

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

SHABBOS MENU



PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS NASO 5781 • ISSUE 241

WHEN THE SHOE IS ON THE OTHER FOOT

The simple fact is that a certain someone is not very smart. You're not saying he's a bad person or that he's committed a sin. You're just describing a fact about him. How could this be loshon hora?

THE DILEMMA

"Have you had a chance to get to know your new brother-in-law?" Michael asked his friend Sholom. They were standing outside the *simchah* hall as Sholom's sister's wedding was winding down. She had been dating for many years, and Sholom was curious as to who this long-awaited *chassan* might be.

"Yeah, he came over for Shabbos a couple of weeks ago so we had plenty of time together," Sholom answered.

"So what's he like?" Michael asked.
"Who was good enough for Suri?"

"He's great. He's very calm and easy-going and my parents are nuts over him," Michael answered. "I'm surprised, though, that he's not particularly smart. You know Suri...she never got less than an A in anything. Ever. But I guess that's not what's important to her."

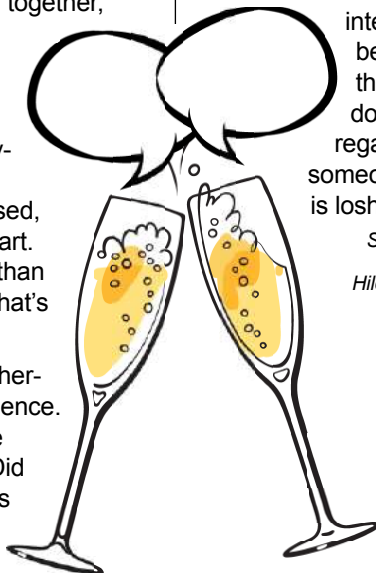
Michael wasn't faulting his new brother-in-law for his seeming lack of intelligence. In fact, he made the comment in the course of praising the young man. Did Michael speak loshon hora about his new brother-in-law?

THE HALACHAH

The Chofetz Chaim warns us that whatever we would find offensive if we overheard it being said about us is considered loshon hora when we say it about someone else. Because no one would

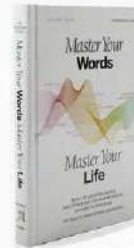
want to hear his intelligence belittled, then doing so regarding someone else is loshon hora.

*Sefer Chofetz
Chaim,
Hilchos Loshon
Hora 5:3*



PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

I had to let you know what an amazing book Master Your Words Master Your Life is.



It's easy reading, relevant, well written and practical – it really speaks to me. It leaves me empowered and with a lot of food for thought.

Thank you for all the wonderful CCHF publications and programs!

C.M.R.
Lakewood, NJ

LAKEWOOD

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

"Wherever peace

reigns,

the Satan cannot

prosecute."

– Sefer Chareidim, ch. 4

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.

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MALKA BREINDEL A" H BAS SHMUEL FISHEL YLCH" T

‘I DIDN’T SEE A THING’

A young man showed up at the Gateshead Yeshiva at the beginning of a new *zman*. He didn’t know anyone there, but he was a confident, lively boy who was sure he would find his place. However, within the first few days he managed to get on the wrong side of a small group of aggressive boys. They began to fight with him and he took off, running as fast as he could.

He ran into the library and slammed the door shut. The boys banged on the door, yelling, “Open up!” He screamed “Go away!”

Then all was quiet, but he stayed put, uncertain whether they were gone or lying in wait. A few moments later there was a knock on the door. “Who is it?” the boy asked. “It’s the Rosh Yeshiva [Rabbi Avrohom Gurwicz]. I need a *sefer*.” “Right! I know it’s a trick. Get out of here!”

There was silence for a few moments and then another knock. Again the person claimed to be the Rosh Yeshiva and again the boy refused to open the door. After another wait, there was another knock.

The boy suddenly realized that the voice on the other side of the door might very well be the Rosh Yeshiva. He opened the door to find the Rosh Yeshiva standing with his head turned away so as not to see who was emerging.

Three years later, when this boy was leaving Gateshead to learn in Eretz Yisrael, he rose to speak at a goodbye *seudah* held in his honor. “We all know our Rosh Yeshiva is a great *talmid chacham*,” he said, “but you may not know the extent of his sensitivity.” He told the story, revealing for the first time to the Rosh Yeshiva the identity of the boy who had locked him out of the library. “If the Rosh Yeshiva would have seen my face,” he said, “I would have left the next morning and missed out on three great years of learning.”



TALK ABOUT IT

What are some ways we can save people from embarrassment in our own lives?

sage advice

HOW TO HANDLE HURT

“How can you be so spaced out? Why don’t you watch what you’re doing?” Noam screamed at Yitzchak.

Yitzchak, a bit of an “absent-minded professor,” had knocked over Noam’s coffee, which was on the table where the two young men were learning. Not only was the coffee cup empty now, but the Gemara page was flooded with the warm, milky brew.

Yitzchak was the smarter of the two, more of a teacher than learning partner. Noam was athletic and popular. Yitzchak always felt a bit clumsy and dull in his presence — and now he had spilled the coffee, proving it. Yitzchak felt miserable, and at the same time he felt angry. Wasn’t he entitled to make a mistake? Wasn’t he human? Was Noam always perfect?

“I’m done with this guy,” Yitzchak thought. “What’s the point of learning with him if he’s not even a mentch!”

Insults that cut into our self-esteem are difficult to process. However, the *Chovos Halevavos* teaches us how to not only survive, but to benefit from these moments. Most insults contain some element of truth, and therefore, he suggests, we should turn our eyes toward heaven and thank Hashem for this opportunity for greater self-awareness. If not for the fact that Yitzchak was somewhat inattentive to his surroundings, Noam’s comment wouldn’t have hurt. When we realize that the pain comes from Hashem and the speaker is only His agent, we know there’s something He wants us to gain from it. This knowledge can turn our anger into gratitude.

Note: This does not apply to an abusive situation, which requires professional intervention.

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TALK ABOUT IT

What would Yitzchak be thinking if he were taking the advice of the *Chovos Halevavos*?



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