

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

SHABBOS MENU

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS VA'ESCHANAN 5781 • ISSUE 250

THEY GIVE YOU A NEW NAME

You see a group of friends talking. While you are not one to speak loshon hora, you know that the people in this group always have the latest news. If you walk over to them and listen in, are you responsible for what you hear?

THE DILEMMA

Michal, Avigayil and Batsheva, three friends from high school, ended up as married women working in the same office. Their social circles overlapped quite a bit and one of them always had news about some mutual friend.

Naama, another employee, didn't know anyone at the office, but the other three women always welcomed her to join them for lunch. She found their lively conversation to be an enjoyable break in a long, dull day of taking customer-service calls. Their wry jokes about the flaws and missteps of their friends – women she didn't even know – put a smile on her face. She eagerly soaked up their stories, although she had none to offer of her own.

Was Naama doing anything wrong?



THE HALACHAH

Joining a group that speaks loshon hora with the intention of hearing what they have to say is far worse than joining reluctantly. In heaven, says the Chofetz Chaim, such a person is called a *baal loshon hora*, even if he doesn't utter a word.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim
Hilchos Loshon Hora 6:6*

PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

I just wanted you to know that I bought Live the Blessing with the intention of reading one story each night, but I could not put it down! Each lesson was amazing, and I stayed up all night reading it.



Now I am learning it weekly with my family, and I purchased copies for my entire staff. Keep up your wonderful work!

Received from the principal of a Bais Yaakov girls school on the East Coast.

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

"It is only right for a person to be

more
concerned with his
speech
than his property."

–Rambam, Iggeres HaShmad Ch. 1

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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MAKING LEMONADE FROM LIFE'S LEMONS

Josh heard the murmur of his parents' voices rising from the kitchen late one night. Something sounded wrong. He crept downstairs and listened. The words drifting through the air were frightening: "The landlord won't wait anymore," his father was saying, "but we owe him so much. There's no way to catch up. He's ready to evict us..."

Returning to bed with tears flowing, Josh's mind turned to one thought: How could he help? An idea came to him. The next morning, he asked his mother for a few dollars for a trip to the grocery store. He returned with a bottle of lemon juice, some sugar, and some empty plastic bottles. Within a short time, he had set up a lemonade stand on his block in Philadelphia. His sign said "Lemonade \$1. Please Help My Family."

Business was not bad, but at \$1 a bottle, sales didn't amount to much. He brought his earnings home to his mother. Deeply touched by her son's caring heart, she took his contribution with a warm thank you and a kiss. The next day, when Josh reopened his stand, a man came by and asked, "What's your story?" He introduced himself as a reporter and invited Josh to be interviewed. At the end of the day, Josh went home with a few more dollars, happy to help in any way he could.

The next day, however, customers were standing many rows deep. The reporter's story had come out and the readers, touched by a young boy's innocent effort to alleviate his parents' plight, were paying \$5, \$10, and even \$20 for their lemonade. By the end of the day, Josh had taken in several thousand dollars. Perhaps the family would squeak through!

At home later that night, the phone rang and his father answered. It was the landlord. "Listen," he said, "I read the story about your son. I could never evict such a sweet kid. Give me what you can



sage advice

YOUR GOOD NEWS, SOMEONE ELSE'S PAIN

A woman came to Rabbi Eli Mansour barely holding back her tears. When he asked her what was wrong, she showed him a picture that had been posted on a social media site. The picture seemed as innocent as could be. It portrayed a smiling family on vacation at a beautiful resort.

"I didn't see what was wrong with the picture," Rabbi Mansour says. "But the woman asked me, 'How can they send out something like this to a whole group? I lost my husband two years ago, and I can't have a vacation with the whole family like they can. Why do they have to rub it in my face? Why do they have to show everyone what they're doing? Don't they care that it's hurting me?'"

In today's media-obsessed world, with its wide array of social forums, people think nothing of posting pictures of their activities. Aside from the lack of modesty exhibited by letting others know more about our lives than we should, when such pictures travel far and wide they are bound to strike a sore spot among some of the recipients. Some, like the woman from Rabbi Mansour's community, might feel the absence of a loved one. Some might feel the pinch of tight finances. Some might feel the pain of ill health.

"So why should we reveal these things?" Rabbi Mansour asks. "What purpose does it serve?" Even when the sender has the most benign intentions, he says, the receiver might take it in an entirely different way. Hashem gives us our moments of joy to appreciate and remember in our own hearts, not to inflict pain in someone else's.

TALK ABOUT IT

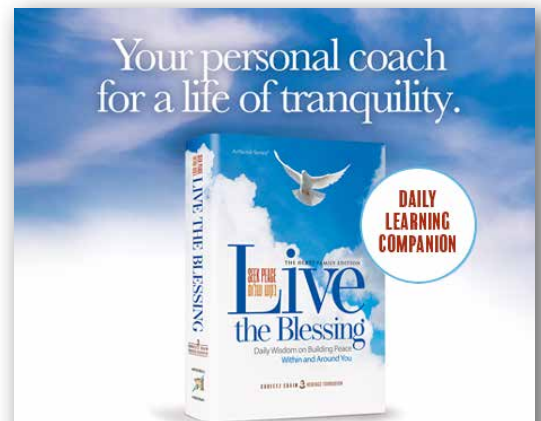
Shouldn't other people be happy for us when something good comes our way?

and we'll work something out."

Hearing this story, Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein saw a lesson: With so much evil and pain in the world, it seems beyond us to help. But if we each do whatever we can to add some sweetness, our effort will not be wasted and our Landlord will surely have pity on us.

TALK ABOUT IT

Have you every attacked a problem that seemed too big for you and discovered *hashgachah pratit* along the way?



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