

בי"ב, Mishmeres
HaSholom Magazine

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משמרת

Rabbi Yochanan
said: Smiling to
one's fellow is
better than giving
him a drink of milk



Where Is the Sunlight?

People keep calling to inquire about the apartment. Schwartz the agent does good work.

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His Methods Haven't Changed

Haman 5784 may have changed his name (to Yitzye Sinwar, or Ibrahim Raisi), or maybe he's a part of the Houthis...

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Send and Make Someone Happy

Your chance to get a brachah in the middle of Purim, in a campaign that increases peace and joy

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A Word from the Mishmeres

Rebbetzin Wertzberger

A good friend of mine, whose grandson recently got married, told me that she decided to have the Sheva Berachos from their side catered. The family had grown and she felt it was too much for her to cope with preparing the meal herself. She asked her son, father of the *chasan*, to order the catering of his choice and she would foot the bill.

"I got to the Sheva Berachos," she went on, "and to my astonishment, I found the tables set for a *milchig* meal—"

She couldn't even describe her shock. "We're very *makpid* on a *fleishig* meal for Sheva Berachos. It is a tradition for generations. I didn't think I needed to even mention such a basic thing," she added.

Nu, what do you do in such a situation?

"At first, I wanted to scream, to demand explanations," she described. "But the next moment, I stopped myself and did an about face. The *milchig* menu couldn't be changed. If so, better to give up on what I wanted and remain quiet."

I was very impressed. This wasn't *vitur* on a piece of chocolate or a game, as we teach our young children to be *mevater* to a friend or sibling. It is forgoing personal wishes. A *vitur* that preserves a good atmosphere and peace in the family. A *vitur* that nobody else knows about, but that builds one's own *nefesh*!

These kinds of situations happen often in families and are liable to lead to hard feelings, anger, and resentment. These are things we always need to steer clear of, and all the more so when dealing with family.

We're not talking here about serious inheritance conflicts, but rather routine discussions about a joint gift for the parents for Purim... or setting a date for a family Shabbos Hisachdus. It's only natural that everyone has his own opinion and is convinced that his suggestion is best. But for the sake of *shalom* and a good atmosphere, it's worth being *mevater*. Just think how much unnecessary *lashon hara* this act of *vitur* is likely to avert—

How simple it is to bake a chocolate cake for Shabbos using a familiar recipe we are used to. We can also operate the washing machine almost with our eyes closed, because we do it all the time. The same is true for spiritual habits. If we get used to being *mevater* to the next person – we'll find that it becomes so much easier.

May all of Klal Yisrael be *zocheh* together to a truly happy Purim, and to a "*mishloach manos*" of *chesed* and *rachamim* from the full and open hand of our Father in Shamayim.

Sari Wertzberger



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Ask the Rav

Harav Hagaon R' Menachem Mendel Fuchs shlita



A Friend from Elementary School Who Talks about Her New Class

Question: I'm in ninth grade and I frequently meet one of my good friends who was with me in elementary school (her family moved and she continued in a different high school). When we meet, she tells me about herself and about her difficulties in the new class, and that usually includes derogatory information about some of her classmates.

I have a personality that leads people to pour out their hardships to me. My focused attention gives them a good feeling and helps them cope. So I think that the stories I hear from that friend are *to'ales*. I also try to hear only the details needed to understand the situation. Am I doing the right thing?

Answer: If both are careful not to mention names or hint at which girls are causing the difficulties - it is certainly permissible for the questioner to listen and try to help her friend cope. But if it appears that, from the report, she'll be able to guess who it's referring to - the questioner should first ask her friend to think very well if this discussion will bring her benefit. If she replies that yes, there is *to'ales* here, the questioner may listen *to'ales*, but not believe what she hears as the truth, rather as a basis for taking precautions.

A Grandmother Who Notices a Language Problem in her Granddaughter

Question: I have a granddaughter who I believe needs a "Gan Safah" (language Gan), because her vocabulary is very scant and she doesn't follow what they learn in Gan. I spoke with my daughter-in-law, but she insists that the girl is fine. She has a sociable, happy personality, and everyone likes her. Therefore, she doesn't think there's any problem that needs therapy.

Would I be allowed to speak to the Ganenet myself and ask if she sees any problems with the girl? Maybe if the recommendation comes from her, it'll help... I think it would be a shame to wait until the child gets to first grade and only then discover the problems.

Answer: On the one hand, the questioner is concerned about her granddaughter's development. On the other hand, she's afraid that if she speaks behind her daughter-in-law's back - this might cause *lashon hara* about her daughter-in-law, who isn't willing to do what's necessary for her daughter's welfare. Therefore, she should conduct herself as follows:

a. If possible, she should suggest to her son, the child's father, to speak with

his wife about the idea of consulting the Ganenet about the girl.

b. If she thinks that the son will side with his wife and won't agree to consult with the Ganenet, she should arrange to meet the Ganenet "coincidentally," such as at a family *simcha*. After thanking her for her devoted work, she can, by the way, ask about her granddaughter's vocabulary and whether she might need a Gan Safah. If the Ganenet thinks she does, she'll already inform the parents.

c. If this, too, is not practical, it may be permissible for her to speak directly to the Ganenet, confidentially. For the sake of *shalom*, she may bend the truth and say she didn't speak about it with her daughter-in-law, since she didn't want to interfere, but she wanted the Ganenet's opinion about the need for Gan Safah. If the Ganenet thinks the child needs help, she should inform the parents, without revealing the grandmother's involvement.

It would be prohibited to tell the Ganenet the truth, that the mother opposes the idea of a Gan Safah for the child, for the following reasons:

1. It would be *lashon hara* to imply that to protect her own honor, she isn't willing to give the girl the help she needs. There's no *heter* of *to'ales*, because it's not clear that the Savta is right in thinking her granddaughter has a problem. And even if she is right, perhaps no *to'ales* will come from the discussion, because the parents may not accept the Ganenet's recommendation.

2. It may be possible to deal with the problem with private lessons or therapy, not in the framework of a Gan Safah, and if so, the mother is justified in her opposition.

