



Messages

Josh

Can't believe there were so many people at that party... soooooo much fun!

yeah was awesome!!!

can I ask u something?

yep

did you see how much Sam was drinking? he really drank a LOT.....

yeah i saw..what's the issue?

idk...im just a little worried... he does this every weekend. I'm nervous he's going to get hurt or something. He would KILL me if I told anyone... but I spoke to him about it and he really doesn't think there is an issue...

it can't be that bad...r u sure you're not overreacting?

u haven't seen him. it's bad. I want to tell someone... what do u think?

Scenario #1: Finding Purpose

The sources for the prohibition of speaking Lashon Harah:

Shemos 23:1	
You shall not accept a baseless report; do not place your hand with a wicked person to be a false witness.	לֹא תִשָּׂא שְׁמֵעַ שְׂוֵא אֶל תִּשֶׁת יָדְךָ עִם רָשָׁע לְהִיט עַד חֲמָס.

Vayikra 19:16	
You shall not go around as a gossipmonger amidst your people. You shall not stand by [the shedding of] your fellow's blood. I am God.	לֹא תֵלֶךְ רֹכִיל בְּעַמֶּיךָ לֹא תַעֲמֹד עַל דַּם רֵעֶךָ אֲנִי ה'.

Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner, Collected Letters 59

Here, Rabbi Hutner explains why the prohibition of Lashon Harah is permitted when it is to prevent personal harm or damage:

Rabbi Hutner, Igros U'Kesvim #59	
The reason why the Torah chose the word שוא, meaning baseless, to describe the prohibition of Lashon Harah, is because the essence of the prohibition of Lashon Harah is purposeless gossiping. However, when the matter being discussed will have an impact on you financially, it is no longer considered speech that is baseless gossiping since it is YOU who is being affected.	הדבר המדביק את תואר ה'שוא' לשמוע לשון הרע הוא משום דדיבור לשון הרע הוא דיבור רכילות... אבל באופן שהדבר נוגע לו מצד 'לא יהיה בך אביון' (דברים טו:ד), שיש כאן חשש של הבאת עצמו לעניות- שוב אין שמיעה זו שמיעה של רכילות כלל.



Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan (1838-1933), popularly known for his work, *Sefer Chafetz Chaim* (*Seeker of Life*) was a Jewish leader in Radin, Poland. The *Sefer Chafetz Chaim*, published in 1873, details all of the laws of speech. Covering the restrictions of slander and gossip, the work remains popular today. R. Kagan was a recognized leader throughout the world for his ethical writing as well as his work detailing all of daily Jewish law, known as the *Mishnah Berurah*. His works are still widely studied throughout the world.

In this sefer, he discusses the 7 conditions that are needed in order for Lashon Harah to be considered “for a purpose” and therefore permissible:

Sefer Chofetz Chaim, Laws of Lashon Harah 10:2

1. The speaker should either see the act himself, or verify it. He should not repeat it based on rumors.	1. שיראה המספר את הדבר בעצמו, או שיתברר לו הדבר, ולא שיספר על סמך שמיעה מאחרים.
2. A significant effort must be made not to jump to negative conclusions. Rather, the speaker must compare what was done as it relates to the laws of the Torah.	2. שיהיה מאוד לא להחליט מיד את הדבר שבדעתו לגנות, אלא יתבונן היטב על פי דרכי התורה האם הוא בכלל גנות ועבירה.
3. The person who did something wrong should be gently criticized.	3. שיוכיח את החוטא בתחילה בלשון רכה.
4. When repeating what happened, no exaggerations at all should be included. Only the exact truth should be spoken.	4. שלא יגדיל העולה יותר ממה שהיא, אלא יספר האמת ללא גזמא.
5. The speaker must intend to be constructive and should not enjoy discussing negativity of another person. The speaker cannot speak out of anger.	5. שיכוון לתועלת, ולא יכוון להנות מסיפור הפגם על חבירו, וכן לא יספר מתוך שנאה שיש לו עליו זה מכבר.
6. Efforts must be made to mitigate the negativity or avoid it all together. If there is a way to accomplish the goal without negativity, then no negative speech is allowed. If the goal can be reached by minimizing the negative speech, then there is a mitzvah to do so.	6. אם יכול המספר לסבב את התועלת הקיימת בסיפור הגנות על חבירו בדרך אחרת, בה לא יצטרך לספר עליו הגנות, אסור לספר. ואם יכול להקטין הגנות, והתועלת לא תפגם כתוצאה מכך, מצווה עליו להקטינה.
7. The negative information should not be shared more than needed and the reports should be made with the seriousness of a court of law.	7. שלא יסובב נזק לבעל הגנות יותר מכפי הדין, אילו היו מעידים עליו על גנות זו בבית דין.



Hey, it's me. Gotta few minutes?

11:03 ✓✓

Hey! What's up?

11:05

Ummm....Not such an easy conversation.

11:05 ✓✓

why r u acting weird? whats going on?

11:06

Ok. Well... I was pretty upset a few weeks ago when everything went down... and I really feel bad, but I kinda... was really a jerk and said some really not nice things about u to some people. I didn't even mean what I said, I was just upset. And I feel kinda guilty, so I wanted to apologize.

11:08 ✓✓

Ummm...wow. ok. maybe would've been better if you said nothing. Can't believe you did that. well thanks for the apology hope your guilt is gone.

11:12

Wait... what? r u upset? I'm trying to apologize... not trying to make you angry

11:12 ✓✓

Would rather not have heard your apology... thanks for nothing

11:13



Text input field with a vertical cursor line on the left and a horizontal line at the bottom.



