

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION



SHABBOS MENU

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • SHABBOS PARSHAS MISHPATIM 5783 • ISSUE 330

“HE’D BETTER BE BRAVE”

Someone comments to you about a friend. You’re with a group of people and want to tell this friend what was said. Does the presence of others make it permissible?

T H E

DILEMMA

A large new housing development was set to be built at the end of Zev’s street. Zev and his neighbors saw this as a disaster, and a danger to the children who biked and played on the street. Zev started a petition and got the local zoning board to agree to hear the neighbors’ objections.

The day before the hearing, Eliyahu, Zev’s brother, met his friend Shmuel in shul. “I hear your brother is going to fight the development!” Shmuel said. “He’d better be a brave man! He’s going to make a lot of enemies.”

That night, Eliyahu dropped by Zev’s house to wish him good luck. He was sitting with a few other neighbors who had signed the petition. “Shmuel says you’d better be a brave man,” Eliyahu told his brother. “He says you’re going to make a lot of enemies.”

Eliyahu’s report might be taken to mean that Shmuel thinks Zev is foolhardy, or it might mean that he admires Zev’s courage. Since it can be taken either way, is it considered *avak rechilus*?



T H E

HALACHAH

Since Eliyahu spoke in front of three people or more, the assumption is that he would not have given the report if he intended it to have a negative connotation, because he can assume that Shmuel will hear about what he has said. Therefore, if Zev is not the type of person who finds faults in others (and will not interpret it negatively), it would be permitted.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim,
Hilchos Rechilus 2:2*

PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

Hi! Just want to say that I’ve been learning these halachos you send for a while now, and it has helped me catch myself in many situations.

ALL YOUR ZECHUS!!!

Thank you,
Raizy

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FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

“Rabbi Eliezer says: Let your

*fellow’s
 honor be as dear to you as
 your own,
 and do not anger easily.”*

– Pirkei Avos 2:15

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



Michal had inborn musical talent. The moment she laid eyes on a piano, she began finding her way around the keys, plucking out tunes. Soon she was playing with two hands, adding chords that sounded, to the ears of her family and friends, quite professional.

“Do you practice?” a friend asked. “No way!” Michal answered. “I have a natural ear for music.”

Shimon was a concert pianist. He played with the greatest orchestras around the world. And he practiced eight hours a day.

Natural talent gets us a short way along the path to success, and then we’re stuck. No one becomes great without working at it.

That is what the *gedolim* do to achieve the heights they reach in both Torah and *middos*.

Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer was once about to give a *shiur*. As was his unwavering custom, he secluded himself for a few minutes before entering the *beis medrash*. One of his *talmidim* was curious. What did the *gadol* do in those few minutes? He positioned himself in a spot where he could see inside Rav Isser Zalman’s room, and he watched.

He saw Rav Isser Zalman sit down at his desk and say out loud, “*V’ahavta l’reiacha kamocha*—You shall love your neighbor as [you love] yourself.” He repeated these words over and over, until he felt prepared to enter the *beis medrash* to teach his *talmidim*.

Knowing that with his quick mind he might inadvertently show disdain to a student who lacked understanding, Rav Isser Zalman worked on his *ahavas Yisrael* each day until he mastered it. If he, at his level, felt that he needed to work on his *middos*, we surely cannot rely on “playing by ear.” We may not reach his heights, but we can prepare




THE GREAT ONES PRACTICE

ourselves before entering into a potentially irritating situation; we can remind ourselves that everyone’s feelings count.

TALK ABOUT IT

What are words or ideas you can “rehearse” in your own mind before dealing with people or situations that might provoke you to behave in a hurtful way?

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 ת.ג.צ.ב.ה.

sage advice

MAKING SHABBOS FEEL AT HOME

Imagine a perfect Shabbos. You daven Kabbalas Shabbos at the Kosel with complete *kavanah*, the melodies of dozens of *minyanim* combining like an orchestra in the air around you. You walk through the Old City to the home of a friend. The meal is regal, the company uplifting, the *zemiros* heartfelt and filled with perfect harmonies.

On the way back to your apartment, you pass a small *shul* that draws you in. There, right in front of your eyes on the bookshelf, is a *sefer* you’ve been wanting to learn. You sit down and learn for a while, and then stroll back to your apartment. As you close your eyes to sleep, you sigh contentedly, and the word “Shabbos” drifts from your lips.

Rabbi Asher Sinclair recalls one such Shabbos in his life; it illustrated for him what it means to truly feel the holiness of this special day. However, he observes, this *kedushah* is not something the average person feels every week, and some people never feel it at all. Why—even if we enjoy the rest, the food, and the *davening*—do we often lack the feeling of closeness to Hashem?

The reason is because Shabbos is not just a day. “Shabbos is a being,” Rabbi Sinclair explains. “If you never felt it, that is because it never came to you. It didn’t feel comfortable with you. Shabbos is sensitive. It’s picky,” he says. The Torah tells us that we have to “Remember the Shabbos to make it holy.” It’s up to us to create the atmosphere for holiness.

One powerful way to make our home a welcoming place for Shabbos to enter is to keep our conversations clear of *loshon hora* and hurtful words. “If we do our part,” says Rabbi Sinclair, “Shabbos will arrive at our door with her retinue of blessings to crown our week.”

From a CCHF Live Life Better video by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

TALK ABOUT IT

What strategies could your family use to focus the Shabbos table conversation on topics that “make Shabbos comfortable”?



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