3. This kind of talk behind a daughter-in-law's back is liable to get out and cause divisiveness in the family.

For these reasons and more, the grandmother should not openly go against the daughter-in-law, especially since, nowadays, it's accepted practice to avoid interfering in married children's business. As the saying goes: "When you marry off children, you need to keep the pocket open and the mouth closed."

A Parent Wants to Speak to the Menahel about a Social Situation

Question: My son is suffering in class due to a number of boys who bully him, but since I know already from experience that the Rebbi doesn't deal with such problems, I want to go directly to the Menahel, who is quite successful in solving such issues. Is that permissible, or is it a problem of *lashon hara*?

Answer: If the questioner indeed has clear information that this Rebbi doesn't deal with such problems, he is permitted to go to the Menahel and tell him about his son's anguish. He should add that since he didn't know whom to speak to about the topic, the Rebbi or the Menahel, he decided to speak to the Menahel, whom he relies on to do whatever is necessary.



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A Hundred Thousand Between You and Me



"A beautiful, spacious apartment, and an excellent location," concludes Schwartz the real estate agent after a brief glance, enough for his professional eye.

"A little on the dark side, but let's hope you won't have to come down too much because of that."

Like a good businessman, he advises them to ask for a hundred thousand more than the estimated value, "so you'll have what to come down from," as he puts it.

And so, the G. family sets off, hoping the journey will be short and will bring them rapidly to a contract signing, *b'shaah tovah*. In spite of the fact that sunlight hasn't been a regular guest in their roomy dining room for years, they rely on the known fact that you never lose by acting *lifnim mi'shuras hadin*.

And still...

The little bird of regret doesn't skip over them. It sets down a thin leg, sometimes even a whole wing, into their calm and secure nest, threatening to peck a hole in their tranquility. It brings them back to the contract they decided to approve and give their signature to, six long years back.

Now the moment of truth had arrived. An offer of a Torah position stands behind their decision to move to a new, developing community in the North. The pleasant and centrally located apartment they've lived in for almost twenty years is up for sale, and it's quite clear that they are about to lose a sum of five or even six digits---



Six years ago:

A hesitant knock at the door on a wintry evening. It's Miri the neighbor, with a folder in her hands. She hasn't come to borrow a cup of sugar or inquire how the low-salt broccoli kugel for the mother-in-law's visit came out. Wearing an embarrassed smile, she says that their expansion plans, which had been in the works for several months, have now moved into high gear. "Here are the plans, so you can see it, so you can sign---

Tzippy G. stretches out her hand to take the gray folder and see where exactly she needs to sign. They've been good neighbors for many years now. Their children were born in the same years and then rode their scooters together in the backyard. Who knows better than she how urgent this expansion is for Miri's family.

But Miri doesn't relinquish the folder so quickly. "We don't want you to sign just like that." There's discomfort in her voice. "Check out the ramifications of this addition on the eastern side very well," she says, her finger sliding along the plan. She speaks about substantial blocking of sunlight, which will darken the G. family's living room and turn the attached porch from sunlit to shaded.

The folder remains on Tzippy's dining room table and with it, the neighbor's clear message that, despite their desperate need for this construction, they will certainly understand if the G. family refuses to sign. This would be real damage for them, with a daily impact on the apartment. No one could demand such a thing---

And still, they sign. They look deeply into the plans and their meaning for a few days, weigh all the aspects, and decide to put themselves on the side of the *mevaterim*. In spite of everything, they are *mevater* out of choice. Out of the genuine desire to see their dear neighbor's happiness and the knowledge that you never lose from being *mevater*.

Now, looking back, maybe they hadn't been responsible enough and hadn't thought about the day they'd need to sell the apartment?

Schwartz the agent does good work. The phone keeps ringing. Tzippy answers patiently. She straightens out the apartment, including all the neglected corners. Putting an apartment up for sale is a demanding job.

One family comes to see it, and then disappears back to where they came from. An older couple asks how many steps there are. Another caller doesn't sound very serious.

And then a customer calls and asks to come specifically in the daylight hours when the sun is high in the sky. This topic seems to be at the center of her considerations. Tzippy sighs. She arranges for the anonymous person on the other side of the line to come on her free morning, regretting in advance the waste of time involved in this visit.

Unenthusiastically, she straightens out the beds and puts the shoes in a corner. If this woman is looking for a brightly lit apartment and a sun porch - there isn't a shred of a chance: it's not worth investing efforts.

She opens the door.

A woman in her fifties comes in. Her gaze is scrutinizing and businesslike.

A quick glance at the foyer, and she's already inside the dining room, lit up by three fixtures spread out throughout its length, trying to make up for what this apartment cannot offer. What this customer is looking for. Sunlight.

Measured steps along the eastern wall. A glance at the slightly creaking shutter, a minor fault, relative to the substantial shadowing that darkens this whole side of the apartment.

Tzippy walks behind her silently. After she finishes with this woman, she'll call Schwartz. They already discussed that morning that they need to tell him about their decision to come down in price. It

seems that they simply have no choice.

She follows the woman out to the porch that was once bathed in sunlight. Miri's addition winks at her. A purple curtain waves in the window. Behind it is the cute children's room that Miri needed like air to breathe, but that darkened Tzippy's dining room and lowered the value of the apartment.

And that little pecking bird again insists on sticking his wing in---

“Wait. My husband will be back from Kollel in a half hour...” she stammers, having trouble digesting the strange reality that has come knocking at her door.

She was so engrossed in the imaginary bird's chirping that she didn't hear the woman's first few words. She shook herself into attention when she understood that the woman was talking about a preliminary agreement and immediate contract signing--

“Wait. My husband will be back from Kollel in a half hour...” she stammers, having trouble digesting the strange reality that has come

knocking at her door.

“No problem. I'll wait here,” the woman responds. Sighing softly, she adds that she's already invested dozens of hours visiting countless apartments. A half-hour wait doesn't scare her, nor the price they're asking for the apartment, which is a little higher than she originally planned on spending.

