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ISSUE 104

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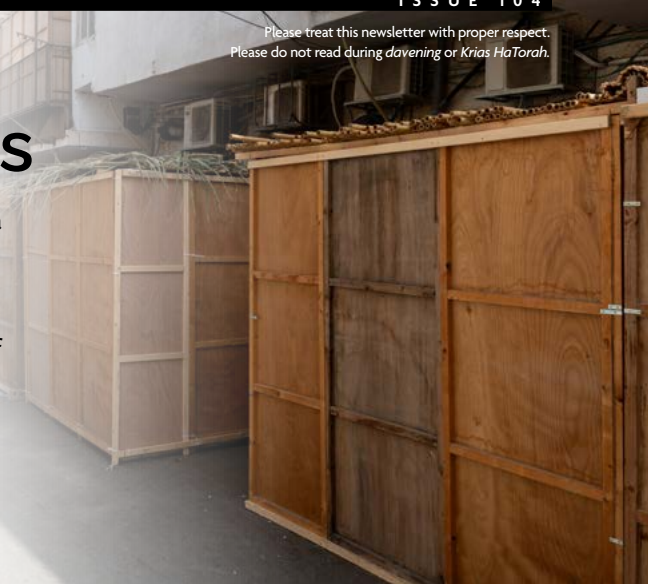
S U C C O S 5 7 8 7

The Succah Walls Have Ears

We live in an old neighborhood in Yerushalayim where everyone builds their succahs on the sidewalks, side by side. Because the succahs are so close to each other, you can hear what other families are talking about even if you don't try to eavesdrop. My next-door neighbor is an elderly man who hired a young handyman, Yair, to build his succah for him. I heard him telling his guests, "I'd

never hire Yair again, even to hang a picture on my wall. He didn't know what he was doing. I had to stand over him and give him step-by-step instructions." I had been thinking of hiring Yair to fix a broken cabinet in my kitchen after Yom Tov, but now I'm thinking I should find someone else. Am I allowed to change my plans based on what I heard?

—Yitzy



What's the Psak?

Do you know the halachah?

A Yes.

Hearing the information was *hashgachah pratis* and may save you from a loss.

B No.

It's forbidden to believe *loshon hora*.

C No.

You need to discuss it with the neighbor.

Now That You Heard It...

A person who hears *loshon hora* is not allowed to accept the information as true or even possibly true.¹ However, it is permitted to be cautious. In other words, the Torah does not expect us to go through life blindly ignoring things that we hear—that would be reckless. So, what *can* Yitzy do with the information? He can take precautions to avoid a possible loss or problem with Yair. Perhaps he can make sure to be available if Yair has questions. But Yitzy may not cause Yair any loss or neglect any obligation that he has towards Yair based on what he has heard.²

Furthermore, Yitzy may not believe what his neighbor said

about Yair. He should assume that, while he overheard his neighbor's impression, other customers might be perfectly satisfied. Perhaps the neighbor's succah was a pile of random boards that no one but the owner could have assembled correctly. Still, based on what Yitzy heard, he may do further research, seek other references on Yair's work, and make his decision accordingly.

Answer: The halachah is A.

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.

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Adapted from
The Power
to Give In, by
Rabbi Moshe
Rockove,
Feldheim
Publishers

It was Motza'ei Yom Kippur, R' Shlomo Zalman Friedman's (currently *av beis din* of Santov in Lakewood) last night as a *bachur* in Eretz Yisrael. He was flying back to America early the next morning, but there was something he had to do first.

He wanted a set of the Steipler Gaon's *sefarim*, *Kehillas Yaakov*. And there was only one place to buy it: from the Steipler himself. So, off he went to the Steipler's home, as soon as he had broken his fast.

There he found the Steipler, still dressed in his Yom Tov clothes,

He Kept His Stringency— and His Sensitivity



reciting *Tehillim*. Since by this time the Steipler had become hard of hearing, people communicated with him in writing. R' Shlomo Zalman handed him a *kvittel* asking for a *brachah* for his future and for a set of *sefarim*.

