

Be aware! When discussing shmiras haloshon issues, using personal examples often leads to unintended loshon hora. Keep it general to keep it kosher.



Let My People Shmooz

Interactive Questions to Spark Your Shabbos Table Discussions



ISSUE 17

SHABBOS CHANUKAH PARSHAS MIKEITZ 5785

We'd love to hear your feedback, stories, and ideas. Email us at aderaba@cchfglobal.org

Chanukah Gelt

I gave my daughter money to give to each of her kids as Chanukah gelt from Bubby and Zeidy. It's nearly the end of Chanukah and I haven't heard a word of thanks from my grandchildren.

Can I ask my daughter if she gave them the money?

– Bubby Malki




What's the Psak?

Can you guess the halachah?

- A **No**, it will reveal that the grandchildren have a lack of gratitude.
- B **Yes**, maybe Mommy forgot to give them the money.
- C **No**, but Bubby should ask the grandchildren directly if they got the money.

1- See Gittin 14b 2- Sefer Chofetz Chaim, Hichos Rechilus 2:2 3- Devarim 32:7 3- See Mishnah Berurah 343:2 regarding whether a mother is obligated to educate her children in mitzvos. Even so, the mother has an obligation to educate her children in Fear of Heaven and good middos, based on the verse: "And do not forsake the teachings of your mother."



The Halachah

The answer is B.

When a person gives someone instructions, he is allowed to check whether they were carried out.¹ Since Bubby effectively appointed Mommy as a *shaliach* (agent) to give the money to her grandchildren, Bubby is permitted to ask Mommy if the job was done.

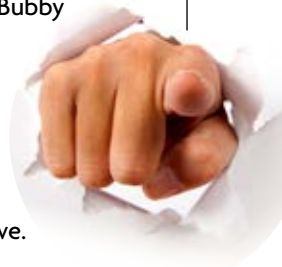
BUT: What about avak rechilus?

A neutral statement that will likely be interpreted negatively by the listener is usually forbidden under *avak rechilus*.² If Mommy did give the money to the grandchildren, then Bubby's question implies that they never thanked Bubby, which is *avak rechilus*. Why is it permitted?

- a. A statement that is made in a neutral manner is only forbidden if the listener has an existing hatred for the subject or always judges him negatively. Here, Mommy loves her children and will probably understand that they forgot to thank Bubby because they were distracted by all the Chanukah festivities.
- b. Even if Bubby is agitated that her grandchildren did not thank her, both Bubby³ and Mommy have an obligation to educate them.⁴ Mommy can use the information to remind them about the *middah* of *hakaros hatov*.

What to Do if It Happens to You

In this particular instance, Bubby should refrain from rebuking her grandchildren for not having *hakaros hatov* so that her gift remains a happy and sweet thing in their eyes. But Bubby could mention to Mommy to remind the grandchildren to thank people for the gifts they receive.



Reviewed by Rav Moshe Mordechai Lowy.

Rav Avraham Yaakov Pam zt"l advised great caution when presenting halachic scenarios to the public, as each situation is unique. This *she'eilah* is for discussion only; actual halachic decisions should be made by a rav or halachic expert on a case-by-case basis. The Shmiras Haloshon Shailah Hotline: 718-951-3696 2-3PM / 9-10:30 PM

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the heart
of a Yid

שגראה מעלת חב"ד

Chanukah's a time of "the few over the many." The Maccabees were as outnumbered as an army could be, but they didn't hesitate. They needed to save the Jewish people! Their miraculous victory was proof of the saying,

"Do your best and Hashem

Wanna Be a Maccabee?

will do the rest."

But we've all got a Maccabee inside us — ideals, goals, and dreams of what could be. And when we look at what some people, regular people like us, have accomplished for *Klal Yisrael* by just doing their best, we see that even centuries after the Chanukah miracle, Hashem still "does the rest."

For example:

- Miriam was in fifth grade when she

joined a family shmiras haloshon conference call as a *zechus* for a relative's preemie. Eventually, she thought, "I want to make a group for girls my age." She got cousins



and friends on board, and then Hashem stepped in and blessed her efforts. By the time Miriam was entering ninth grade, her conference call had become the nationwide Word Watch program.

- Zev Bienstock of Flatbush started learning shmiras

haloshon and noticed what a beautiful outlook it brought into his life. So, he started

"selling" the idea to others in his shul, Khal Zichron Mordechai, and it spread from there. Eventually, 1,000 people were learning *The Chofetz Chaim: A Daily Companion*, and the entire community was enjoying the benefits.

- Barak Bayer, a Chicago businessman, wanted to make Chicago's Jewish schools into models of *bein adam lachaveiro*. With the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation's help, he started the Kamocha program, which engaged 1,200 students in a four-week program leading up to Shavuos. It got all the kids thinking, before they said or did anything, "How would I feel if someone did/said this to me?"

This Chanukah, remember, you too can be a Maccabee!

Take It to the Table

Do you think the people we mentioned **expected** their ideas to take off and **become something big**?

How can you encourage others to change for the better?

Word
Power

Can You Light a Lit Light?

We all know that when someone is down, an encouraging word can switch on a light inside him. But is there any need to give a boost to someone who's happy, healthy, and doing just fine?

The *menorah* tells us that it's not just useful—it's vital! The Midrash says that

the *Menorah* in the *Beis Hamikdash* stayed lit from Rosh Hashanah to Rosh Hashanah. The light never went out. So, the Gerrer Rebbe asked, how could the *kohanim* have obeyed the Torah's commandment to pour fresh oil to light the lamp every day? Can you light something that's already lit?

Rav Chaim Brisker explained that, in fact, you can. For example, on Shabbos, if someone adds a drop of oil to a Shabbos light that's already

burning, he has broken the Shabbos law against lighting a fire. Adding just one more drop of oil is considered lighting a fire!

If that's the case, then our one kind word to someone who's already glowing is like lighting a brand new fire. We sometimes think that kids who don't make trouble, adults who are happy and successful, or workers who do a good job don't need praise. But the *menorah* teaches us that a daily drop of new oil is never wasted. It keeps the fire burning bright.



Take It to the Table

Do you enjoy **hearing praise** even for something you **feel confident** about?

What does it do for you?