The woman updates her husband, in an excited, rushed phone call. She gives him the address, asking him to come as quickly as possible to see the find. The dream apartment that is so perfect for her, with her rare disease. A spacious, beautiful, well-kept apartment, and totally shaded, without the presence of any warm, pleasant sunrays, which, due to her special medical circumstances, are dangerous and threatening and could *challah* endanger her life.

A rare disease. And an apartment. And a “coincidence” that no one could have imagined even in their wildest dreams...

That same week, a contract is signed between the G. family and this couple. The price remains as is, precisely as Schwartz had suggested the day they put the apartment on the market. A hundred thousand more than its true value.

Because from *vitur* and going beyond the letter of the law, you never lose---

Rav Yaakov Yosef Herman was known in America as a great *machnis orchim*. Every Shabbos, many guests would sit around his table. He would fuss over them and try to give each one a pleasant, homey feeling.

Once, he served one of the guests a cup of tea. The guest, who was a bitter man, decided that the tea wasn't hot enough and he spilled the contents of his cup on his host's Shabbos suit.

Rav Herman calmly took off the wet jacket and went to prepare another, hotter tea, to please his guest---

Harav Hatzaddik Rav Aryeh Finkel zt"l, Rosh Yeshivas Mir Brachfeld, was deeply moved by this story, and said: “There was someone who knew how to be *mevater*.”

(Mesivos Halachah)

Vatranus

In a fight, we'll try to be *mevater*, our honor we'll set aside. Even when it's clear to us that the truth is on our side.





Stop and Think

Between Haman Harasha and the Houthis of 5784

➔ Haman of 5784 may have changed his name to Yihye Sinwar, or perhaps Ibrahim Ra'isi from Iran, or maybe he's a part of the Houthis... but his methods haven't changed. When he came to "King Achashverosh" with intentions to "destroy, slay and exterminate" the Jews, he had a very convincing argument: "There is a people scattered among the nations...and it is not befitting the king to tolerate them." As we know, every place in the *megillah* that it says "Hamelech, the king," it refers to the King of the world. Haman was actually arguing to Hakadosh Baruch Hu: "It's not worth it for you to leave the Jews alive because they are 'scattered' - there is *machlokes* and separation among them."

And how do we rectify this sin that was the cause of the terrible decree against Am Yisrael? Esther Hamalkah had a request of Mordechai: "Go assemble all the Jews." Work on strengthening their unity, on enhancing their *mitzvos bein adam lachaveiro*.

MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY, SIBERIAN-STYLE

Rav Yaakov Galinsky *zt"l*, who went through the horrors of the Holocaust in frigid Siberia, gives an amazing testimony: "We were a group of boys from Novardok Yeshiva, together with the revered Mashgiach, Rav Yisrael Movshovitz *zt"l*. Every morning we were marched into the frozen forests to chop down trees."

He describes trees so gigantic that several people needed to hold hands to circle one of them, and he describes the wondrous mutual responsibility that the group demonstrated: "We split the *bachurim* into groups, so that the stronger

ones needed to fill a higher quota of trees and the weaker ones - a lesser amount. Regarding the Mashgiach, who was elderly and frail, we elected to exempt him from work altogether and to leave him the job of saying *divrei mussar* and *chizuk*."

The food there was doled out in tiny quantities. "With a bribe, we managed to obtain an added ten portions of bread a day. We decided to give one portion to the Mashgiach and divide the other nine among everyone else."

But when the Mashgiach heard about the plan, he firmly refused. "Divide the bread among everyone equally," he said. He also demanded to join the group of the strong ones who did the hardest work.

This is how the Mefarshim explain the remaining words that Esther told Mordechai: "And fast for me: do not eat or drink" - There is a double language here, to emphasize Esther's message: Even though you are in danger, don't think just about yourselves: "fast for me," display caring and mutual responsibility, because *that* is what will save you." Then she adds, "And I, with my maids, will fast also." We too will act with responsibility and concern for others. We won't think only of ourselves and fast only for ourselves, but rather for you! And we know that one who davens for his fellow is responded to first!

DEFEATING THE HAMAN INSIDE US

Purim is the time to strengthen our *mitzvos bein adam lachaveiro*, which form a central part of the *mitzvos* of the day. The Yetzer Hara won't sit quietly; it will try its hardest to rouse anger and quarrels in every way, but if we remember that this was Haman Harasha's plan, it will be easier for us to restrain ourselves and defeat him.

Tic-Tac-Toe

B. Halevy



A Winning Mishloach Manos



Purim is a once-a-year opportunity to demonstrate your talents. To show people you're worth something and they should please start treating you accordingly. You just need to think of a brilliant idea that no one on this globe every saw, dress the delivery people, ages three and up, in uniforms to complete the effect, and wait for the eyes to almost pop out and the impressions to echo until next Purim.



If you want to make a bang, you need to work hard. If you want to be a star, you need to sweat. Certainly when your idea is a chess-themed *mishloach manos*, and you need to dress up six kids as king, queen, rook, knight, and pawns--- Or when you opt for an exclusive "coffee break" theme, which calls for trays emitting aromas of "java," and delivery kids with curly peyos and braids peeking out of a milk carton, bag of sugar, and jar of instant coffee.



In order to complete the "Wow!" you also need a special, heartfelt poem, with plays on words and perfect rhymes, but this is precisely where you feel uncertain. Because, to be honest, from among the sixteen doors that are supposed to gape open in amazement to receive your million-dollar creations, there are several to whom gushing wishes are the last thing you feel like sending. Enough said...



