

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

SHABBOS MENU

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS VAYEITZEI 5781 • ISSUE 218

'SURELY THERE'S A GOOD EXPLANATION'

Is that your Rabbi walking out of the non-kosher take-out store? Is that the renowned Rebbetzin from Yerushalayim cutting the line in the grocery store? Is that your yeshivah's Mashgiach chatting with a teenage girl in front of the pizza shop? And what if it is?

THE DILEMMA

A strange and troubled family moves into your community. There's a mother, seven children and no father. The children are unmanageable and sometimes violent. The mother has no power over her older boys, who are, at 10, 12 and 14, already taller than she is. Neither has she any money, resources or family to turn to.

The rabbi of the community seems strangely aloof from this family's plight. People try to get him involved, yet he keeps a distance. He "out-sources" the problem to other activists in the wider community, but matters go from bad to worse. Why won't this Rav, who helps hundreds of people daily, step in?

"It's terrible," says one neighbor of the unfortunate woman. "It seems as if he couldn't care less about this poor family!"

How are we to view this seeming lack of compassion from a trusted Torah leader?

Reviewed by Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Lowy. For discussion only; actual halachic decisions should be made by a rav or halachic expert on a case-by-case basis.



THE HALACHAH

Because he is a trusted Torah leader, a person known for his *yiras Shamayim*, we must assume that there's more to the picture than we can see and that his actions are justified. Additionally, the neighbor is guilty of being *motzi shem ra*.

*Sefer Chofetz
Chaim,
Hilchos Loshon
Hora, Klal 3:7*

A TASTE OF PLEASURE

The yetzer hara tries to lure people into seeking pleasure by promising instant gratification. Yet doing the right thing, though it may be a long, hard road, brings far greater pleasure in the end. Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshis'cha once commented that if the baal taavah only knew how much pleasure the tzaddik has, he would become a tzaddik overnight!

There is a way to taste the tzaddik's pleasure without the long wait, and that is with the Shabbos Table Machsom L'Fi kabbalah. The moment you decide to abstain from loshon hora, your whole family is surrounded by a happy atmosphere. Take a taste and you'll see...it works!

Rabbi Avraham Neuberger

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

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"From my younger years

until

my old age,

I never saw someone
lose by being

mes'ater."

– HaRav Aharon Leib Shteinman, zt"l

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MALKA BREINDEL A"H BAS SHMUEL FISHEL YLCH"Y

In business, people sometimes think that disparaging the competition or his merchandise is “part of the game,” especially if it seems that a competitor is being unfair — for example, if he undercuts the price or opens a store nearby. No matter how people view these comments, the Chofetz Chaim tells us that they’re *loshon hora*.

We can steer clear of this stumbling block by following the example of three businesses in Monsey that demonstrated exactly how a Jew should view his *parnassah*:

Zisha’s Bakery, now located in the Evergreen Supermarket in Monsey, was formerly on Main Street, a few doors down from Monsey Take-Out. To save its customers an errand, Monsey Take-Out stocked Zisha’s challahs.

One day, Zisha’s Bakery burned down. Soon afterward, the owner of Zisha’s got a call from the owner of Taam Eden, a competing bakery in the nearby town of New Square. “You can bake your challahs here until you get back on your feet,” he offered. Rather than trying to benefit from the extra customers that would have come his way, Taam Eden’s owner helped his competitor remain in business.

There was, however, a time lag between the fire and Zisha’s resumption of baking at Taam Eden. In that gap, Monsey Take-Out bought Taam Eden challahs. However, once Zisha’s began producing again, Taam Eden’s owner sent Monsey Take-Out back to Zisha’s.

“Why are you buying from me?” Zisha’s owner asked. “You’re Taam Eden’s customer. You should be buying from them.”

“No, no, I’ve always been your customer,” the Monsey Take-out owner replied. “That was just temporary.”

“OK, but let me ask you. Whose challahs did you sell more of?” Zisha’s owner asked.
 “Well, to tell you the truth, I’m



YOU WON’T LOSE A PENNY

selling more challahs now. Probably because people can’t go to your store two doors down anymore.”

“Then I won’t take you back as a customer,” replied

sage advice

“I CAN’T BELIEVE YOU THINK THAT!”

In the past, most people could overlook differences of opinion among friends or relatives and “agree to disagree.” But in our current social climate, passions run so high that people feel and act as if those who disagree with them are traitors. Differences of opinion are cleaving relationships apart.

Rabbi Tzvi Sytner of Aish HaTorah in Toronto observes that today, “we are seeing divisiveness turn into hatred. It’s clear that we don’t know how to deal with people who are different from us.”

The answer, he says, comes from Avraham Avinu in his dealings with the people of Sedom. In our day another person’s political preferences might rankle us to the point where we think, “You’d have to be blind or evil to support him,” and yet we know that this person is neither blind nor evil. The people of Sedom, however, were firmly committed to evil, a complete anathema to Avraham’s holy and kind-hearted ways.

However, he didn’t celebrate their upcoming end. Instead, he prayed for them to redeem themselves and live to bring goodness into the world. If Avraham Avinu could do this for the most debased society in the world, certainly we can do it for people we believe are misguided.

“We have a choice,” says Rabbi Sytner. “We can hate those we think are wrong, or we can daven for them. We can stop for a moment and pray for their health, their marriage, their kids – that they have the best of the best in their life so they can see things more clearly.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do we feel that we have to get the other person to see things our way?

Zisha’s owner.”

All these businessmen knew that Hashem alone provides their *parnassah*.

If we truly believe that, then we know that *loshon hora* about a competitor can never do any good.

TALK ABOUT IT

What are some other situations besides business in which we might fall into the trap of speaking *loshon hora* to get ahead of someone else?

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