

FOOD FOR  
THOUGHT  
TO SPARK  
CONVERSATION

# SHABBOS MENU



PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS MISHPATIM 5782 • ISSUE 277

## WHEN HE DIDN'T KNOW ANY BETTER

People who violate Torah and mitzvos can sometimes be considered "evildoers" who are not protected by the laws of Shmiras Haloshon. But what about people who are just unaware of their obligations? Is ignorance an excuse?

T H E

### DILEMMA

**O**n vacation, you find a small Orthodox shul in a seaside community. The *minyan* is filled with fellow vacationers and a handful of year-rounders. They're warm and welcoming, even going so far as to offer coffee and cake after *Shacharis*.

The cake looks good! You ask a local about the *hechsher* and he explains, "It doesn't need one. I just look at the ingredients and if they're all kosher, there's no problem. See, it says here flour, sugar, vegetable oil and a bunch of preservatives."

"Your rabbi is OK with that?" you ask.

"Oh, we don't have a rabbi. He left a few years ago. Mr. Grossbardt kind of fills in for him. His parents are from Europe, so he knows all the ins and outs."

This is quite a tale to tell your friends back home. May you?

T H E

### HALACHAH

**T**he prohibition against *loshon hora* applies to "*amecha*" – your nation. While evildoers are excluded from this group, people who are ignorant of the mitzvos are still counted within it. Therefore, disparaging them is *loshon hora*.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim,  
Hilchos Loshon Hora  
8:4*



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.

## PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

*There have been a lot of positive changes since we started the Shabbos Table Machsom L'Fi. It has helped us create the Shabbos table we dreamed of.*

*Mr. Dovid Auslander  
New Hempstead, NY*

NEW HEMPSTEAD

## FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

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"[At Sinai] every angel revealed its secret and its

*power*

to [Moshe Rabbeinu].  
The Angel of Death did too. It

*disulged*

that its secret is  
rooted in *loshon hora*."

– Pri Tzaddik,  
Parshas Korach

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MALKA BREINDEL A"H BAS SHMUEL FISHEL YLCH"Y

# LONELY IN A CROWD

**M**any years ago, Yoel Silverberg was attending a *simchah* at the Aperion Manor in Brooklyn, a catering hall long since closed. When he arrived at his table, he saw two friends sitting together on one side and another friend, Aharon, sitting alone across the table. Aharon was a socially awkward young man, and more of an acquaintance than a friend. Quickly surveying the choice of seats, Yoel placed himself with the two closer friends.

As the evening went on, Yoel and his friends were clearly enjoying their time together. Aharon was occupying his own universe across the table, and no one bothered to bring him into the conversation. Eventually, Aharon got up to walk around. At that moment, another acquaintance appeared at the table.

He looked straight at the three friends sitting there and spoke two brief, withering sentences. "Who do you think you are sitting together having a great time while Aharon sits alone on the other side of the table? You should be ashamed of yourselves!"

Yoel winced from the stab of truth in the young man's reproach. Since that day, he has made it his practice to survey his assigned table at a *simchah* before choosing his seat, spot anyone who is



## sage advice FREE WOOD



If someone offered you all the wood you needed to build an extension on your home, wouldn't you take it? How would you feel if, after you built the extension, you discovered that the wood was infested with termites that have now spread to your existing home? Would you still be happy with the gift?

It's normal to want to enhance our lives — to "build an extension." Unfortunately, we might be tempted to seek this bigger, more interesting life by listening to *loshon hora*, thinking we will gain something from it. But just as in the case of the termite-infested wood, we must think carefully about what we accept from others. Once we accept *loshon hora*, it invades our thoughts and spreads its damage to every aspect of our lives.

### TALK ABOUT IT

Why is it difficult to "unhear" *loshon hora*?

sitting alone and sit down next to him. This practice, he says, has changed his life.

"I remembered the name of the person who confronted us, and I knew he had moved to Israel," says Yoel. "Over the years, I've tried to find out his phone number and where he lived. Finally, last year, I got his number and called to thank him. It was 51 years later. I hope I made his day!"

Very few people set out to be hurtful and insensitive. However, most people are comfortable doing the normal things they do, talking about the normal subjects people talk about, and socializing with their normal circle of friends even if someone might suffer "collateral damage." Yoel shows us that when we pay attention to the people around us, we can redefine "normal" to a far higher level.

### TALK ABOUT IT

Have you ever been at an event where you didn't know anyone, or you knew only a few people? How did you react?

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