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SHABBOS MENU

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS EMOR 5782 • ISSUE 290

NOT EVERYONE WOULD AGREE

In any public venue, there are bound to be people with differing opinions about others. Does a speaker have to take this into account when praising someone publicly?

T H E

DILEMMA

Schwartzbaum Commercial Realty was having a sales meeting. Yisrael Jaffe, who had joined the company only a few months earlier, had caught Mr. Schwartzbaum's notice with his hard work and excellent results.

Before Mr. Schwartzbaum began the meeting he turned to Yisrael and said, "It's been a few months since you've joined us and I just want to say that you've been doing a fantastic job. I really appreciate your effort and your follow-through, and as we've seen, it brings in great results!"

When the meeting was over, two of the salesmen who had been there were discussing what had transpired. "Is he joking?" said one. "Jaffe's not working any harder than you or me. He uses his family connections to get buyers. As far as I can see, he's pretty arrogant and lazy."

Is Mr. Schwartzbaum responsible for this man's demeaning remarks?

T H E

HALACHAH

Praising someone in public is bound to bring out a negative response from those in the crowd who do not share the speaker's positive view of the person. Since there are many people around, the likelihood of stirring loshon hora is high, and therefore public praise is *avak loshon hora* and therefore prohibited.

*Sefer
Chofetz
Chaim,
Hilchos
Loshon Hora
9:2*



Kabbalah teaches that each day of the Omer is connected to a different character trait, and Lag Ba'Omer's is connected to Aharon HaKohen. Aharon greeted everyone in a pleasant way. Sensing friendship from this righteous man, the potential wrongdoer would be loath to disappoint such a friend. Even when Aharon admonished someone, his manner conveyed his underlying love and respect. Sefirah marks the deaths of Rabbi Akiva's 24,000 students, whose sin was a lack of respect for one another. Lag Ba'Omer is the counterbalance—the day the dying ceased—a day saturated with the spirit of Aharon HaKohen. By absorbing that spirit, we each come closer to becoming a treasured, trusted friend.

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

"If a dispute is not

settled
in its early stages, it will

escalate
out of control."

— Sanhedrin 7a

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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A KIND REBUKE

Rabbi Aryeh Levin once saw a group of people lined up in front of a small ice cream shop in Jerusalem, just a short time before Shabbos. He realized that for all these people to be served, the store would have to remain open into Shabbos. At the same time, Rav Aryeh empathized with the storekeeper. He recognized what a great temptation the storekeeper would be facing, and how difficult it would be to turn away all these customers. He walked straight to the head of the line and spoke to the storekeeper. "Dear Jew, I know the temptation you are facing right now, but it is almost Shabbos and we are commanded to observe it."

Before the man could respond, Rav Aryeh was gone. But on Sunday, the storekeeper approached him and said: "Rabbi, your words were so kind and tactful that I overcame the temptation and closed my store immediately."



TALK ABOUT IT

How did Rabbi Levin's empathy enable him to succeed with his rebuke?

sage advice

FIRE DOOR: DO NOT OPEN



Empathy is the golden trait of feeling for others. However, sometimes people misunderstand this to mean they should take up arms for the other person, join the fight and get others to join as well. In contrast, the truly empathetic person knows his friend will not benefit from a whirlwind of spreading *machlokes*. We can learn how to empathize properly through the example of the fire door:

When a building is on fire, there are doors that must be kept shut. That is because they prevent the smoke and fire from being sucked up into the stairwells and hallways, quickly spreading their deadly force. What works for physical fire works for the fire of *machlokes* as well.

When someone upsets us, our first instinct is to share our negative feelings with someone who will validate us. But what happens if that confidant goes forth from the conversation and repeats it to others? What happens if they, too, relate the controversy to an even wider group? The result is that people begin to weigh in and take sides. The small flame of one person's hurt feelings turns into a raging wildfire that consumes the peace.

Our lips are the "fire door." If we keep the controversy locked behind them, it will not have a chance to spread. It will lose oxygen and die down.

This does not mean that a person cannot share his burden in order to lighten his troubled heart. He needs to have one confidant who will listen and empathize. That person plays the vital role of helping his friend cool down his anger or soothe his pain. Later, when the person is calmer, the confidant might even be able to show him another side of the situation that will enable him to see things differently.

We can hear our friend's pain and help lower the flame, or repeat it, spread it, and turn it into a deadly blaze. True empathy depends on keeping the fire door closed.

TALK ABOUT IT

What is the attraction in repeating a story that doesn't involve us directly?

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דבורה בת ישראל ע"ה
Dedicated by Uri and Riki Sklar

In honor of the bar mitzvah
of our grandson
DOVID ELIYAHU MARON
Dedicated by
Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Maron and
Rabbi & Mrs. Rosenwasser