



SHABBOS MENU

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS HA'AZINU 5783 • ISSUE 311

ONE STINGY BUNCH

Residents of various towns and cities tend to have certain overall traits. If we encounter a population whose traits are negative, may we mention our experience to others?

T H E

DILEMMA

Ezra was a fundraiser for an organization in Israel that helps at-risk teens, especially those with American parents. One year, the organization decided to send him to America to speak at various venues and increase interest in the group's work.

In one city, he was disappointed to see that only a handful of people attended his well-publicized fundraising event. Those who were there seemed skeptical. "How are you going to help these kids?" one man asked. "They don't want help." Another commented, "We've got plenty of this in America to worry about." The family with whom he stayed wasn't even interested in his cause. They showed him to his quarters and barely interacted with him after that.

Ezra would have become downcast about his trip if the next stop on the itinerary hadn't been the polar opposite of the previous one. Here, the fundraising event was packed with supportive, interested people who wanted to hear all about the group's work. When he stood up to speak, he said, "It's great to be in such a warm city. I'm trying still to defrost from my two days in Anytown." Did Ezra speak loshon hora?

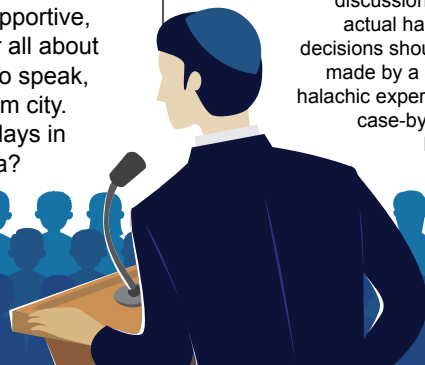
T H E

HALACHAH

Disparaging an entire city of G-d-fearing Jews because they failed to accord him the help or the welcome he expected is loshon hora, just as it would be regarding an individual. The Chofetz Chaim explicitly writes that this particular form of loshon hora "is certainly a grave sin!"

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim,
Hilchos Loshon Hora 10:12*

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

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H.L.
Edison

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"The Torah assessed
the depths of man's
power
and realized that
he is indeed

capable
of refraining from
loshon hora."

- Sefer Chofetz Chaim,
Introduction

In Yerushalayim, in the days leading up to Succos, Rav Zalman was a very busy man. He was an expert on *esrogim*, and people streamed to his home day and night for his advice on their purchase.

On Erev Succos, two hours before Yom Tov, Rav Zalman closed shop and headed to the *mikveh*. On his way a little boy, Aharon Ellenbogen, approached him excitedly with an *esrog* in his hand.

"Would you look at it for me?" he asked.

Although Rav Zalman was in a rush, he said, "Sure, let me see it." Reb Zalman gave it a once-over and handed it back.

"You know, your father (Rav Moshe Ellenbogen) is a big *talmid chacham*. I'm sure that if he bought this *esrog* for you, it's a very good one."

Aharon walked off with his *esrog*, feeling a bit deflated. Still, he consoled himself, it was very close to Yom Tov. Had he come earlier, he surely would have gotten the "full treatment."

Early the next morning, as Rav Moshe Ellenbogen sat learning in his *succah*, there was a knock. He opened the *succah* door to find Rav Zalman standing there.

"Good morning, Rav Zalman! What brings you here so early?" Rav Moshe asked.

"Actually, I'm here to see Aharon," he replied. "Is he up?"

Rav Moshe quickly roused Aharon. "Rav Zalman is here to see you!" he told the boy. Aharon raced to get dressed and ran out to the *succah*.

"Aharon," Rav Zalman said, "I was thinking. When you showed me your *esrog* yesterday, I was in a rush and I don't think I looked at it carefully enough. Would you let me take another look?"

The boy happily obliged. Rav Zalman studied the *esrog* carefully, top to bottom and all around.

"I knew it was a good *esrog*," he told

Aharon. "But I didn't realize how special it is! In fact, if you would be willing, I would trade with you."

"Thank you," Aharon answered, "but if my *esrog* is as



HE'S ALSO A PERSON

special as you say and my father bought it for me, I want to use it."

Aharon ran inside feeling several inches taller. Rav Zalman turned to Rav Moshe and explained his visit with one simple sentence. "A child is also a person."

TALK ABOUT IT

What does it mean when we say someone is "also a person?" What does that call upon us to do?

לע"נ
שמואל חיים בן אברהם יוסף ז"ל
דבורה בת ישראל ע"ה
Dedicated by Uri and Riki Sklar

As a *zechus* that all those in need in Klal Yisrael should find *shidduchim*

Dedicated anonymously as a *zechus* for our family

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נלב"ע ערב שבת קודש
י אלול תשע"ז
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

sage advice

NOT TOO BUSY FOR YOU

The Gemara contains many stories illustrating the patience and humility of the great Hillel. Most famous is the one in which a man bets his friend that he can cause Hillel to lose his temper and goes on a harassment campaign on a Friday, while the Sage is trying to prepare for Shabbos. Hillel addresses the man's repeated interruptions with calm and understanding, and the man loses his bet.

So it seems out of character when the Gemara relates that Hillel, arriving at the *Simchas Beis HaShoeivah*, announced, "If I am here, everyone is here." Many commentators try to reconcile this seemingly arrogant statement with the humble personality for which Hillel is known.

In a lecture recorded for CCHF, Rabbi Paysach Krohn offers an explanation heard from child therapist Rabbi Shmuel Ackerman, that contains advice that every person, no matter how far they might be from the great Hillel, can use to greatly improve his relationships.

"Hillel was saying, if I am here, all of me is here. My essence is here. I am totally focused on you," Rabbi Krohn explains.

Giving our full attention to those who are speaking to us is not only good manners and good social skills. It is also good *middos*, rooted in humility, as we see with Hillel.

It says, "You are more important than my agenda. I'm not such a busy, in-demand person that I have to handle five other things while you speak to me."

When we're fully present, the other person feels valued. Also, we are far more likely to understand the nuances of what the person is saying—to pick up the mood and the details, which gives us insight and prevents misunderstandings. If we emulate Hillel by being really present wherever we are, everyone around us is glad we're there.

TALK ABOUT IT

How can you increase your focus and block out distractions when interacting with others?

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