The Steipler gladly gave the *brachah*, but he apologized that he could not sell the *sefarim*. He had a long-standing *minhag* not to conduct business dressed in his Shabbos clothes, so that he wouldn't accidentally put something in his pocket, forget about

it, and carry it on Shabbos.

For R' Shlomo Zalman, it was now or never, so he asked again more insistently. But the Steipler wouldn't budge. Trying a third time, R' Shlomo Zalman offered to watch to make sure the Steipler did not slip anything into a pocket.

At this point, the Steipler asked his persistent guest to wait. He disappeared into the back of the apartment. Fifteen minutes later, he came back with the *sefarim*. As R' Shlomo Zalman bought the books, he noticed something. The Steipler had changed into weekday clothes!

Kehillas Yaakov is a staple in yeshiva libraries. Many people gain clarity from it. But R' Shlomo Zalman gained clarity just by buying the *sefarim*. He learned that when we're willing to inconvenience ourselves for another Jew, we can keep *avodas Hashem* and *chessed* in perfect harmony.



“How did I get into this mess?” thought Berel the merchant. Here he was in Berditchev, miles from home, staying with one of Reb Levi Yitzchak's chassidim. Yet neither his host nor any Jew in town would let him eat in their *succah*!

It all started when a chassid stopped Berel on the road as he returned from a long business trip. “Do you have an *esrog*?” he asked. Berel did. Reb Levi Yitzchak had searched for months, everywhere for miles around, but had been unable to find even one *esrog* for his town. “You have to sell it to the Rebbe,” the chassid

insisted. “Absolutely not.”

Reb Levi Yitzchak himself tried to convince Berel. “You can be my guest here in Berditchev and use your

esrog.” But Berel refused. Finally, the Rebbe made an astonishing offer: “I'll sell

you my *Olam Haba* for the *esrog*.” Berel agreed.

But now, every *succah* in Berditchev was

The Rebbe's Impossible Deal



Berel was furious. How dishonest! But he desperately longed to sit in a *succah*. He paced and thought. Finally, he sighed. “Fine. I'll sell you back your *Olam Haba* for the *mitzvah* of *succah*.” The Rebbe jumped up and hugged him. “How could I have given you an *Olam Haba* you might not have deserved?” he explained. “Now that you were willing to give it up for a *mitzvah*, you deserve it.” And Berel was welcomed into the Rebbe's *succah*.

Can you **Crack** the case?

Adapted from
Storylines, by
Hanoach Teller,
NYC Publishing

DEDICATIONS

לעיני רון דוד בן לטמן שמואל ז"ל ומלכה חנה בת לטמן שמואל ע"ה • לעיני בתשבע רחל ע"ה בת ר' שמעון יבלח"ט
As a *zechus* for *refuah sheleimah* for Maayan Bracha bas Elisheva. Dedicated by Yitzchok and Frimi Levi
לעיני חיים יחיאל מיכל בן רפאל פיוועל שניאור ז"ל • As a *zechus* for a *refuah sheleimah* for Chana Rivka bas Yosefa

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ISSUE 105

SIMCHAS TORAH 5787

Please treat this newsletter with proper respect.
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"She Has Her Moments"

My wife has everything—she is such a patient mom and an amazing wife. On top of all that, she runs a successful business. She is the go-to person in the community for chessed projects, and she is a great role model. Her middos are beautiful, and—as you might imagine—she's well-liked by everyone who knows her. My parents spent Yom Tov with us, and when they were leaving, as I walked them out, my mother said to me, "You really landed a

gem of a wife!"

I answered, "I certainly did, *baruch Hashem!*"

Still, I know she's not perfect. I didn't think it was right to maintain the impression that she was, so I wanted to add, "But she's human, you know. She has her moments, too."

I wouldn't be saying anything they don't know. After all, we're all human! Would it have been okay to say it?

—Moishy



What's the Psak?

Do you know the halachah?

A No.
That's loshon hora.

B Yes.
"Having a moment" isn't specifically negative.

C Yes.
It is true.

Too Much of a Good Thing

Loshon hora is negative speech about someone else, even when the information is true.¹ This prohibition applies even if the speaker hints something negative and even when he speaks about someone he loves, such as his wife.²

Moishy wants to tell the truth about his wife. Of course she is not perfect—no one is! However, saying "She has her moments" implies that she is not exactly who everyone thinks she is, and this will cause his parents to think less of her. Furthermore, it is likely that he will illustrate his point by discussing occasions when she didn't live up to her great name.