Scenario #2: Saying “I’m sorry” Face-to-Face for Talking Behind their Back

When Rabbi Kagan traveled throughout Europe asking Rabbis to write approbations for his work, one very notable Rabbi refused. Rabbi Yisroel Salantar (1810-1883) was the founder of *The Mussar Movement*, which spread ethical teaching throughout European Yeshivos. He objected to writing an approbation based on the following passage in the work *Chafetz Chaim*:

Sefer Chofetz Chaim, Laws of Lashon Harah 12:4

And even if the person about whom you spoke negatively was unaware, you must still reveal to him what you unjustly did.

ואפילו אם חברו אינו יודע עדיין כלל מזה צריך לגלות לו מה שעשה נגדו שלא כדין.

As we have seen, it is not always clear when a person should be forthcoming about wronging another. Here, we will examine a source that discusses when and how a person should share their frustrations with another person:

Leviticus 19:17

You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your fellow, but you shall not bear a sin on his account.

לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך הוֹכַח תוֹכִיחַ אֶת עַמִּיתְךָ וְלֹא תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חַטָּא.

WHAT DOES NOT HATING SOMEONE IN YOUR HEART HAVE TO DO WITH REBUKE?

Ramban- Nachmanides, ibid.

When the verse states, “Do not hate your brother in your heart”, it refers to a time when your friend does something against your wishes. You should rebuke him, saying, “Why did you do this to me?” When the verse continues with, “And do not bear a sin because of him,” it means that you should not hide your frustration in your heart by not telling him what he did to offend you. When you are honest, your friend will either justify what he did, or he will repent and admit his offense, and you will forgive him.

ויאמר הכתוב, אל תשנא את אחיך בלבבך בעשותו לך שלא כרצונך, אבל תוכיחנו מדוע ככה עשית עמדי, ולא תשא עליו חטא לכסות שנאתו בלבבך ולא תגיד לו, כי בהוכיחך אותו יתנצל לך, או ישוב ויתודה על חטאו ותכפר לו. ואחרי כן יזהיר שלא תנקום ממנו ולא תיטור בלבבך מה שעשה לך, כי יתכן שלא ישנא אותו אבל יזכור החטא בלבו, ולפיכך יזהירנו שימחה פשע אחיו וחטאתו מלבו. ואחרי כן יצווה שיאהב לו כמוהו.

 **Samantha**



More ▼

me: Hey... did you see the article online this morning?

Sent at 10:27 PM on Monday

Samantha: No.. what r u talking about?

Sent at 10:29 PM on Monday

me: um I can't believe you didn't hear yet....two seniors got caught shoplifting! They were in jail overnight!!!!

Samantha: WHAT?!?! OMG. what happened????

me: idk i guess they went to the mall and took some stuff from the apple store. Soooo dumb of them. they stole from a store that has cameras everywhere!!! on the way out, 3 cops arrested them IN CUFFS. i feel so bad for them must be so embarrassing and their parents will prob kill them!!!

Samantha: Whoa. u think school knows? will they be kicked out?

Sent at 10:32 PM on Monday

me: idk...i guess so

Sent at 10:33 PM on Monday

Samantha: Who was it? You have to tell me!

me: Idk i feel bad...maybe no one else knows. it was a small link at the bottom of the news... not a major story. But still....crazy right?

Sent at 10:35 PM on Monday

Samantha: WOULD YOU TELL ME WHO IT WAS ALREADY????



Pop-in ↙

Scenario #3: But Everyone Knows!

Talmud Arachin 16a

Rabbah the son of Rav Huna said, anything said in front of 3 people is no longer subject to the laws of Lashon Harah. What is the reason for this law? [Once 3 people know, we assume] they will tell friends, and their friends will share with their friends.

רבה בר רב הונא: כל מילתא דמיתאמרא באפי תלתא, לית בה משום לישנא בישא; מ"ט? חברך חברא אית ליה, וחברא דחברך חברא אית ליה.

Rambam Hilchos De'os 7:5

Whether a person speaks Lashon Harah in the presence of his fellow or outside his presence, or one is speaking things that will bring about - if heard one person from another - injury to his fellow in either his body or his property, or even serve to distress or frighten him, that is lashon hara. And if these things were said in the presence of three, then the matter has already been heard and become known, and if one of the three relates the matter another time, there is no prohibition involved on account of Lashon Harah. But that is only if he does not intend to spread the rumor and expose it further.

אחד המספר בלשון הרע בפני חבריו או שלא בפניו, והמספר דברים גורמים אם נשמעו איש מפי איש להזיק חבריו בגופו או בממונו ואפילו להצר לו או להפחידו הרי זה לשון הרע, ואם נאמרו דברים אלו בפני שלשה כבר נשמע הדבר ונודע, ואם סיפר הדבר אחד מן השלשה פעם אחרת אין בו משום ל לשון הרע, והוא שלא יתכוין להעביר הקול ח ולגלותו יותר.

Tosafos Arachin 15b

The leniency of allowing Lashon Harah to be spoken in front of three people only applies to cases where the words spoken have an ambiguous meaning and can either be interpreted positively or negatively (for example: "Wow, Josh is so rich, he must get whatever he wants."). In such a case of ambiguous speech, if it is spoken in front of three people, one can assume it was meant to be positive, otherwise he wouldn't have risked making a statement that would get back to the person who is being spoken about. However, if the statement is clearly negative, than even in front of three people it would be prohibited.

כל מילתא דמיתאמרא באפי תלתא לית בה משום לישנא בישא - פירוש כגון כה"ג דנורא בי פלוני דאיכא למישמע דלא אמרה משום לישנא בישא אבל אם הוא אמר דבר קנטור על חבריו אפילו היה אומרה בפניו אית ביה משום לישנא בישא.

What is the machlokes, argument, between the Rambam and Tosafos?