The Nuclear Weaponization of Loshon Hora

### **6** Strategies



# **PHENO**

#### HOW TO STOP THE DAMAGE

פרשת תזריע מצורע APRIL 21, 2018 י 6 IYAR 5778



CHOFETZ CHAIM HERITAGE FOUNDATION THE ZICHRON YAAKOV TZVI CENTER FOR THE TEACHINGS OF THE CHOFETZ CHAIM

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#### TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE AN

Due to time constraints we were not able to contact all Kehillos.

לע״נ Isadore and Ruth Gibber a"H AND CHARLES AND KATE GOLDNER A"H Elliot and Debbie Gibber and Family

לע״נ הרב הגאון רב חיים ישראל בעלסקי זצוק״ל Shlomo Yehuda and Tamar Rechnitz

<sup>לע״נ</sup> ישראל לייב בן מרדכי ז״ל שרה רחל בת ישראל לייב ע״ה לרפואה שלמה לכל חולי ישראל

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Whether we are speaking person-to-person or online, when we erase Hashem's instructions for proper speech from our lives.

> we are at the same time erasing from our lives so much of the brachah

When our words or posts humiliate one of Hashem's children, we create division among ourselver

IN THE

CHAIM WAS

PUBLISHED.

HAS JOINED

THE BATTLE

LOSHON HORA.

SOCIAL MEDIA

IS GIVING OUR

AGE-OLD ENEMY

A NEW SURGE

OF POWER.

AGAINST

BUT NOW

KLAL YISRAEL

into which all Hashem's goodness flows.

We compromise the merit to appeal to Hashem's compassion. We may think of loshon hora as a debt that only comes due in the Next World, but in reality **145 YEARS SINCE** our words create the world we live in here and now. **SEFER CHOFETZ** And so, this **Parshas Tazriyah-Metzorah**, hundreds of Rabbonim are uniting to bring their Kehillos the awareness of the damage of Loshon Hora in speech and in all of its new technological forms. Now is the time to repair **the breaches** that are opening moment by moment in our wall of Divine protection. This Shabbos is a window of opportunity in which we can raise our awareness

of what our mouths - and for many of us, our digital devices - are doing to our world.

Winning the battle against loshon hora means empowering our Torah and Tefillah, bringing us sholom and brochah and

**DIVINE PROTECTION.** 

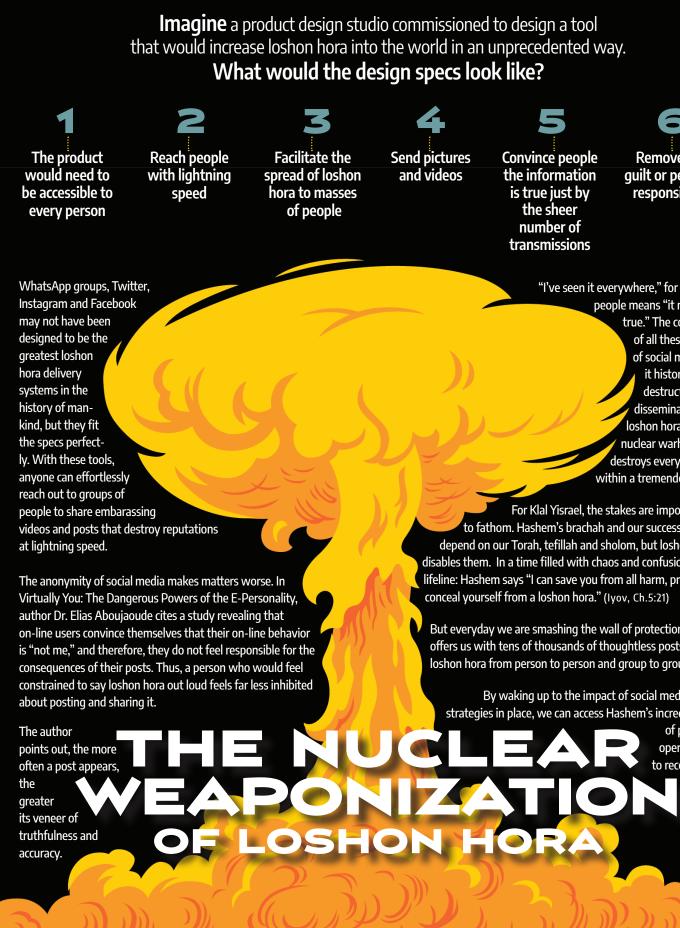
Standing together, it's a battle we can win.