This question also illustrates the purpose of the halachah against praising someone excessively. As soon as a person

begins portraying someone else as a perfect *malach*, people who are close to this "*malach*" on a day-to-day basis automatically begin thinking about the instances that show that he isn't always perfect. People also become jealous of this perfect human, which makes them eager to say and hear things that take him down a peg. This leads to negative thinking and, often, negative speech.

Answer: The halachah is A.

Reviewed by **Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Lowy**

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1 Sefer Chofetz Chaim, Hilchos Loshon Hora 1:1
2 Sefer Chofetz Chaim, Hilchos Loshon Hora 8:2

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Adapted from
Mishpachah
Magazine,
September 20,
2022

Years ago, R' Yaakov Rajchenbach—Chicago's legendary *baal chessed*—walked in to a Boro Park clothing store, looking for a shirt. The one he was wearing had gotten stained, and he needed a clean shirt to wear to his upcoming meeting with the Novominsker Rebbe.

But R' Yaakov's mission wasn't exactly a success. The shirt he wanted to replace was a cufflink shirt, and the store didn't have one in the right size for him.

"That's okay," he told the store owner. "I'll just take a shirt with button cuffs."

The store owner found what R'

Where Did He Get Those Cufflinks?



Yaakov was looking for and made the sale.

Years later, after R' Yaakov's passing, the store owner still remembered the remarkable ending of this sale. "He took off his

cufflinks and handed them to me. He said, 'I won't be needing these now. Please give them to someone who

looks like he could use them.'"

Not long after, a *chassan* came into the store, looking for a shirt for his wedding. The store owner assumed he would want a cufflink shirt, but the *chassan* shyly confided that he couldn't afford cufflinks.

"Ah, but there's a solution!" the owner told the young man, and he bestowed

R' Yaakov's cufflinks upon the *chassan*. The happy customer walked out with a cufflink shirt, a set of cufflinks nicer than anything he could have imagined, and the special feeling of a warm hug from Hashem.

R' Yaakov demonstrated that true *chedes* doesn't come from a bank account; it comes from the heart, and it can overflow in dozens of ways every day.



Dr. Goldstein's house was a welcoming spot for anyone looking for Shabbos hospitality. A girl named Miriam Tibi came often. Knowing that she was experiencing some troubles, the Goldstein family made sure that she felt comfortable.

One Friday night, Miriam arrived in a beautiful, handmade sweater. Kaila Goldstein instantly recognized it. It was hers! It had been missing for more than a month! What should she do?

Kaila, who had been raised to judge others favorably, thought there must be an explanation. Maybe Miriam had packed it accidentally the

last time she came?

Why not just ask? "That's such a pretty sweater," Kaila told Miriam. "Where did you get it?" "It was given to me," Miriam replied calmly. Kaila told her father about her suspicions. "There's no proof that she took it," he said. "Don't even think about it, because the suspicion will make her feel uncomfortable."

"Proof?" Kaila thought. "I

The Case of the Stolen Sweater



Adapted from
Quill of the
Heart, a CCHF
publication

know! There was a small loop of yarn sticking out in the back. If I see that loop, that's my proof."

At the meal, Kaila glanced at the back of the sweater and saw the loop! Still, nothing was said. After Shabbos, Mrs. Goldstein called Mrs. Tibi to try to get to the bottom of the story. Mrs. Tibi claimed she had gotten the sweater from Mrs. Schechter—who ran a clothing *gemach*. The perfect alibi!

How could Miriam have been so ungrateful and sneaky?

Can you **Crack** the case?

Hearing her sister and mother discussing the sweater, Kaila's younger sister suddenly remembered: "I accidentally got some ink on it and brought it to the dry cleaners," she told them. Mrs. Goldstein went straight to the dry cleaners, but the sweater wasn't there. "I'm so sorry," said the owner, "but you know our policy. Anything that isn't picked up within a month is donated to Mrs. Schechter's *gemach*."

DEDICATIONS

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