Adar Aleph passes, leaving you still deep inside the swamp of the challenge that keeps you up at night. You sniff out stressful shreds of information about your colleagues, who aren't sitting on their laurels. They're busy working on bombastic recipes of Sephardic cookies, Yemenite hot sauce, Moroccan breads, or American bagels, depending, of course on the matching costume for the young emourage that will carry the gleaming trays from apartment to apartment. In order not to lose the winning crown and the halo of the *mitzvah* that is meant to increase love, peace, and friendship - you decide to just abandon the competition. Better to throw in the towel and the costumes and to celebrate Purim far away from the building. Because the whole point is genuine *simchah* on Purim---



When the Doctor Wants to Double Dosages

My daughter has a chronic illness for which she gets biological medicine. A few months ago, one test showed an abnormally high value, and upon repeating the test - the value was even higher... The doctor started talking about doubling her medication dosage, but first he sent us for a long, complex series of tests. The moment I realized the matter was serious, I took upon myself *kabbalos intznus* and in speech for her *zechus*. I also called Mishmeres HaSholom and asked to become a "rep" and distribute the magazines. It was not an easy *kabbalah* for me since we live in a non-religious area and I'm also naturally shy. But I made the effort - and we were *zocheh* to see *nissim*! The results of the expanded tests surprised the doctor very much. He stopped talking about doubling dosages and we hope that *b'ezras Hashem*, the high values that appeared in the first tests have gone down and stabilized.

Ki from the Center

Two Groups, Abundant Yeshuos

For two years, we've been learning *hilchos shemiras halashon* together, as a group. Over time, more and more women joined, and since

seven p.m. doesn't suit everyone, another learning group formed for nine p.m. I enjoy the learning and find it very inspiring. *Baruch Hashem*, I've also seen big *yeshuos*: my daughter found her *shidduch* at age 39 and, a year later, became a proud mother!

E. from Ha'ar Miprah

Angels Watched over the Child

Our son was miraculously saved from an accident, when a car knocked him off his bike and, *baruch Hashem*, no harm came to him! We were overwhelmed by the great *neis*. We tangibly felt how angels were watching over him. Suddenly I remembered what had happened the day before... A *shemiras halashon* gathering for children had been organized in our area and we donated treats to distribute to the participants. When we asked how many children had been at the event, we heard that there were eighteen - the *gimatriya* of *chai*!

Parents of Refael

Legal Complication

I was involved in a complex legal complication and understood that it wasn't enough to take a good lawyer: I also needed to amass *zechuyos* and to *daven*. I decided to donate 180 shekels to Mishmeres HaSholom, since it's known that merits

of *shemiras halashon* have great power. I also took upon myself that if I'd come out innocent, I'd donate another 180 shekels.

Baruch Hashem, I had a real *yeshuah*, and now, of course, I'm keeping my promise and transferring my donation to support the important work of spreading *shemiras halashon* in Klal Yisrael.

Business owner in the Yerushalayim area

Buyer Needed for an Apartment

We were on the verge of buying an apartment that appeared to be very good and suitable, but we were afraid to jump in and sign the contract, because we hadn't yet found a buyer for our apartment, which had already been on the market for quite a while. We were under a lot of stress due to this tough decision. We decided, as a *segulah*, to donate to Mishmeres HaSholom. The phone receptionist suggested donating the *gimatriya* equivalent of "דינה - דינה" shekels - with a monthly standing order. We agreed and submitted our name so the Rabbanim of the organization would *daven* that we'd find a buyer.

A month and a half later, we *baruch Hashem* signed a contract with an excellent buyer, at a good price, and we called Mishmeres HaSholom to ask them to change the request for the *davening*.

M.S.



Real Estate in Tel Aviv That Refuses to Budge

"Hello. Is this the *lashon hara* hotline?" the voice on the phone asks.

"The Mishmeres HaSholom hotline. The organization that inspires people to avoid *lashon hara*," the phone receptionist politely fine-tunes the definition.

"Yes, *lashon hara*. Not to speak *lashon hara*," the voice confirms. "You also put out a magazine with stories, right?"

"Certainly. A monthly magazine to strengthen *shemiras halashon* and *mitzvos bein adam lachaveiro*."

"That's very interesting. I never knew that there is such an organization. It's just for the religious?"

the man inquires.

"*Mitzvos bein adam lachaveiro* are for everybody who wants to keep them and strengthen themselves." A simple, genuine answer.

The man sounds pleased. He tells of a piece of real estate he owns in Tel Aviv that has been on the market for a very long time, but even though he advertised it dozens of times, on a variety of platforms, he didn't get a single phone call. "I feel as if there's a curse hanging over me and I decided to do some good deed; maybe it'll help," he says, and asks to transfer a credit card donation of seventy-two shekels to Mishmeres HaSholom.

The donation is transferred. The caller, who doesn't know much about Torah and Yiddishkeit,

becomes a part of the huge enterprise of *zikuy harabim* in *shemiras halashon*.

Three days later, another call comes in from the man who became a partner. "You're the ones from the *lashon hara* organization, right?" he asks. Then he says excitedly: After I decided to donate to you, I again put in an ad about my real estate, and listen - the phone simply doesn't stop ringing. So you have my credit information, yes? I want to continue this donation on a monthly basis. I see that I've gotten to an important cause that is worth giving to. Sign me up for a regular monthly donation of seventy-two shekels, because there are a lot of other things stuck by me and I need a *yeshuah*."



From Opposite Angles

A super-organized educational coordinator with a creative teacher who's always running after the clock • A dynamic, bubbly office manager with her orderly secretary who likes to work quietly • An article about opposites that will let you get into the next person's shoes and emerge with insights relevant not just for Purim.

Born with a Phone in Her Hand

R. Bergman, head of Mishmeres HaSholom's telemarketing system, with her secretary, M. Himmel

Mrs. Bergman:

ID: Sociable, charismatic, and dynamic, not put off by any challenge, directs a staff of fifteen workers

Likes: To talk. Persuade. Communicate with people.

Put off by: Numbers. That's not for me. A nei's that I have an orderly secretary I can rely on. I always tell the staff that, if not for her – there'd be no salary payments...

Mrs. Himmel:

ID: Refined and calm. Very orderly. Enjoys working with numbers and tries not to miss a single dot.

Likes: Working quietly. Doing my jobs perfectly.

Put off by: Phone calls. It's funny that I work in a telemarketing office, but, practically speaking, my job is not connected to phones at all. In my private life, too. I evade phone calls, and if possible, "toss" them to my husband.

How do you manage to work together?

