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ISSUE 99

SHABBOS PARSHAS KI SEITZEI 5786

Please treat this newsletter with proper respect.
Please do not read during davening or Krias HaTorah.

I Don't Know Who She Is, but She's Wrong

My wife told me that she was recently shopping at Target when she ran into someone who proceeded to give her an "earful" about the new shul in our community. My wife said, "She couldn't find one nice thing to say. She told me that she tried it out and was horrified. 'People were cold as ice.' And she could tell by how short the rav's speech was that 'no one there is interested in learning or growing.'" My wife is careful with hilchos



loshon hora, so she didn't mention who made these negative comments to her. I didn't want my wife to put any stock in such a snap judgment, so I wanted to respond: "What kind of a person walks into a new shul and judges the whole *kehillah*?" Since I don't know who the woman who made the comments is, I think that maybe it's OK for me to say this. Is it?

—Menachem

What's the Psak?

Do you know the halachah?

A Yes.

You're speaking about someone whom you don't know.

B Yes,

but only if you'll never know who your wife is talking about.

C No.

You're adding to the negativity.

She's Even Worse Than You Thought

We are not allowed to speak loshon hora about someone, even if it will not cause them loss or harm. It is forbidden because it creates a bad image of them in the mind of the listener.¹

Since Menachem's wife knows the identity of the woman who gave her the negative report, Menachem is not allowed to add his own criticism of the woman (even though he does not know her), since it will further reduce the standing of the woman in his wife's eyes.²

A further issue is that Menachem knows the *shul* that is being criticized, and therefore he is hearing loshon hora about the shul. He should not listen to the negative report his wife is relaying, and he should not accept what he does hear. He

should advise his wife not to accept the report as true. He might also cast doubt on the negative report by saying, "I don't think anyone can judge a *kehillah* so quickly." In this way, he is protecting the shul's reputation while refraining from inferring anything negative about the woman.

Answer: The halachah is C.

Reviewed by Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Lowy

Rav Pam, zt"l, advised great caution when presenting halachic scenarios to the public, as each situation is unique. This *shailah* 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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See the
good
in the
heart
of a Yid



Adapted from a
story submitted
by **Aderaba**
participant
Rabbi Moshe
Hirschberg, from
his *sefer*, *Zichru*
Toras Moshe

Every member of the Cincinnati shul knew that, without fail, on Shevi'i Shel Pesach, an *aliyah* would go to Reb Yosef Shimon Kinderlehrer. They assumed the day had some special meaning to him. Maybe it was his birthday? The *yahrtzeit* of a friend or relative? Someone decided to ask him, and he shared this story:

In the spring of 1945, as the war neared an end, Reb Yosef Shimon was withering away in the Lodz

אדרבה

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ghetto. After years of starvation, fear, humiliation, and loss, he was losing his will to live. He lay on the ground, as if already gone, wishing his soul would just lift itself out of his miserable body and fly off to *Shamayim*.

Yosef Shimon's Two Birthdays



Suddenly, he felt a gentle tap on his shoulder. With warmth and sincerity, the man said softly, "Yosef Shimon, today is *Shevi'i*

Shel Pesach, the day that Klal Yisrael defeated the *Mitzrim* at the sea. This is a day when a Jew can find strength to overcome his enemies."

Somehow, the warmth in that man's voice, the encouragement, the reminder of what this day represented—awakened something in Reb Yosef Shimon. He felt his hope rekindling. He would go on fighting to survive, one moment at a time, until the nightmare was over.

That is how *Shevi'i Shel Pesach* became his new birthday. Every year, until his passing in 1996, he asked for an *aliyah* on that day to commemorate the moment that a few heartfelt words restored his will to live.

We can never overestimate the power of a kind word, a gentle gesture, or a few sincere moments of warmth. Those small acts have the power to breathe life into a shattered soul.

See the
good
What's the
Real
Story?



Our family went on a road trip this summer, and each night we stopped at various motels along our route. One night, after a long day of driving, we checked into a motel where we had reserved two rooms to accommodate us—one for me and the girls and another for my husband and the boys. We had to squish in a little, but it worked. My youngest daughter, who was six,

was going to sleep, and I was going to join her. Meanwhile, the older kids were playing a board game with my husband in the other room. It was late, we had been out all day, and I couldn't wait to lay my head down.

What Kind Of Princess Is She?

After my daughter got into pajamas and brushed her

teeth, I asked her which bed she wanted to sleep in. There were three in the room. She picked one, pulled up the blanket, snuggled

into the pillow, and then, a minute later, moved to the next bed and did the same thing.

As she attacked the third bed, I became frustrated. Did we have to have three unmade beds, each "gently used?" Her older sister and I would have liked a nice, neat bed to slide into.

I couldn't imagine how my easygoing Rena had turned into such a fussy little princess. What was her issue?



Can you **Crack** the case?

"What are you doing, Rena?" I asked my daughter. "Why are you messing up all the beds?"

"I'm trying to find the one that's the coziest," she said. "That one will be for you, Mommy." My eyes filled with tears. Rena really was a princess... the good kind.

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L'ilui nishmas Reva Esther bas Tzvi Hirsch HaLevi a"h, Reva Esther Robbin. Dedicated by Shlomo and Risha Schwartz