

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

SHABBOS MENU



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DO HELP BUT DON'T MISCONSTRUE

Children need guidance. Sometimes people notice what the parent or teacher does not; they want to make sure issues are addressed before someone comes to harm. What are they allowed to report?

T H E

DILEMMA

Shua was already in second grade – old enough to know not to push other kids and grab their toys. Nevertheless, his aggressive behavior sometimes turned recess into chaos. One of his primary victims was a short, slight, shy boy named Moishy.

Enjoying the focused attention and sympathy he got when he told his parents about Shua's abuse, Moishy tended to elaborate, and sometimes even fabricate stories. After trying to help their son fend off Shua on his own, Moishy's parents decided to call Shua's parents and warn them that their son was becoming the class bully.

Are they permitted to tell Shua's parents what their son has done to Moishy?



T H E

HALACHAH

If their intention is to make Shua's parents aware of an issue so that they can address it and prevent their son from further anti-social behavior, they are allowed to speak to them. However, they should verify their son's account before having this conversation.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim,
Hilchos Loshon
Hora 8:3*

PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

The story about the will and Rav Dovid Ashear's mashal [in Shabbos Menu 268] were both absolutely, extraordinarily fabulous.

*B. Simon,
A longtime fan
Chicago, IL*

CHICAGO

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

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"Hashem loves

only

those who
love the Jewish people.

And the more one

increases

his *ahavas Yisrael*,
the more [love] Hashem
showers upon him."

– Mesillas Yesharim, ch.19

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



PERFECT GIVE AND TAKE

It was midnight at the Kosel. Avrumi was deep in prayer, oblivious to his surroundings. Suddenly he saw a hand reaching out in front of his face. He turned to see who had approached him, and there stood an elderly man with a long white beard.

“Tzedakah, tzedakah,” the man beseeched.

Avrumi dug into his pockets, checking one after the other and coming up empty each time. Didn't he even have a coin to give the old man? Apparently he was carrying nothing but his bus pass.

He turned to the man earnestly and said, “I'm sorry. I don't have any money on me.”

“Oy! No money!” the elderly man cried with empathy. He surely knew what that felt like. Then he reached into his own pocket and withdrew a shekel, no doubt a product of his night's work. He gave the coin to Avrumi.

Then the man extended his hand again to Avrumi and resumed his plea: “Tzedakah, tzedakah!”

Avrumi took the shekel he had been given and dropped it into the man's hand. The man broke into a warm smile and said, “Thank you!”

The elderly man knew poverty; he knew what it was like to need and to beg. However, he also knew that giving is one of life's greatest pleasures, and his heart ached for the young man who stood there with nothing to give. His solution – to give Avrumi a shekel –



surely didn't make him any richer. But it illustrated poignantly that everyone has something to give.

sage advice

IRON-CLAD PROTECTION

The Torah instructs us how to build an altar for the *Mishkan*. The precise instructions are vital, because having a proper altar is vital. On it are placed the sacrifices that bring us into a close, harmonious relationship with Hashem. This is the most essential relationship the Jewish people can possibly have. It's the vehicle for bringing Hashem's blessings into the world, so we have to do it right.

The first step in the construction process is to choose the building material; the Torah requires that the altar be made of stone. Next, we need tools. Here, the Torah tells us what *not* to use, which is any implement made of iron. The chisel, the axe, and the hammer are all forbidden, even though using them would appear to be the most efficient way to cut and shape stones.

Rashi explains this prohibition. He says that iron is the material of which weapons are made. The same material that kills and maims may not be used on the stones that will create the ultimate *shalom* between Klal Yisrael and Hashem. Because the stones are there to make peace, they cannot be subjected to the violence of iron.

From this Rashi, we can see clearly that Hashem has set down a formula: That which makes peace cannot be struck with instruments of destruction. It's not just for stones; it's for us, as well. **When we devote our lives to bringing peace to the world, we protect ourselves from harm. Hashem will not allow an instrument of destruction to touch us.**

TALK ABOUT IT

How can a person live in a way that brings peace between Klal Yisrael and Hashem?



TALK ABOUT IT

Do you think Avrumi felt better giving the man his shekel than he would have felt giving him nothing? Why or why not?



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