Mrs. Bergman: As manager, I need to get along with a broad staff, and to also try to understand those who don't think like me. Regarding my dedicated secretary Miri – *divka* because of my ebullient personality, I need my "right-hand man" to have two feet on the ground. It's a winning combination.

Mrs. Himmel: I know that it's *divka* because of my personality that I'm sitting here next to the manager, who has the exact opposite personality... It's challenging, and I learn a lot from it.

Tip for life we picked up along the way:

An important rule in interpersonal communication is to listen until the end. To wait until the other person finishes what she wants to say and then to reflect back what she said. It's true for clients at work, and also for the neighbor, husband, mother-in-law... Try it and you'll see how it enables you to understand the next person's line of thinking, even if she is very different from you (Mrs. Bergman).

Racing after the Clock

G. Rubin, English department coordinator in a high school, with teacher L. Friedman, from her staff:

Mrs. Rubin:

ID: Organized and planned-out, to the last detail.

Likes: Dealing today with tomorrow's assignments, staying as far away as possible from the "last minute."

Put off by: Anything connected to not sticking to a schedule. I'll always prefer to go out early and wait, rather than risk being late.

Mrs. Friedman:

ID: Last-minute type.

Likes: Variety (e.g., using a new textbook), and also getting a deadline, because otherwise, there's no chance anything will happen---

Put off by: The calendar. I have to work with it when submitting an annual plan or students' grades, but I prefer to forget about it.

How do you manage to work together?

Mrs. Rubin: I know my personality is not standard and I try to keep that in mind when dealing with the teachers. I integrate a lot of humor into my interactions, to keep the atmosphere pleasant and not too pressured.

Mrs. Friedman: I try to harness Mrs. Rubin's orderliness for my benefit. I ask her in advance to give me target dates for assignments.

Tip for life we picked up along the way:

One Thursday, the coordinator called to ask for the recipe for a mousse I'd prepared for one of the staff meetings, "in honor of the new *kallah* who's coming for Shabbos," she explained. After Shabbos, I naturally inquired how Shabbos was with the *kallah*. "Do you really think I'd wait until the last minute before Shabbos to prepare dessert??" she marveled. The *kallah*, of course, had been invited for the *next* Shabbos...

This story sharpened what I knew already: Don't judge your fellow until you're in her place. And since you'll never totally understand her personality and way of thinking - just don't judge her at all. (Mrs. Friedman)

SEND & MAKE SOMEONE HAPPY

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TO MEET THE NEW NEIGHBORS → TO MAKE UP WITH FRIENDS



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Ask the Rav

By Harav
Hagyon R'
Menachem
Mendel
Fuchs shlita,
Rav of
Mishmeres
HaShalom

A Purim Program That's Liable to Insult

Question: We're preparing a funny, interesting program for the Purim party, in which we'll play bits of conversation with girls in class that were recorded on different opportunities. We've been working a long time on collecting these recordings, but suddenly it occurred to us that maybe there is a problem of *lashon hora*, or hurting someone's feelings, because the girls don't know that they're being recorded.

Answer: If you can recognize from the voice or the subject of conversation who is speaking, it is indeed prohibited to publicize these recordings without permission. It can cause the speakers discomfort or

embarrassment and may be a violation of serious prohibitions, like *ona'as devarim* and *halbanas panim*. Sometimes there is also concern for revealing private matters.

The solution is to ask the girls speaking on these recordings for their explicit permission to publicize the conversation by playing it back for their classmates at the Purim party. This would perhaps allow doing it, *b'difveid*.

It should be pointed out that the very idea of recording other people's words without telling them - is not proper, and this is not the place to elaborate.

A Happy Mishap

Rav Yehoshua Wertzberger z"l was a very popular, *yerei Shamayim batim macher* (who makes *batim* for *tefillin*). He would call each bar mitzvah boy whose father ordered *batim* from him to watch how he put the *parshiyos* inside. As he worked, he'd also explain to the boy the importance of *tefillin* and halachos that are important to know when starting to lay *tefillin*.

Once, a boy's bar mitzvah had almost arrived, and, though R' Yehoshua had summoned him several times, he hadn't come. In the end, R' Yehoshua was compelled to begin the job of sewing the *batim* closed, a very delicate and complex process, without the boy watching. When he was almost done, two things happened: The *gid* used as thread tore, and the boy walked in.

R' Yehoshua wasn't annoyed at the mishap. Instead, he said with a big smile: "What *hashgachah!* Hashem tore the *gid* so that you could see how I put in the *parshiyos!*" And the bar mitzvah boy, too, was overjoyed.

Each bar mitzvah celebration will remind me how to look at everything positively and make the next person feel happy.



And this time:
Rav Yehoshua
Wertzberger
z"l

for his *yahrtzeit*,
9 Adar





Scrambled Egg or Mashed Potatoes?

"Zeidy," Matis asked. "Would you let us use your cane?"
 "Why do you need a cane?"
 "We're playing 'hot and cold' and we couldn't find anything else to hide. So, do you let?"

"I let. Sure," I smiled under my mustache. "But on one condition."
 "Okay! Okay!" Chaim, Eliezer, Matis, and Shmuly answered enthusiastically. Even little Elisheva made a peep from her crib.

"Wait" - I tried to teach them proper judgment. "First hear what the condition is. Maybe it's something you can't handle?"

"Oy, Zeidy. We know you wouldn't make us an impossible condition!"

I laughed. They're so cute. "The condition is..."

Everyone waited with bated breath. "The condition is... that you include me in the game?"

"Really?"

"You're willing to play with us?"

"Hurray! You're the best Zeidy in the whole world!" Shmuly hugged me, and the game began.

It really was nice playing with them. They're so entertaining! Instead of saying, "hot," "cold," "getting warmer," and so on, they decided to announce names of cold foods and hot foods. So there was: "ice cream," "fruit salad!"

and also: "getting icecreamier, getting icecreamier" (instead of "getting colder..."), "soup," "tea," and so on and so forth.