### The Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation's Mission

is to inspire Jews around the world to grasp the life-enhancing gift of Shmiras Haloshon and to provide easy access to a wide array of options designed to spark personal growth.

powerofspeech.org



#### **Imagine** a product design studio commissioned to design a tool that would increase loshon hora into the world in an unprecedented way. What would the design specs look like?

Send pictures and videos

Convince people the information is true just by the sheer number of transmissions

5

### 6

**Remove any** quilt or personal responsibility

"I've seen it everywhere," for most people means "it must be true." The combination of all these elements of social media makes it history's most destructive disseminator of loshon hora. It is a nuclear warhead that destroys everything within a tremendous radius.

For Klal Yisrael, the stakes are impossible to fathom. Hashem's brachah and our success as Jews depend on our Torah, tefillah and sholom, but loshon hora disables them. In a time filled with chaos and confusion, this is our lifeline: Hashem says "I can save you from all harm, provided you conceal yourself from a loshon hora." (Iyov, Ch.5:21)

But everyday we are smashing the wall of protection Hashem offers us with tens of thousands of thoughtless posts that dart loshon hora from person to person and group to group.

By waking up to the impact of social media and putting strategies in place, we can access Hashem's incredible promises

> of protection and open up our world to receive Hashem's goodness.

## STRATEGIES

#### "WITH STRATEGIES, YOU SHOULD WAGE WAR"

MISHLEI, CH 24:6

3. Attention Admins

of WhatsApp groups or other

social media platforms:

Make your group

Loshon Hora free!

even if it already went viral. Just because it's making the rounds and everyone knows about it, does not prevent a negative report from being loshon hara.

ספר חפץ חיים הלכות לשון הרע ב, יא

2. You can't share loshon hara about someone you decide is "bad" unless that someone is: a) halachically considered a "rasha"; and **b)** you are publicizing it so that people should stay away. It is not so easy to become a "rasha". speaking or writing. Merely Unless someone casts off Judaism (porek ol) he is not a "rasha". Non-frum people are generally classified as acting innocently (tinokos shenishbe'u) because they don't know better, so you cannot speak negatively about them. ספר חפץ חיים הלכות לשון הרע ד, ה



5. Taking a picture 6. You cannot . It's loshon hara publicize a person's if it's embarrassing,

of food at a restaurant and making fun private matter. of the quality with a Even if someone called you and you cute "emoii" or iust one "star"is bonarecorded the phone fide loshon hora. as call, you cannot it may cause harm to post it without his the store owner.

ספר חפץ חיים

הלכות לשון הרע ה, ז

incident. does not permission. ספר חפץ חיים הלכות רכילות ח, ה

ספר חפץ חיים הלכות לשון הרע א, ט

lust because vou

**Sian up** for the Shabbos Table Machsom L'fi\*

Before you post, click,

HOW WOULD I FEEL IF

THIS POST WAS ABOUT ME?

power of speech.org

"how would I feel" sticker

visit powerofspeech.org/

forward or share:

To get your free

computersticker.

Think.

Create a Shabbos of sweetness and harmony. The Shabbos Table Machsom L'fi takes the concept of a ed for every lew to observe and Machsom L'fi and uses it to enhance succeed at this crucial mitzvah. and uplift every Shabbos meal.

