

A Quick Review Of the Laws of Lashon Hara L'Toeles

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Question: Over the past two weeks, we have gone over many halachos of when it is permitted to speak *Lashon Hara* for a *toeles*. Can we do a quick review of the guidelines?

Answer: I have created a chart with the basic rules.

We can split the beneficial impact of the words being spoken into two categories.

1. If someone is in danger of being harmed and the information will save him.
2. If no one is in danger of being hurt, the information will be beneficial (for example, informing someone that a restaurant's food is not good).

We can divide the impact on the one being spoken about into three categories.

1. If the one being spoken about will be hurt in some way.
2. If the one being spoken about won't be hurt at all.
3. If the one being spoken about will not lose anything he already has, but he will lose an opportunity.

We can now say the following general rules:

If the one being spoken about is doing something wrong that could hurt someone else, it is permitted to speak *Lashon Hara* about him even if this will cause harm to the subject, provided that he is deserving of that harm [i.e. a *bais din* would inflict this kind of harm to stop him].

If he isn't doing anything wrong and no one is in danger and the *Lashon Hara* will cause him an actual loss, it is forbidden to say it even if it would provide benefit.

If the *Lashon Hara* will not cause the one being spoken about any loss at all, it is permitted to say it for any *toeles*.

If it will not cause him a real loss, but will cause him to lose an opportunity, it would depend on whether the information being spoken is derogatory or not. If it is derogatory, it is generally forbidden except for certain exceptions (such as for an Amazon review according to many Poskim). If the information is not derogatory, many Poskim say that it is permitted to say. In almost all cases where it is permitted to speak *Lashon Hara* for a *toeles*, the Chofetz Chaim's seven conditions must be met.