Even I was chosen to look for the cane, to the whoops of the cheerful group. But just when they announced: "Cholent!" an important guest arrived: my eldest son, Azriel, from Yerushalayim. I went to the living room to receive him properly, and the children continued their game a while longer. Then it was night and the house got quiet. In the morning, the children left while I was in shul. Mordechai, a grandchild who lives nearby, escorted me there and back, and I didn't need the cane. Only later in the morning, when I was alone in the house, I realized the problem. Someone knocked at the door, and I remembered: The neighbors' package! Yesterday, neighbors from the second floor had come and asked if they could leave a package with us for their

uncle to pick up in the morning. "That's a bit of a problem, the Kravitzes (that's the name of my daughter's family, whom I'm living with now) started saying, explaining that no one would be home in the morning. That is, just Zeidy would be home, and it's not--- But I immediately intervened and said that it definitely is. We do *chessed* always, even when we need a walking stick in order to do it... And it was fine with me to do a *chessed* for the neighbors tomorrow morning.

But now... the cane! I didn't know where it was, and there was no mischievous, giggling boy to announce "ice cream" or "chicken soup." The knocks got louder and more insistent. I really wanted to help the neighbors' uncle. But how? Just then the telephone started ringing...

Chaim's story:

"Who wants to hear what I'm dressing up as?" asked Moishe at recess.

It was so surprising that we all surrounded him curiously. Until then, everyone had kept the secret of their costume under wraps. Moishe decided to rip off the veil of secrecy. "Why not start the Purim spirit already now?" he asked logically, and when we all enthusiastically agreed, he continued: "So I'm going to dress up as a beggar, to carry out what it says, 'Whoever puts out their hand - give to him!'"

"And I'm going to be a rich man!"

"And I'll be a Purim rav!"

"And I'll dress up as a Zeidy. I have a real cane!"

"And I as a candyman."

I didn't stay there to hear all the nice ideas, even though they interested me very much. I had to run to the office and call home. Shloimy's costume, with the real cane, reminded me about something very important: Zeidy's cane! After the game, it remained hidden behind the coat hooks in the hallway, and Zeidy apparently doesn't know its whereabouts! Who knows how he's managed without it until now.

I couldn't stop to think about it: I could only speed up and try to solve the problem.

"Zeidy?" I panted. "It's Chaim. The cane is behind the hooks in the hallway. It's okay? Suddenly I remembered yesterday's game and I immediately ran to call you."

"It's just fine, you responsible grandchild" - said Zeidy, and then he added: "I'm standing right next to the coat hooks. So what am I supposed to say? Scrambled egg or mashed potatoes?"



THROUGH ZEIDY'S EYEGLASSES



Whoever answers correctly enters a raffle for prizes
 Last month's winner: Malissah Nivon, House 1-a



A Worthwhile Mishloach Manos

The Fried kids are on the bus from Kiryat Sefer to Bnei Brak. They're traveling to the *seudas Purim* at their grandmother's house.

In the seats ahead of them are two brothers from their block, Yehoshua and Eli, talking about the *mishlochei manos* they got - what was worthwhile and what wasn't. "It's so annoying, I brought *mishloach manos* to Motty," said Yehoshua to his brother Eli so loudly that even the Fried children could hear. "That cheeky kid didn't give me a thing in return..."

Look up *sefer Chofetz Chaim, Klal Bels, Seif Aleph*, call 072-337-2212 Ext. 33, and choose the most appropriate answer. Those who answer correctly will automatically enter a raffle.



The idea that won the prize was from Eisenstein family, Bnei Brak

You're invited to send us stories suitable for this column: stories in which a friend was almost hurt or embarrassed, and thanks to someone's sensitivity, it was prevented, and also stories in which, sadly, a friend was hurt. The stories chosen for the magazine will earn the sender a prize.

M025379160@GMAIL.COM | 02-650-6107



No Offense

Shabbos at Bubby's House

Wednesday afternoon.

Tzippy comes home from school exhausted. In her backpack is her math test with the disappointing mark, folded into a little square. In her Chumash notebook are two review sheets that she needs to fill in for homework. No wonder she is down in the dumps. She climbs the steps, stair after stair. The aroma of fishcakes tickles her nose and reminds her of the Wednesday menu, which she doesn't like. *Oof. What an irritating day* - she mutters to herself quietly. Self-pitying thoughts fill her mind.

"Tzippy, I have a surprise for you!" Ima's voice smiles to her the moment she enters the kitchen.

Meir and Daniel, her two brothers, who came home for the lunch break, are already sitting at the table. Four-year-old Estie isn't back yet from the Gan's afternoon program, but little Dassy, sitting in the high chair, waves at Tzippy with two chubby arms, adorned with grains of white rice and oily remains of a fish cake.

"A surprise? For me?" Tzippy perks up and releases her puckered lips a bit.

Ima moves aside the bowl of rice to make room for Tzippy to put her plate on the table and announces to her: "Yes, Bubby called to invite you to her for Shabbos!"

Wow! What good news!! All at once, Tzippy's heart starts dancing for joy. Who doesn't like to go to good, warm, pampering Bubby, and also to meet with Ruti and Micha'el, the daughters of Tanta Estie who lives on the same block? In her excitement, Tzippy almost forgets about the math test and the Chumash review. What a marvelous Shabbos awaits her!!



A few words from Tzippy:

What could have happened:

"Hey, why is just Tzippy going?" my brother Meir wasn't capable of digesting the idea.

"What do you care? It'll be the most fun if she goes," Daniel calmed him. "She's just an irritating girl, and without her, it'll be a lot nicer on Shabbos. I'll share the treat we get at the Siyum we're having on Erev Shabbos just with you. And we'll also eat all of the dessert that Mommy prepared and we won't leave her anything..."

The truth is that all my excitement was ruined, after these negative comments.

What happened in the end:

"Why is just Tzippy going?" Meir complained. But when Daniel promised him that he'd give him some of the nosh from his Siyum, Meir calmed down. "Don't worry, Tzippy, I'll save some for you, too," he said, adding quietly that he, too, was a little jealous that just I was going, but he was trying to overcome his feelings and to feel happy for me.

