

FOOD
FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

SHABBOS MENU

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SUSPECT AND VERIFY

People are not allowed to stand by while others prepare to harm a fellow Jew. But what about ourselves? Do we have to stand by and let others damage us, all to avoid believing rechilus?

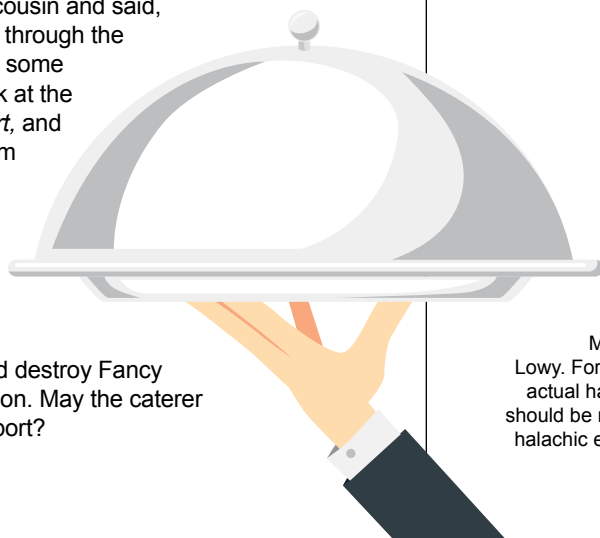
THE DILEMMA

Four people at the Nussbaum-Cohen *vort* became sick later that night. When the hostess, Shani Nussbaum, heard about it, she blamed the caterer, Fancy Fare. "Obviously they don't have proper sanitation procedures in place," she told people. "Something must have been spoiled. I won't use them again."

As word spread, the caterer's second cousin heard about it. "Oh, boy, my cousin has to know about this. He'll be out of business in no time if people think he serves spoiled food!"

He called his cousin and said, "Listen, I heard through the grapevine that some people got sick at the Nussbaum *vort*, and Mrs. Nussbaum is telling people that you served spoiled food."

The cousin is right, this could destroy Fancy Fare's reputation. May the caterer believe the report?



THE HALACHAH

Since the caterer stands to be harmed if the information is true, he may suspect that it is true and act to protect himself. However, he is forbidden to believe in his heart that it is certainly true.

Sefer Chofetz Chaim, Hilchos Rechilus 5:2

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

A HUGE yasher koach for your Pesach Menu. Although I prepare diorei Torah for Pesach every year, this year Hashem led me to your Pesach Menu, and it was perfect for the day meals. The stories were exactly what we needed and the lessons were inspirational beyond words. The adults and children all enjoyed them. Thanks again, and continued hatzlachah!

Rabbi Benari
Flushing, NY



FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchglobal.org

"All people are precious because they are all made in the image of

Hashem.
When one showers *others*

with kindness and respect, one honors Hashem Himself."

– The Alter of Slabodka

What do *Gedolim* think as they go about their day? We might assume that they are connecting with Hashem in some profound way that we could never fathom.

But their greatness doesn't start in Heaven. It starts on earth, with the down-to-earth deeds of *chesed* they do. This is where the bottom of the ladder rests, while the top soars up to the highest realms.

Chanoch is described by the Torah as someone who "walked with Hashem." And yet, he spent his day working as a shoemaker. Where was his mind as he stitched the shoes for his customers? Did he have special, holy *kavanos*?

The answer is far from mystical. With each stitch he sewed, he thought, "I hope this will fit well. I hope my customer will be comfortable." By serving his fellow man with all his heart and focus, he clung to Hashem wholeheartedly as well.

Gedolim throughout the ages exemplified this ideal. One Erev Rosh Hashanah, Rav Yisrael Salanter was observed in the *ezras nashim*, hammer in hand, banging in nails that were protruding from the benches so that the dresses of the

THE SHOEMAKER'S SECRET

women who came to pray would not be snagged.

Rav Shmuel Rozovsky observed that Puah, the midwife in Mitzrayim

who heroically saved the male Jewish babies, merited speaking with the *Shechinah*. However, her name was not a reference to that lofty level; rather, it came from the "poo, poo, poo" baby-talk with which she soothed the infants. Her name reflected her *chesed* because that was her greater claim to fame.

Not everyone can rise to greatness, but by stepping onto the first rung of the ladder and doing *chesed*, we can all start the climb.

Heard from Rabbi Lipa Geldwirth on the CCHF 2018 Radin Trip

TALK ABOUT IT

How does *chesed* lead to greatness and greatness lead to *chesed*?

sage advice

UNCOMMON DECENCY

The infinite value of chesed

We learn from the story of Rus and Naomi that an act of *chesed*, performed with love and care, is an act of regal proportions.

According to *Megillas Rus*, there is more merit in taking care of one's widowed mother-in-law – an act of common decency – than there is in the brave and dramatic relinquishment of home, people and royal status to live as a pauper among a downtrodden nation. This does not diminish the value of Rus's sacrifice in leaving her life as a Moabite princess; instead, it elevates her act of *chesed* toward Naomi to a position higher even than this difficult decision!

As *sefiras ha'omer* comes to its climax and Shavuot arrives, we find in the *Megillah's* calculation a means to keep ourselves on the track of spiritual growth. Greatness can be found in our small, simple acts when we do them with love, kindness, and care.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think doing *chesed* is a greater merit than all other sacrifices Rus made?



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ודבורה בת ישראל ע"ה
Dedicated by Uri & Riki Sklar

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