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SHABBOS MENU

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS ACHAREI MOS 5782 • ISSUE 288

NOT SO GREAT

You want to heap praises on someone, but not everyone within hearing range will agree with your assessment. In fact, some might feel just the opposite. Should that stop you from saying something nice about a fellow Jew?

T H E

DILEMMA

You've used Ben Rothenberg as your accountant for the past 15 years. He's great! He's saved your business tens of thousands of dollars over the years. He also recently emerged from a long, bitter divorce that created a feud between his and his wife's families.

When your friend begins a conversation about new tax laws that are costing him a fortune, you want to sing the praises of Ben Rothenberg, CPA, and his genius financial strategies. However, the third person involved in your conversation is Jacob, the brother of Ben's former wife. You wonder if it's a good idea to say something nice about Ben right at that moment. Is it?



T H E

HALACHAH

Even though you are only speaking positive words, because of Jacob's enmity toward Ben he is likely to counter your praises with *loshon hora*. Therefore, your praises are *avak loshon hora* and not permitted.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim,
Hilchos Loshon
Hora 9:1*

PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

I would like to express my deep, personal hakaras hatov to the administration of the organization, as I have personally been a beneficiary of your tremendous work. My daughter's Bais Yaakov also utilizes some of your programming for students, which is a wonderful resource for our children's Torah education.

Yasher koiach and thank you.

E.S.S.

LONDON

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

"The highest level that a person can reach in this world is to live his seventy years [his whole life] without hurting anyone."

- Chazon Ish, Maaseh Ish, part 2, ch. 12

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





When we hear stories of people being *dan l'chaf zechus* – giving others the benefit of the doubt – it seems that finding that *zechus* requires a deep dive into a sea of improbable explanations. However, when someone masters the trait of judging favorably, he doesn't have to do a deep dive. The favorable interpretation is, in his eyes, the most likely one, because after all, he's dealing with a fellow Jew invested with a *tzelem Elokim*. Why would he do wrong?

This is how the Belzer Rebbe *zt"l* viewed others. Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein relates that many years ago in Tel Aviv, whenever a car passed the Rebbe on Shabbos he would say, "Mazal tov!" He felt that the driver was most likely not desecrating Shabbos, but taking a woman in labor to the hospital.

Another instance portrayed by Rav Zilberstein took place in shul on Rosh Hashanah. The *chazzan*, dressed in his ethereal *kittel* and *tallis*, walked toward the *bimah* with a stately gait, the call of "*HaMelech*" reverberating throughout the shul. The room was silent but for the *chazzan's* booming voice.

Then people began to hear it – a jingling noise. It sounded like coins! With every step the *chazzan* took, the jingling was repeated. The congregants began to look at each other, and then to whisper to each other. What should they do? How could they entrust their supplications on the Day of Judgment to a man who carried money in his pocket on Yom Tov?

THE MOST LIKELY EXPLANATION

One man, however, felt there was no way the *chazzan* was carrying money. "He must have the Rebbe's amulet in his pocket," the man assured his friend. There was a

Rebbe in Antwerp who gave out two half-dollars tied on a chain as an amulet, and they made just such as jingling noise.

The man, it turned out, was exactly right – not because he was so creative that he concocted an outlandish excuse, but because he was so sure of the innate goodness of his fellow Jew that the truth sprang instantly into his mind.

sage advice

'HE WOULDN'T HURT A FLY' *The Ripple Effect of Shmiras Haloshon*

When you say about someone that he wouldn't hurt a fly, you imply something further: He wouldn't hurt anyone at all. Likewise, someone who avoids hurting people with words also avoids hurting them in more concrete ways.

Aryeh became the manager of his company's marketing division. He was well aware that the staff was highly competitive, often discrediting each other in the hopes of building themselves up. Gossip and insults abounded.

He also knew that there was a lot dishonesty: false expense reports, inaccurate work hours, and time wasted on personal emails and texts.

He called a meeting. "As the new manager, there's one small change I want to make," he told the staff. "Every person here has to email me one good thing about a co-worker every day."

There was a lot of grumbling, but Aryeh had a force of personality that let everyone know he was serious. Within weeks, the staff became not only warmer and kinder, but honest, too. Why?

The compassion developed through Shmiras Haloshon extends to all other personal interactions as well. If you won't even say a negative word about a coworker, you certainly won't steal from the boss. In this way, positive speech breeds a life of harmony.

TALK ABOUT IT

In what other situations in life can this strategy be used? How could it help?



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TALK ABOUT IT

What are the risks of judging someone positively when they are guilty? What are the risks of judging someone guilty?

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ודבורה בת לאה זהבה

לע"נ
שמואל חיים בן אברהם יוסף ז"ל
דבורה בת ישראל ע"ה
Dedicated by Uri and Riki Sklar

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