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Parshas Tazria-Metzora, 5 Iyar, 5785

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Chizuk - Inspiration

Reb Yehoshua Ozer

Halperin of Manchester

was a close Talmud and later a Gabbai of the Manchester Rosh Yeshiva, Reb Yehuda Zev Segal ZT"l ("Rosh Yeshiva"). It wasn't surprising that when Reb Yehoshua Ozer got married in Montreal, the Rosh Yeshiva agreed to fly in from England for the wedding. While in town, the Rosh Yeshiva was hosted by "Reb Yoni" who was to drive the Rosh Yeshiva to the wedding and to attend the wedding with him.

As is often the case, the wedding got off to a late start. At 11:30 PM, the Rosh Yeshiva informed Reb Yoni that he was ready to be taken back to his house.

"But we haven't even benched yet," protested Reb Yoni, who was a close friend of the Baal Simcha and had intended to remain until the wedding was over. Reb Yoni was surprised that the Rosh Yeshiva wanted to leave when he did, especially after making the long trip from England just for the wedding.

"It's all right. I have benched already," replied the Rosh Yeshiva. "Please drop me back at your house and then you may return to the hall until the wedding is over."

Reb Yoni tried convincing the Rosh Yeshiva to remain a little longer but to no avail. Reb Yoni had no choice but to bring the Rosh Yeshiva back home. When the car pulled up in front of the house, the Rosh Yeshiva got out of the car and encouraged Reb Yoni to return to the wedding which he did.

The next morning, the Rosh Yeshiva provided Reb Yoni with the following explanation of why he insisted that he be brought back home from the wedding when he did.

"As we stepped out of the door to go to the wedding last night, one of your children asked you when you would be returning home. You answered, 'Go to sleep before we come home. But don't worry, someone will be home by midnight.' When I saw that the wedding was running late and it was getting close to midnight, I realized that you no longer had any intention of returning home by that time. I

insisted on being driven home so I could be the 'someone' that would be home by midnight as you had told your children and you would therefore not be guilty of telling a lie."

Halacha – Jewish Law

Question: I work for a school in a wealthy

community. A wealthy individual bought a house in the area and wanted to enroll his children in the school. My boss told me to tell the wealthy individual that there is no room for his children and that he must pay for another classroom to be built if he wishes to enroll his children. I know that this is a lie – there is plenty of room to accommodate his children. How should I proceed?

Answer: Regarding the verse in Parashas Mishpatim (Shemos 23:7) "Midvar Sheker Tirchak" — stay away from a false matter, there is a debate as to how we are to understand this charge. The Chofetz Chaim rules that with this verse, the Torah means to prohibit one from lying. This is in accordance with the view of some Rishonim. Other Rishonim believe that with this verse, the Torah means to provide one with good advice – it is not advisable to lie, but the Torah does not mean to prohibit one from doing so. A third opinion believes that the Torah means to prohibit one from lying but only in the context that the verse was stated in. Since the verse was referring to a judge during his deliberations, the Torah is saying that a judge is prohibited from lying when adjudicating the law. Generally speaking, the view of the Chofetz Chaim is the view that we follow and therefore, in accordance with his opinion, it is a general Torah prohibition to lie.

Under pressing circumstances, some authorities may consider the other opinions and rule that one may consider a lie as not being prohibited by the Torah, however in your case, there is the additional component of actual theft, as a lie is being used to elicit money unduly from the wealthy parent. He would be donating money under the false pretense that the school needs funds to build an extra room so he may enroll his children. This is actual theft and the Torah absolutely forbids any act of theft — even in a

case such as yours, where you are not stealing but rather enabling a theft by relaying the falsehood of your boss to the wealthy parent.

Further, since you are enabling a theft, there are also serious questions and debates on whether the prohibition of "Lifnei Iver Lo Titen Michshol" – do not put a stumbling block before the blind, would apply.

You should tell your boss that you will not lie and that your boss will have to tell the wealthy parent the message himself. If you are concerned that your boss will fire you if you say this to him, then you still may not lie as you may not illicitly take money from someone else under any circumstances. Instead, you may choose your words carefully and tell the wealthy parent that your boss, "Told me to tell you that there is no room for your children unless you donate for an additional classroom."

On The Parsha

In Parshas Tazria, the Passuk (Vayikra 13:46) tells us regarding Tzara'as, "All the days the lesion is upon him, he shall remain unclean. He is unclean, he shall dwell isolated, and his dwelling shall be outside the camp."

Rashi explains the words, "he shall dwell isolated" to mean that other unclean people [that are not stricken with Tzara'as] shall not live with him. Our Sages said: "Why is he different from other unclean people that he must remain isolated? Since, with his slander, he caused [discord and] separation between man and wife or between man and his fellow man, he too, in kind, will need to be separated."

Rav Michel Yehudah Lefkowitz ZT"l explains that Hashem's employment of Middah K'Neged Middah (paying a person back measure for measure) is not an example of "you get what you give" or "what goes around comes around." Rather, it is a Chessed (kindness) from Hashem and instructional in nature. Once we are aware that Hashem operates in this fashion, it allows us to identify the specific area in which we have sinned so that we can correct it.

Rav Tzvi Shraga Grossbard ZT"l, the Rosh Yeshiva of Ponevech L'Tzeirim explains that the dwelling in isolation mentioned by the Passuk is also a Chessed that Hashem designed to correct the underlying cause of the Lashon Harah that was said by the individual. What is the underlying cause of speaking Lashon Harah?

Rav Grossbard answers (Daas Shraga, Vayikra p.48) that we tend to think that hate and jealousy are the general causes of Lashon Harah and are the byproducts of bad Middos (character traits). Rav Grossbard cites a Vilna Gaon, however, that indicates that the real reason behind our hate and jealousy towards others stems from our inability to perceive the truth.

In the blessing of Yotzer Ohr that is recited daily before we recite the Krias Shema, we state regarding the celestial angels, "All of them are beloved, all of them are pure, all of them are mighty and all of them perform with awe and reverence the will of their Creator..." The Vilna Gaon comments (in the Avnei Eliyahu) that regarding the celestial angels, "All of them are beloved" because they have no hate or jealousy among them because they see the truth – that each person (or entity) has their own specialized role to play and no one may take that which is prepared for another [by Hashem]. Therefore, each angel is happy and satisfied with the role that Hashem has assigned to him.

The cure for relieving ourselves of the base qualities of hate and jealousy which causes us to speak Loshon Harah, is seeing the absolute truth the way the angels do. To see that truth, Hashem "punishes" the individual who spoke Lashon Harah by separating him from the rest of the camp so that through this forced isolation, he has the time and headspace to reflect on this fundamental truth. Upon this realization, he will no longer speak Loshon Harah.

*"May I back out of a school carpool that
I have already committed to?"
"Should I report a co-worker who is acting dishonestly?"*

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