On Friday, right before I left, Daniel managed to sneak into my carry bag a chocolate covered wafer from his Siyum, with a note: 'Have a sweet Shabbos,' he wrote.



Way to Go!

Kasriel's amusing corner, with stories on middos tovos that happened to him on the way.

A Masterpiece of a Brachah

After I wrote to you last time about the so-called costumes that I collected from the garbage bin - I regretted doing it. The one to rouse my regret was my oldest sister. She said that everything's important and funny and teaches a lesson, but I have to think at least four times before publicizing a story. Why four? I asked my sister if it corresponds to the four *leshonos of geulah*, for example, but she said that I'm getting stuck on trivialities. She doesn't care if I think five times, the main thing is the point itself. "Who will continue being your friend, Kasriel" - that was her point - "after they hear you rummaged in the garbage bin? Who?"

I had no idea what to answer so I remained silent.

Afterwards, when I was on the way to... and back from... (I can't give details because of my sister), I decided that I'm not writing any more stories. Good bye. To think four times about anything - is too much for me. Even thinking once isn't easy. After I made up my mind not to write anymore, I breathed a mixed-up sigh. On the one hand, a sigh of relief, and on the other, a long, pained sigh of "Alas" because precisely on this walk, a lot of fascinating things happened to me. It would be a shame to keep them from you: A parakeet sat on my shoulder and screeched, "I want Ephraim!" A boy who passed by me asked me to help him with his bike; and that was amazing *hashgachah*, because the boy with the bike knew Ephraim from his *cheider*... I really couldn't decide: Should I stop writing stories because of friends that might stay away from me if I do?

These thoughts were racing between my

heart and my mind, when suddenly two things happened: a) Four friends came over to me (note: they didn't keep their distance); and b) they asked me to write a *brachah* (not a story).

"A *brachah*?" I asked, wrinkling my brow.

"A *brachah*," my friends confirmed, explaining that it's for the class *mishloach manos* to Rabbi Greenholtz.

"Me?" I asked (humbly).

"Yes, you know how to write nicely," they replied, pulling out a paper

and a green pen. "That's a fact." sound as if the rebbi barely gets us to the next grade." I said, "Ah" and tried to add to the line the words "learn well" so it shouldn't sound as if he hardly teaches us, but Gavriel said that every rebbi teaches his students to learn well. We need a different brilliant idea.

"Brilliant idea?" I tried to think of an acrostic with each line starting with a letter of "Chocolate," (which is what we're bringing him), but for "c," all I could think of was "courageous," and I didn't want to imply that you need to be courageous to deal with our class... Then I asked if anyone had a calculator, because I thought that the words "*es Haman harasha tahu al eit*" might be the same *gimatriya* as Rav Greenholtz's name in Hebrew. "Oh, c'mon!" Refael groaned. "Are you seriously comparing our rebbi, the tzaddik, to Haman Harasha?"

I tried *this* and I tried *that* and the paper was full of scribbles but no *brachah*, when suddenly, I got a brainstorm: "Hey, forget about me. Let Azriel do it!" Azriel who came up with a long, long *brachah* last year. Azriel who yawned and said that he'd barely slept that night, and how hard he'd worked! Azriel's *brachah* might have been very moving. I can't tell you because I didn't read it. I just winked at him and said that it's as long as the Galus. "But don't be insulted, maybe it's as beautiful as the Geulah..."

Now I remembered it and I said to them, "Let Azriel write the *brachah*." I knew that next time, before giving an opinion, commenting, or complaining about his *brachah* - I'll think. At least four times, for sure. After trying to write it myself - I really understood...



and a green pen. "That's a fact."

This fact caused me some work, but that's okay. I sat down on a bench and started thinking what exactly (not approximately) we might want to write. Maybe, "To the rebbi so devoted, who helps make sure we get promoted..."

"No!" Yechiel objected, looking over my shoulder at the paper, before I even finished the "d" of promoted... "If you write that, it'll



What would you think of our switching roles this time?

In the spirit of "Vnahafochu," you get to bring paper and pen, a microphone, and a recording device to an authentic interview, and we sit on the other side of the desk and simply answer your questions.

Let's start with a question that bothers a high percentage of our dear readers and they don't tire of sending it in to the editor's desk again and again.

Please, tell us - are the stories in Mishmeres HaSholom magazines true??

Editor R. Trovitz answers: The stories in the magazines are sometimes true, in which case, we write the source of the story or mention explicitly that the story is true. But many times, they are based on a true story. For example, the writer might choose the figure of a boy she knows to serve as the "hero of the story" and "send him" to live in America... or change him into a pampered youngest child. She might describe a true conflict that happened in the class she teaches, but move the event from the big city to a village, among fields and chicken coops.

We mentioned the heroes of the story, and here we have a collection of interesting questions that deal with them. Again, the microphone is in your hands, dear readers:

I'm really curious if Kasriel (from the "Way to Go" column) is a real kid, and also where he lives, which cheder he goes to, and does he keeps things lively in his class all day, too...

Writer G. Bernfeld answers: The truth is that, at first, I wanted to give you all the details clearly: his exact address, cheder, etc. But then I saw the last part of your question and I stopped short. Kasriel? About Kasriel you wrote: "Does he keep things lively in his class all day?" But Kasriel is a good, obedient, friendly boy. He doesn't look for action at all: the action looks for him.

(And in order to prevent action from coming to his doorstep, we refrained in the end from giving a clear identity and address. Please forgive us...)

The new column, "Through Zeidy's Eyeglasses," talks about an interesting family living in the Shilbolim neighborhood. Which city is that in? And wait - did they really have a new baby and their Zeidy came to live with them?

Writer L. Yerushalmi answers: If you're looking for the Shilbolim neighborhood in any of the cities here in Eretz Yisrael, you won't find it. Shilbolim is an imaginary location. The lovable Zeidy and all the Kravitz kids are not real figures, so don't start sniffing around to reveal who is the family being written about in the magazine... But, of course, all the stories are "almost true," because they're all based on things that really happen in life, with a little salt and pepper and other spices added.

