

## Feathers in the wind

Once upon a time there was a woman who loved to gossip. Every day she would sit with her friends gossiping about the bad things others may have done. "Can you believe he did that?" "Can you believe she said that?" "And did you see what he was wearing? A man of his age..." On and on and on she would gossip.

One day the Rabbi asked to see her. "There's something I want you to do for me," he told her. He gave her a cushion and told her to go outside, cut it open and release all the feathers to the wind. "But why?" she pleaded. "Just do as I ask," he told her.

The woman went outside, slit the cushion open and released all the feathers to the wind where they were quickly blown far and wide and out of sight.

'Now,' said the Rabbi, "I would like you to go out and bring back all the feathers."

"But I can't," she pleaded. "They've been blown from pillar to post, down the street, over the hill. I'll never be able to bring them all back."

The Rabbi looked at her sternly. "And so it is with words and idle gossip," he told her. "Words once spoken can never be taken back. There is no telling how far they will travel and what harm they could do. From now on, I want you to think before you speak."

And she did.