the girl wrongly. How hurtful that would have been!

See the
good
in the
heart
of a Yid

Rabbi Davis was wrapping up the final Avos Ubanim program of the year. As the boys munched on their fresh pizza, it was time for the season's grand finale—the highly anticipated raffle for a brand-new Schwinn speed bike.

The boys watched excitedly as Rabbi Davis inserted his hand into the large bag of tickets, making a show of how he was swishing them around inside the bag until—he stopped, pulling out the winning ticket in his clenched fist. The boys all stared at their tickets, each one of them hoping to be the lucky winner of the grand raffle; the room was pin-drop silent. Finally he announced, "And

"I WON!"

the winning number is . . . 057893!"

Barely a second passed, and ten-year-old Heshy sprang to his feet, screaming: "I WON!" As Heshy ran up to the *bimah* to claim his prize, the fathers in the room were all smiling. They were aware of the

difficult situation Heshy had been experiencing at home over the past few months and were thrilled that he would now have a sparkling new bike to keep him in high spirits. Rabbi Davis seized the opportunity to make Heshy shine with pride; he took him by the hand and danced with him around the *bimah*, and the other boys joined along.

Nobody in the room realized that Heshy's ticket, now sitting innocently on the *bimah*, actually said a different number: 057983. The eager ten-year-old hadn't noticed that, in his haste,

he'd reversed the 8 and the 9.

After the shul cleared out Rabbi Davis collected his belongings, getting ready to leave, when he was approached by a father and son, the last ones left in the shul. "Here's the actual winning ticket," the father said, showing him his son's numbers. Rabbi Davis gasped.

"Don't worry about the bike," the beaming father continued. "My son realized what happened right away—but he chose to let it go. He didn't want to embarrass Heshy in front of the whole shul."

What's Your Opinion?

This story happened years ago, and the boy—now a father—doesn't remember if his father ended up getting him a bike. What can you learn from the fact that while he remembers the story with satisfaction, he doesn't remember if he got a bike?



DEDICATIONS

Dedicated anonymously as a *zechus* for *hatzlachah* for the entire family • As a *zechus* for the Litenatsky family • As a *zechus* for the Sasson family
As a *zechus* for a *refuah sheleimah* for Chanon Gadol ben Leah • Dedicated anonymously • לע"נ חיים יחיאל מיכל בן רפאל פיוועל שניאור ז"ל • לע"נ האשה החשובה מרת הענטשא בת ר' יצחק קליין ע"ה