

SHABBOS MENU

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‘THAT’S A DIFFERENT STORY’

If you already know that a story is true, and someone tells it to you again, can this possibly be counted as accepting loshon hora?

T H E

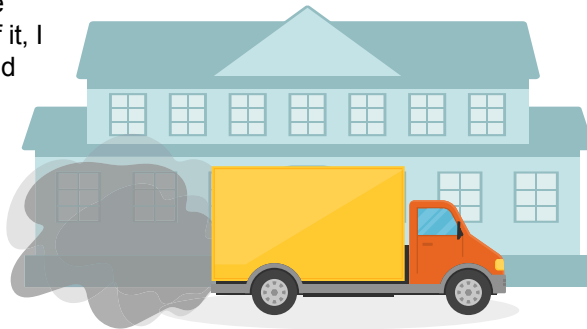
DILEMMA

In what seemed like a big rush, the Feinberg family packed up and moved out of town. Dovid Feinberg told everyone that he had gotten a new, higher-paying position in a company based in a small Midwestern town. The family expenses were growing, he said, and he had little choice but to take the job. The boss wanted him to start ASAP.

One day, Yaakov was talking to Moshe about Dovid’s departure. “He left so fast. It almost seems like he was run out of town!” Yaakov joked.

“It’s true, he did leave awfully fast now that you mention it,” Moshe said. “Come to think of it, I wonder why. It was kind of odd...”

Because Moshe already knew that Dovid left town in a rush, was Yaakov’s information loshon hora?



T H E

HALACHAH

Since Yaakov introduced a new, derogatory interpretation of the story, even in jest, his words were loshon hora.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim
Hilchos Loshon Hora 6:7*

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

Ani l’Dodi v’Dodi li, “I am for my Beloved and my Beloved is for me.” These words are derived from the letters of the word “Elul” — alef-lamed-vov-lamed. But ani can mean something else (besides “I”): In Hebrew, when we want to know where someone is going, we ask him “L’an?” — where are you headed? Thus, ani can be translated as “my destination,” and the passuk is saying, “[When] my destination is to my Beloved (Hashem), [then] my Beloved’s is towards me.”

This Shabbos, when we sit down at our tables and speak with care, we are moving ourselves in Hashem’s direction. In this zechus He will surely draw closer to each of us.

— Rabbi Ephraim Eliyahu Shapiro

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

“The more one

accustoms

himself to judging others favorably, the less he will

transgress

the sin of loshon hora.”

— Sefer Shmiras HaLoshon,
Shaar HaTevunah ch. 4

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”T

DO THE RIGHT THING

Small pleasures can sometimes soothe large wounds. This was the case in a Displaced Person's camp, where those who had survived the war and the concentration camps found temporary refuge.

Some clothing, a pair of shoes, a few items to call their own – these were the small things that took on tremendous importance. In one camp, a man named Boruch Lieberman had the job of distributing new shoes. He set up racks, as in a shoe store, and served his “customers” in order, according to their number in line.

But Boruch had another matter on his mind. He had been introduced to Rachel Simanowitz, a fellow survivor. She, like he, wanted nothing more than to build a family on a foundation of Torah. He hoped that she would soon become his partner in life.

One day, Rachel came to choose a pair of shoes. He noticed her eyes settle on an elegant burgundy pair displayed on the third row of his shoe racks. However, two girls were ahead of Rachel in line. One of them went straight for the burgundy shoes. Turning to Boruch, she asked, “Are these available?”

For a moment, Boruch was torn. How he would love to please Rachel with the shoes she desired! But why should this young lady, who had also been through so much, not get the shoes? “Yes,” he told her, “they’re available.”

As he handed the girl the shoes, he noticed Rachel averting her face. Were those tears he saw in her eyes?

A few days later, Boruch and Rachel had their next date. He immediately apologized for the incident with the shoes, but Rachel cut him off.

“Do you think I was crying because I didn’t get the shoes I wanted? Not at all! I knew you wanted me to have the shoes and I watched to see what you would do. When I saw that you gave



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STRICTER THAN HASHEM?

Some things seem unforgivable. You see a friend you admire texting as the Torah is read one Thursday morning. You overhear a woman you thought was a great mother lashing out at her daughter. You spot your son's beloved *rebbe* cutting in front of another car to grab an empty parking space. In situations like these, our estimation of the other person tends to plummet. Even if they regret their act, we don't forget it.

In this way, we judge people with far less mercy than Hashem shows to even the worst Jew. The *Gemara* brings an interesting scenario that illustrates the point: A person is spending the last moments of Yom Kippur eating – not just eating, but eating something *treif*. As soon as Yom Kippur ends, he draws a ring from his pocket, places it on a woman's finger, and says, “You are sanctified to me on the condition that I am righteous.”

Placing the ring on the woman's finger with this declaration is enough to make her his wife. However, what about the condition? Can a man who eats *treif* food on Yom Kippur be considered righteous? The *Gemara* holds that he has met the condition. He has performed a valid wedding ceremony because perhaps he had a thought of *teshuvah*, a spark of inspiration, before he placed the ring. In that case, he is no longer considered a sinner.

Most of the Jews we know are not eating ham sandwiches on Yom Kippur, but they might occasionally be impatient, inconsiderate, or impulsive, leading them to do the wrong thing and most likely regret it. If they've had their moment of *teshuvah* and Hashem has forgiven them, how can we not do the same?

TALK ABOUT IT

What is the difference between disapproving of what someone has done and feeling negatively toward them because of it?

them to her, I asked Hashem, ‘Please help me marry this man who had the courage to do what was right.’

And He did.

Boruch's story reminds us that when we're making that choice between right and wrong, Someone is watching, waiting for us to choose right. Whether it's the words we speak or the deeds we do, we always win by doing the right thing.

TALK ABOUT IT

What are some of your strategies for resisting temptation and following your *yetzer tov*?

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