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SHABBOS MENU

**FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION**

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS BECHUKOSAI 5782 • ISSUE 292

SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS

When someone is kind and generous to us, praising him to others would seem to be the right thing to do. Is there any way this can backfire?

T H E

DILEMMA

Eliyahu brought his financial documents to the tuition committee of his son's yeshivah, hoping to obtain a generous scholarship. He succeeded. Later, when a group of his friends were discussing the expense of yeshivah education, he said, "Mr. Freund, the new tuition chairman, is a really nice guy. He doesn't grill you. He wants to give people a break."

With this endorsement, several of the men involved in the conversation decided that they, too, should speak to the kind-hearted Mr. Freund. Sure, they could afford full tuition, but if breaks were being given out, why shouldn't they benefit?

Word spread, and soon kind-hearted Mr. Freund, swamped with a mountain of scholarship applicants, was struggling to figure out who really needed the help and who didn't. He was certain that some people who needed the help would not be getting it; next year, he would have to tighten the process.

Was Eliyahu in any way responsible for the negative outcome?

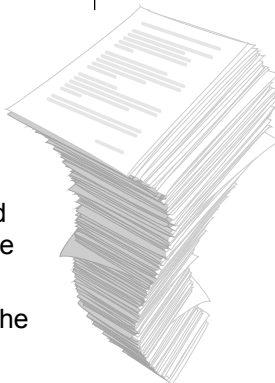
Reviewed by Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Lowy. For discussion only; actual halachic decisions should be made by a rav or halachic expert on a case-by-case basis.

T H E

HALACHAH

Praising someone's generosity in public encourages others, who may be unscrupulous, to go to the person for help. He may be forced to give more than he realistically can, and thus he may sustain damage because of the praise. It is therefore *avak loshon hora*.

*Sefer Chofetz
Chaim,
Hilchos
Loshon
Hora 9:3*



PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

A very big thank you for sending out the Shabbos Menu newsletter.

I find it easy to read, enjoyable and inspiring, and really makes a difference to our Shabbos table.

It's a great way to keep the talk filled with divrei Torah, and everyone (all ages) enjoys the Dilemmas and guessing the Halachah....

May Hashem continue to bless you and help you to inspire Klal Yisrael with shmirat halashon!

Kol Tuv,

Mrs. Ruthie Braude

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

"If someone's words are

he will

*kind,
enjoy*
a good and
peaceful life."

— Yalkut Shimoni, based on Mishlei 13:2

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MALKA BREINDEL A" H BAS SHMUEL FISHEL YLCH" T



LIFE SUPPORT

"Ma, you got flowers!"
 "Who are they from?" Gitta Levin asked in surprise.

The enclosed card only added to the mystery. It read: "Dear Mrs. Levin, I can't thank you enough. Sara Green."

Sara Green was a lovely young woman whom Gitta knew only casually. She recalled that they had seen each other in shul a few weeks ago. But why had Sara Green sent her flowers? Perhaps there was a mistake. She picked up the phone and called Sara.

"Hi, this is Gitta Levin," Gitta said. "Um, I just received a bouquet of flowers and a thank-you note, but I think it may have been a mix-up."

"Oh, it's not a mix-up at all," Sara said, her voice brimming with excitement. "Let me explain."

"Remember I walked out of shul with you a few weeks back? There was an *aufruf* that Shabbos, my best friend's *chassan's aufruf*. With her getting married, I would be the only girl from our class still single.

"I can't describe my feelings as I watched everyone congratulate Adina's mother and throw candies at the *chassan*. I yearned to meet my *bashert*, too, but at nearly thirty years old, I felt like it would never happen. I felt I could no longer bear the repeated disappointments, and I was ready to resign myself to being single. If a *shadchan* called, I decided, I would not even listen to the suggestion.

"Of course, you had no idea of my despairing feeling when you smiled at me as we walked outside together. You asked me how my teaching was going, and how my mother was feeling. Then you turned to me with a big, friendly smile and said, 'Sara, you look simply stunning in that suit! Wherever do you get your great fashion sense? I'm sure your children will be the best-dressed kids on the block!'

"I was speechless. Your kind compliment awakened the hope in me that maybe I, too, could meet my *bashert* and become a wife and a mother.

"I walked home a new person, all my self-pity gone. And your words came at just the right time, because I had been all set to reject the *shidduch* offer that had just come my way. Who wanted another failure? But your words gave me *chizuk* and I agreed to go out.



sage advice

SINS OF OMISSION

The Torah tells us that a person suspected of having *tzaraas* was quarantined for one week—kept in isolation, away from family and friends. And because *tzaraas* was a punishment for *loshon hora*, the ordeal brought shame with it as well. But after one week, the person was re-examined, and at that time, if the Kohen determined that the suspect discoloration wasn't *tzaraas* at all, the person would go free. Case closed.

So it would seem that an innocent person had suffered; he had been shamed and separated from the community for seven days, all for nothing. The Imrei Emes explains that, in fact, it was not for nothing. This "false alarm" was a punishment in itself, not for forbidden words that had been spoken, but for positive words that had been left unspoken.

From this we learn the importance of "*loshon tov*," of using our power of speech to create good in the world. There's a vast difference between noticing the good in others and putting it into words. Sometimes we underestimate the impact of our compliment, our thank you, our quick "moral support" phone call. We think the world can get along fine without it.

But *loshon tov* is the fiber of *ahavas Yisrael*. Sometimes the context is dramatic—empathy and comfort in troubled times, or *mazel tovs* upon a *simchah*. But often the context is commonplace—a hello and a smile in passing, a thank-you for a small favor, a compliment on a child's behavior. All of this is just words, yet the words are profound acts of *chesed* as well. We are not allowed to leave them unspoken.

TALK ABOUT IT

Is it a failure to express the good thoughts we have, or a failure to notice the good, that causes a person to fall short in *loshon tov*?

"The flowers are just a small token of my *hakaras hatov* to you, Mrs. Levin. Last night I became a *kallah*. Who knows what might have been if not for you and your thoughtful, positive words?"

TALK ABOUT IT

How can we make sure that we don't miss opportunities like this one, to revive someone's spirits with a good word?

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Dedicated as a *zechus* for our family by Louis and Lisa Eisen

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