

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

SHABBOS MENU



PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS VAYEISHEV 5782 • ISSUE 268

SPEAK WITH CAUTION

Sometimes one relative sincerely despairs of another's conduct. Can he speak up about it without stumbling into loshon hora?

T H E

DILEMMA

Nachum and Menachem are "twin cousins," born the same day to two brothers. Now they have gone to Eretz Yisrael together to learn in the same yeshivah. Menachem is the more serious of the two, and he fears that Nachum is starting to look for a little freedom and adventure 6,000 miles from home. They have different circles of friends, and Nachum's group likes to get out and see different parts of the country whenever possible. In truth, Nachum isn't doing anything wrong.

Menachem's father calls one Erev Shabbos to speak to his son.

"So how's Nachi doing?" he asks.

"Honestly, I think it was a bad idea for him to come to Eretz Yisrael," Menachem replies. "He's got a bad group of friends. They're always running around."

Did Menachem speak loshon hora about his "twin" cousin?

T H E

HALACHAH

Since he doesn't want to disparage Nachum but simply wants to help get him on the right track, the comment – if true – would not be loshon hora. However, Menachem did not verify his information or speak to Nachum before giving the negative report – which was not in fact true – and therefore his words are pure loshon hora.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim,
Hilchos Loshon Hora 8:1*



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

We love "Impressions"! Each edition is well written, pertinent (some even to our secular teachers), and with a great lesson.



Thank you! We look forward to another great year of inspiration.

*All the best,
Susan Rich
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DALLAS

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

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"We should learn from the ways of Moshe

Rabbeinu

who went to the tents of Dassan and Aviram in an

attempt
to make peace."

- Sefer Shmiras Haloshon,
Shaar HaZechirah ch.17

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MALKA BREINDEL A"H BAS SHMUEL FISHEL YLCH"Y

GAINING BY LOSING

A wealthy man died and left his fortune to his children. However, the vast majority of the money went to his one son, while the daughters each received a far smaller share. They and their families burned with resentment at the injustice. How could their brother just walk off with such a huge inheritance, with no consideration for his sisters?

The brother saw what was happening. He understood his sisters' disappointment, but he reasoned that the decision had not been his. This was what his father wanted, and they would just have to accustom themselves to the reality. So he thought... but that's not what happened. Instead of adjusting, the family began to fall apart.

At that point, the brother knew that he had to make a decision. Would he keep the money and lose his family, or lose the money and keep his family? The answer was clear. No amount of money would compensate for a *machlokes* in the family, which would sap all the joy out of life and drive away *brachah*. He hired a lawyer and charged him with the task of redividing the estate evenly among the siblings.

When the new arrangements were final, this man had lost \$7 million that was rightfully his under his father's will. Nevertheless, he had no regrets, because the warm, close family he knew and loved was reunited. Not only was he pleased with the results, but apparently Hashem was pleased as well, because within that year, he made a business deal that earned him \$7 million in unexpected profits. The message from Above couldn't have been clearer.



sage advice

TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT



Rabbi David Ashear retells this *meshal*: A tree is asked to explain why, when hit by an axe, it does not scream, but when a metal pole is hit by the same axe, its scream resonates for miles. The tree explains that it is wood and the axe is metal. Therefore, when the axe strikes, the tree feels no connection and the strike doesn't hurt much. However, the pole is metal, just like the axe. They are brothers, and there is no pain as great as being hurt by a brother.

This expresses a fact everyone can readily recognize: The closer a person is to us, the more vulnerable we are to their hurtful words or deeds. That makes family members particularly prone to *machlokes* and *loshon hora*. We think of family members and even close friends as a part of ourselves, and when they do not seem to act with our best interests in mind, we feel betrayed. A stranger, by contrast, is expected to offer nothing but an accepted level of civility.

This tells us that when we find ourselves taking offense at something a family member has said or done, it's time to stop and assess the situation. Are we screaming because the person has wounded us so grievously, or are we screaming because this person is so close to us that we expect him to *be* us? If we can give our loved ones the same margin of error that we give people who are only peripheral in our lives, we can ensure that they remain our "loved ones" for life.

Today, this man repeats his story to all who will listen: Keeping shalom keeps the *Shechinah* in our life, and the *Shechinah* brings *brachah*.

As heard from Rabbi David Ashear

TALK ABOUT IT

In this story, we see a complicated situation that was resolved without actually figuring out who was right. Did it matter? Why or why not?

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