

Lashon Hara – By Rabbi Duvi Bensassoun

- Lashon hara is the prohibition of telling gossip. Lashon hara differs from defamation in that its focus is on the use of true speech for a wrongful purpose, rather than falsehood and harm arising
- The danger of telling a Goy lashon hara is much worse than telling a Jew, since the Goy will follow up and throw this Jew into grave danger.
- Believing slanderous speech (lashon hara) is forbidden even when the lashon hara was said by a respected person.
- Believing lashon hara is forbidden even when the person who is spoken about is right there and doesn't deny it.
- If someone speaks lashon about himself and his friend, you are allowed to believe it about him but not about his friend. Example: Your father and I were big shots in high school.
- Children are prone to exaggerate information, therefore if a child tells you lashon hara, it is forbidden to believe it (although you must investigate to ensure safety).
- If your friend asks you specifically for a shidduch "is Sarah organized? Neat? Sloppy?" Such questions when asked specifically may be answered truthfully and without exaggeration.
- Believing lashon hara is forbidden even when a few people say the same thing about the same person.
- X says-"Do you know any reliable babysitters?"
Y says- "Yes, Mrs. Z is reliable"
X says- "Oh I wasn't happy with her, got anyone else?"
That's unnecessary lashon hara!
- Every word must be measured especially when it comes to shidduchim. There is a big difference between "He's a quiet guy" and "He's VERY quiet" (implying social problems).

- Crucial information must be revealed about a shidduch even if you were not asked.
- 1) Serious Medical problems
 - 2) Unstable character flaws (temper, abusive)
 - 3) Lack religion
- Even if the shadchan pressures you saying "why don't you want to proceed with the shidduch?" You are not allowed to tell her why. You simply respond "it's not for me".
 - When asking information about a person for any purpose, you may not ask information from someone who bears a grudge or doesn't get along with that person/group.
 - The fact that the father in law is not wealthy does not give you the right to assume or mention that he might not carry out his financial wedding promises.
 - Specific personal information about a shidduch such as sociable, organized, leader, etc. must not be volunteered but if you are asked, you must tell the truth.
 - You heard David talk negatively about Joe's wife, it is forbidden to tell Joe what David said about her.
 - You heard that David was looking for a new chavruta and then decided against it. It is forbidden to tell his chavruta that David was looking for a new study partner.
 - It is forbidden to ask a friend "What did he say about me". (If there is a strong chance that the answer will be negative).
 - The Ramban says the question we must ask ourselves before speaking is "Will my words cause bad feelings to be aroused against another Jew?"
 - When someone pressures you to repeat what someone said about them, instead of repeating the negative statement, you may lie for the sake of peace.

- The principal knows that only you and your friend used the fax machine, still you may answer "I didn't break the machine" giving away that your friend is to blame.
- Rechilut is saying information that isn't negative but will cause ill feelings. Example - forbidden to tell Mr. Green that his partner was thinking of splitting up and then decided not to.
- Rechillut- If your friend tells you that someone spoke against you, it is forbidden to go back to that person and ask him "Why did you say that about me?"
- It is forbidden to say "I always said you were lazy, even Shimon agrees with me". This will cause bad feelings between the person and Shimon and that is "Rechilut".
- It is forbidden to repeat information that people are sensitive to. Example - "Your neighbor told me that she had a hectic week and really wasn't up to watching your kids while you were on vacation."
- Your mother says "You must tell me what your mother in law said about me". Even when pressured it is nonetheless forbidden to say.
- It is forbidden to mention something which will remind the person of ill feelings or a bad experience that they had with someone else - adding fuel to the fire.
- In the event that your friend already signed a contract with the contractor, it is forbidden to say your negative comments if you know that your friend will cancel the contract.
- In the event that a person knows that something was done against him, yet he doesn't know who did it, it is forbidden to reveal the culprit.
- It is forbidden to say - "Someone told me that you didn't stop talking straight through tefilla last shabbat" when your friend can figure out who told you.