When the microphone is in your hands



Children from all over the country and questions that piled up on the editorial desk - combine in a "Purimy" interview with the editorial and production staff of the Mishmeres monthly magazines

And how about Meshulam, who smiles at us every month in the "In Their Footsteps" section? Is it the same picture, or does the artist draw it again every time?

B. Toporovitz answers: When the series started, I drew Meshulam from all different angles. Now, each time I get the monthly story, I pick the "Meshulam" that fits the story best and make a few changes. I draw new hands, move his head or eyes, or erase his mouth and create a different one - more smiley, or amazed, or disappointed. When I don't find any suitable "Meshulam" in my files, I just draw a new one...

The microphone is still in your hand and you have another really interesting question:

How is it that, in the stories, all the kids manage to overcome their bad middos and to be tzaddikim, and they never make mistakes or stumble?

Writer R. Tov answers: Did you ever see a big pan of cake coming out of the oven? Ina cuts the cake into nice, exact pieces, arranges them in a container, and puts the container into the fridge or freezer (or she sends them to a neighbor who has a *simchah*, with warm wishes). What's left in the pan? The edges. The corners. The pieces that didn't cut so nicely. That's the *mushal*. And the *nimshal* is the stories that go into our magazine. Stories about children who didn't stand up to their *nisayon* "remain in the pan" and don't get published.



The purpose of the children's section is to provide material that will give spiritual *chizuk*, so we choose stories of overcoming challenges and polishing *mitotot*. But we certainly describe the process, which sometimes demands a lot of effort on the part of the hero, until the "happy ending."

Here, you put down the pen and paper for a moment and ask permission to open the stuffed drawers at the editorial desk and peek inside.

In the "No Offense" section, you promise a prize to the one whose idea is chosen and used. How do you choose? What are the chances of a story that is sent in to be printed?

Editor R. Trovitz answers: Do you see how many nice stories and interesting ideas there are in our drawer? It really isn't easy to choose. But we only have room for one story each month, so we have no choice... We prefer original, interesting ideas, not too overused, but that also sound logical, not unrealistic. Sometimes, we give preference to ideas that suit the season. For example, during the summer months, it's not suitable to put in a story about exams and schoolwork pressure...

And what about Rav Fuchs *shlita's* section? Do kids really send questions to the Rav?

This time, the editorial secretary C.W. responds: The children send the questions to us in the office, and we fax them to the Rav, together with the questions we get for the adult column. It really excites me to receive the questions straight from the hearts of these little *tzaddikim*. For example, there was a girl whose friends talk about interesting things at recess, but she knows that she is likely to stumble into *lashon hara*, so she asks what to do. I always imagine Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev looking at these letters and taking them straight to Shamayim to show Hakadosh Baruch Hu what wonderful children He has! The Rav regards the questions very seriously and tries to answer them as clearly as possible, so the kids will understand.

Sometimes children plead that they need an answer urgently... This is my chance to explain that much as we want to help, we aren't technically capable of obtaining an answer overnight. So if you have an urgent question, just call the Beis Hora'ah number: 072-337-2212 Ext. 3. The Rabbanim there are waiting for your questions.

And before you say goodbye to the Mishmeres HaSholom staff, you have something important to request.

On Purim, we read about how Achashveros promised to fulfill Esther Hamalkah's requests "*ud chatzi hamalchus*." So we also have a request: The comics story on the back of the magazine is very interesting, but it's set in the past. We also want comics stories that happen nowadays...

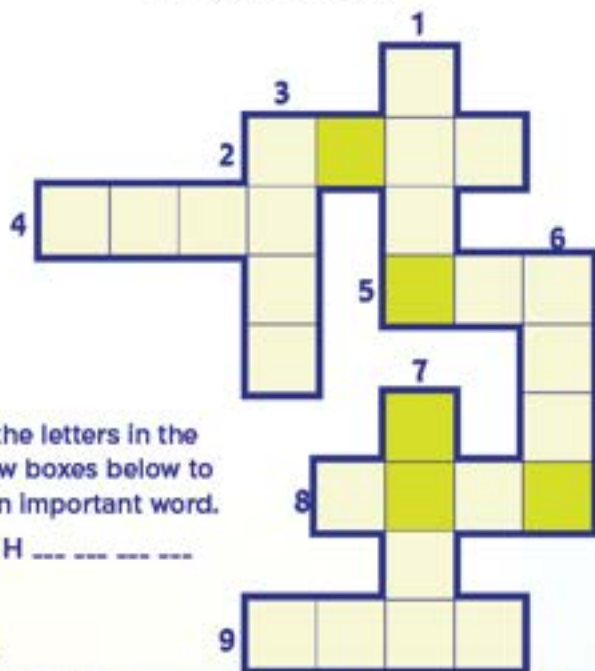
Oho... It's clear. Which kids don't like comics?

So we don't have room to add another comics section, but *bizras Hashem*, we'll try to use a current story for the next comics series. Hope you'll like it ---

'V'nahafochu' Puzzle

In this puzzle, each word has a double definition - reading forward or backward. You need to figure out in which direction to write the answer so that it will fit into the grid properly.

After you solve it correctly, fit the letters from the highlighted squares into the following blanks to form an important word:



Fit the letters in the yellow boxes below to get an important word.

--- H ---

CLUES:

1. Utensil - plunder
2. Tie a boat to the pier - spooce
3. Encounter - abound
4. Correct an article - High or neap ---
5. Place to swim - circle of cord or ribbon
6. Used for cooking - halt
7. Streetcar - short for "supermarket"
8. Exchange - animal's feet
9. Shock - almond, hazel, etc.

Send solutions to Mishmeres HaSholom
11 Sdei Chemed St. Jerusalem or fax: 02-650-6107
Raffles follow the protocol at Mishmeres
HaSholom offices. Winners will be informed

Name:	
Address:	
Phone:	City:

MELTING THE ICE

Summary: An unrefined fellow who appears to be drunk enters the Jewish inn. It turns out that he is a former Cantonist soldier, who was forcefully taken away from his family and from the derech haTorah.

Written by B. Holevi
Illustrated by R. Fus

3



To be continued, be"t