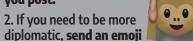
Sign up at powerof speech.org/shabbos



4,391 families have already signed up!

#### **Post vour Protest** If you're on a group and Loshon

Hora or bullying is being shared: 1. Verbalize your displeasure by replying **#Think before** you post.



of the monkey covering his ears. 3. If nothing else works, leave the group.

#### 2. Daily Learning: Learning the Laws of Shmiras Haloshon

in small portions, was the method that the Chofetz Chaim recommend-



Seforim available at bookstores or at powerof speech.org/shop.

## Distribute the free

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**PER** 

Shabbos menu newsletter with weekly inspiration to your shul.



2. Set up a shiur to learn the halochos of Shmiras Haloshon every day before or after davening.

> Visit powerofspeech.org/shop or at any Jewish bookstore for Seforim.

3. Post a 20 second Shmiras Haloshon message on your shul email list. Sign up at powerofspeech.org/post.

For newsletter sign up at powerofspeech.org/shabbosmenu.

## **\*WHAT IS A MACHSOM L'FI**

A Machsom L'fi is a program in which people commit themselves to focusing for a set period of time each day on the proper use of their power of speech as defined in the Torah. During that time, they concentrate on avoiding speaking and hearing loshon hora, gossip, slander, ona'as devarim (hurtful and angry words). The goal of Machsom L'fi is to grow in Shmiras Haloshon step-by-step. Often, a Machsom L'fi is undertaken as a zechus for someone who is in need of a refuah, a shidduch, children, parnassah or a personal yeshuah.

#### 3. Machsom L'fi\*

Call 845-352-3505 ext. 116 machsomlfi

#### new 20 second a day inspirational post at powerofspeech.org/post.

Organize a Machsom L'fi as a powerful merit for a friend or relative in need of Divine Assistance. Our free organizers

### Visit powerofspeech.org/admin to receive a protocol system. 4. Subscribe your group to a

kit makes it simple.

## or visit powerofspeech.org/

## 4. Powerofspeech App

Download our free app at the Apple store or Google play with a daily audio or text learning of Shmiras Haloshon and engaging videos.

1. It is still loshon hara

**3.** Loshon hara is about conveying negative or harmful information: it is not specifically about posting a video or picture of someone acting improperly is loshon horah even if you don't add anv "cute" negative comment.

**4.** You cannot post a video of frum Jews making a chillul Hashem because its "news" or "interesting." Let's face it. What is a greater chillul Hashem than publicizing a chillul Hashem!

פשוט

ספר חפץ חיים הלכות לשון הרע א, ח

#### 

8. There is no heter to speak ..even if it's hysteriabout a group of cal...and even if you people. Writing "Chassidim... were also involved. Yekkes... don't care about the are so...." is a allow you to shame of loshon hara. someone who does.

Lakewooders,etc. severe example

> ספר חפץ חיים הלכות לשון הרע י, יב

9. Even if you are writing fact, and even judge a person if it is not technically loshon hara, there is a prohibition against generating discord and friction amongst people.

ספר הפץ חיים

**10.** One may not unfavorably...and generally when you post a pic or video of someone doina something questionable, vou clearly mean "wink wink. Can you believe he is doing הלכות רכילות ט, ד this..."which is clearly prohibited.



## <sup>66</sup> The loshon hora post and subsequent viral storm hit at our son's Bar Mitzvah.

**The negative comments came pouring in.** What was supposed to be one of life's happiest moments was a nightmare. Now whenever I meet people, it's **"Aren't you the one who..."** My life has been reduced to one unfortunate moment in time. Hundreds of people forwarded the post.

## What were they thinking?

- A N O N Y M O U S



#### <sup>66</sup>I would advise those seeking

to improve their economic situation to take exceedingly great care in regard to loshon hora, and especially not to harm others actively through, cheating and the like...if one respects another person's feelings and possessions, his own possessions shall certainly be blessed more than if he had performed any segulah.