

On the Tip of Your Tongue

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Toras Avigdor

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

Junior

"Mommy!" exclaimed Shimmy, as he came bursting into the living room shortly before supper. "You're not going to believe this! You know the Hershkovsky family that just moved in down the block? Well Moishy just told me that they weren't always frum! And you know what the father used to do before he kept Torah and Mitzvos? He -"

"Shimmy!" Mommy interrupted him. "This sounds like *lashon hora!* Remember last night that we agreed as a family to be extra careful with what we say, and that it should be a *zechus* for Tante Rina to find a *shidduch*?"

Shimmy paused to try to catch his breath, but he was still huffing and puffing in excitement.

"B-b-but the sign you put on the fridge says that we are *mekabel* to not speak about other people from 5 to 6 - and now it's 6:04!"

"Wait Shimmy, that doesn't mean..." Mommy started, but Shimmy was too excited.

"I need to call Cousin Pinny right away and tell him," he said. "Where's the phone?"

Shimmy skidded over to the phone, but stopped short when he realized that it was inside of a glass case that was locked with a padlock! This was new...



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“Mommy, why did you lock the phone? Where’s the key? I need to call Cousin Pinny!”

“Shimmy, Shimmy,” Mommy said. “Why don’t you calm down for a second and catch your breath?”

Shimmy inhaled deeply and counted to ten, he realized that he wouldn’t be able to make the call this second. Mommy motioned to the couch where they both sat down.

“First of all, Shimmy, just because we are being extra-careful with what we say from 5 to 6, it doesn’t mean that we can just say whatever we want the rest of the day. *Lashon hora* is still one of the worst aveiros in the Torah. Do you know why?”

“Because we wouldn’t want people to say bad things about us, so we shouldn’t say bad things about other people?”

“Well yes, that is the Mitzvah of **וְאִהְבֵת לְרֵעֵךְ כַּמוֹךָ**, which one is also **עוֹבֵר** when speaking *lashon hora*, among many other things. But Rav Avigdor Miller points out two things. First of all, when we say *lashon hora* we are forgetting that Hashem is always listening, and second Hashem loves all *frum* Yidden. And when one says *lashon hora*, he is speaking bad about someone whom Hashem loves! Imagine if someone was in front of a king and while the king was listening, he said something bad about the king’s best friend?”

“Hmmm, I would think the king might have that person killed,” Shimmy said thoughtfully. “Wow I never thought about how bad *lashon hora* really is. But why did you lock up the phone? How are we supposed to make phone calls?”

“Shimmy,” Mommy said. “Look at the hook right above the phone.”

Shimmy looked and saw that hanging right above the glass box was a key.

“Is that the key to the padlock?” he asked.

“Yes,” Mommy replied with a smile.

“Well then what’s the point of locking up the phone if the key is right there?”

“Because the lock isn’t meant to keep us from using the phone. The phone is a wonderful tool if used properly. However, this lock and key is there to remind us that before picking up the phone we need to pause for a second and think ‘what am I about to say on the phone? Is it something that I am better of keeping quiet about?’”

“I like that idea,” Shimmy said with a smile. “But what about when I’m with my friends? I can’t put a lock on my mouth to remind myself not to say the wrong thing.”

“But Shimmy,” Mommy said. “Hashem already gave you something better than a lock. In front of your tongue, Hashem gave you a beautiful set of teeth and lips. Aside from being an incredible gift that helps us enjoy our food, any time we talk, we should feel our lips and teeth against our tongue, and it should remind us to think before we speak.”

Shimmy ran the tip of his tongue along the inside of his teeth and lips. “Thanks Mommy!” he said. “I’m going to try to always use this to remind myself to think before I speak!”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

Takeaway:

Lashon Hora is a terrible aveirah because it goes against the first two yesodos of the Torah

1. Hashem is listening all the time. 2. because you’re denigrating a great Jew.



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