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SHABBOS MENU

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • SHABBOS PARSHAS SHELACH 5780 • ISSUE 195

WHODUNIT? NOT ME!

What if you are unjustly blamed for something that another person did or said? Are you allowed to name the perpetrator in order to clear your own name?

THE DILEMMA

You are one of two salespeople in a store. Both you and your coworker use the cash register to ring up sales. After a customer leaves, you hear the other salesperson tell a stock-boy, "Uh-oh. I thought those shirts were on sale." At the end of the day, your boss finds a shortage and blames you for it.

May you tell him that it was your co-worker who made the mistake?



THE HALACHAH

The answer is complicated. If a person makes an innocent mistake (and you are therefore not obligated to inform the storekeeper, as you would be if he stole the money), you are not allowed to name the person who did it just to clear your name. You are, however, allowed to say that you did not do it. If there are only two possible culprits, as in this case, you can make that denial only if the other person's actions were, in fact, improper; for instance if the cashier had been negligent in making the error.

If you are not in a position to deny that it was you, you could try to mitigate the impact by minimizing the act: For instance, you could say, "I know it wasn't done intentionally." In general, accepting the blame is considered a meritorious act, unless you will be unjustly penalized. If remaining quiet would cost you your job, a raise, a promotion or a good reference for the future, you are not obligated to take the blame.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim, Hil. Loshon Hora 10:17 with
Be'er Mayim Chaim 43; Hil. Rechilus 9:14*

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.

PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

I love everything about the program! I print out Shabbos Menu by Thursday morning. It's beautifully done, and the Table Card is a gentle reminder, non-threatening and pretty too. It makes a difference in the conversation at the table.

The program enhances our Shabbos table and I promote it further too: I have a chaburah where we do a machsom and learn the mitzvos bein adam lachaveiro, and I introduced your program to the group. You got it right!

Lynne Steinberg
Passaic, NJ

PASSAIC

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

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"A person sees

*everyone's
faults
except
his own."*

- Nega'im 2:5

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MALKA BREINDEL A"H BAS SHMUEL FISHEL YLCH"Y

In October 1976, Avie Gold was sitting *shivah* for his revered father, Mr. Jack (Yaakov) Gold. Rabbi Yaakov Pollack, Rabbi of Congregation Shomrei Emunah in Boro Park and a Maggid Shiur at Yeshiva University, entered the house and sat down.

“You’re probably wondering why I came to be *menchem avel*,” he said to the mourners, “since neither Avie nor Jack Gold ever *davened* in my shul. I’ll explain it to you with a story:

“Many years ago an Orthodox Jewish man was driving in Queens near a Jewish cemetery when he noticed an elderly lady standing under a bus shelter. He pulled over and asked her in Yiddish where she was heading. She answered that she was going home to Brooklyn, and she told him where she lived. He replied that he was heading to the same neighborhood and he would be happy to drive her home.

“During the drive to Brooklyn she explained that she had *yahrtzeit* and had come to the cemetery to *daven*. She had been waiting for the bus to take her home. They conversed cordially until he dropped her off in front of her home.

“Almost a year later, the man called the elderly woman. ‘Since we both have to be at the cemetery on the same day and we live in the same neighborhood, I’m going to pick you up and we’ll go to the cemetery together, and then I’ll drive you home.’

“The scene repeated itself for a number of years, until the elderly woman passed away.

“Before she died, the woman mentioned the story to her son and told him the name of the man who drove her to the cemetery every year on the *yahrtzeit*.

“The elderly woman in the story was my mother, and the man was your father. So when I heard he passed away I came to express my gratitude and to tell you how special your father was.”

A renewed wave of awe and love washed over Jack Gold’s bereaved children. Their father’s *chessed* was much more than even Rabbi Pollak knew – because Jack Gold didn’t live anywhere near the Rabbi’s mother. Nor did he have a *yahrtzeit* on the same day. He had simply offered himself – his time, patience, company and conversation – to take a little bit of

sage advice

JUST FOOL HIM

Question: “My *yetzer hara* never quits! How can I ever conquer *loshon hora* for good?”

Answer: “Just tell him you’re not really giving it up. You’re just holding off for now.”

The answer comes from **Dovid Hamelech**, who would set out for the *beis midrash* with the *yetzer hara* tagging along, saying, “You’ve got a million things to take care of! Who’s got time to sit and learn?”

“Oh, you think I’m going to learn?” the king would reply. “I’m really going to take care of some important business.”

The *yetzer hara*, thinking he had won, would go away long enough for Dovid Hamelech to direct his feet to the *beis midrash*.

In His kindness, Hashem allows this ruse to work whenever we’re faced with a challenge. The truth is, it’s not the *yetzer hara* that falls for the trick, it’s we who fall for it, because we’re falling in the direction in which we really want to go.

TALK ABOUT IT

What are the dangers of making a big, dramatic change? What are the benefits?

GOING MY WAY

the burden off a fellow Jew’s shoulders.

Excerpted with permission from *Stam Torah*, by Rabbi Daniel Staum

TALK ABOUT IT

What are some of the many lessons about the best way to do *chessed* that we can learn from this man’s selfless act?

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