

Be aware! When discussing shmiras haloshon issues, using personal examples often leads to unintended loshon hora. Keep it general to keep it kosher.

Let My People Shmooz

Interactive Questions to Spark Your Shabbos Table Discussions



ISSUE 8

SHABBOS SHUVAH PARSHAS HA'AZINU 5785

We'd love to hear your feedback, stories, and ideas. Email us at aderaba@cchfglobal.org

Left Off the Guest List

Shira and I are good friends. She sent me a message: "We'd love to have you over for lunch on Shabbos."

Without thinking I replied: "We would love to—but I'm going to a bar mitzvah lunch at the shul."

Shira obviously found this information very interesting. She sent back: "Oh, who's making a bar mitzvah?"



I realized I was in a tricky situation, and now I don't know what to do.

Tzippi is making the bar mitzvah and having a big meal after shul. Even though I know that Shira and Tzippi are not at all close, I'm concerned she will feel bad that she was not invited.

Can I tell Shira who's the host of the *simchah*?

— Devora with a Dilemma

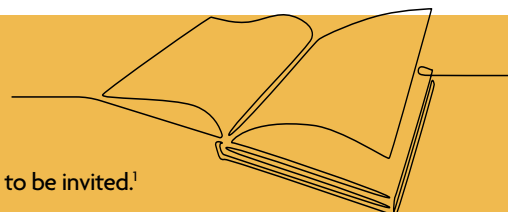
What's the **Psak**?
Can you guess the halachah?

- A **Yes**, Devora's just telling the truth, and it'll come out anyway.
- B **No**, it will cause Shira to feel upset about not being invited.
- C **It depends** on whether Shira would expect to be invited.

The Halachah

The answer is C.

Yes, because Shira should not have expected to be invited.¹



Neutral Statements

A neutral statement that will make a person feel that someone else did something against him is *avak rechilus*.

However, that's only when the statement can be taken negatively and could cause *machlokes*. But here, Devora is only telling Shira whose bar mitzvah lunch she is going to, without implying anything negative. Since Shira is not close to Tzippi, Shira won't be offended.

However, if Devora knows that Shira and Tzippi don't get along, Devora is not allowed to respond, because it can only make matters worse between them.

What to Do if it Happens to You

First think, "Is it possible that my answer might make the other person feel disappointed?" If so, change the topic and try to avoid answering. In this case, if Devora perceives that Shira would be upset at not being invited, she should avoid mentioning the bar mitzvah at all by saying, "Thank you so much for the invite. Can we try for another week?"



The Time Is Now!

Shabbos Shuvah has a power all its own. HaRav Chaim Vital teaches that the improvements we make this Shabbos are a *tikkun* for every Shabbos in the year gone by.

So, if in the past, the table was a place where criticism crept in, or gossip, or cynical words, today it can all be erased. Using Aderaba's easy-to-read newsletter, with something for everyone at your table, you can create a new normal: **"We see and speak the good!"**

Committing to this simple, quick but powerful weekly program helps everyone succeed. And on *this* Shabbos, it gives us the tool we need to come before Hashem and *daven* with pure lips for forgiveness and a new year of life and *brachah*.

Reviewed by Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Lowy

Rav Pam zt"l advised great caution when presenting halachic scenarios to the public, as each situation is unique. This *she'eilah* is for discussion only; actual halachic decisions should be made by a rav or halachic expert on a case-by-case basis.

The Shmiras Haloshon Shailah Hotline: 718-951-3696 2-3PM / 9-10:30 PM

Pursuing Peace

Fix It With Forgiveness

Aviva,* a sixth-grader, was enjoying her summer at a day camp located in a school building. One day, the sixth-grade bunks went to the gym for a basketball game. Those who didn't like playing sat on the sidelines talking.

Aviva decided to break their boredom by flickering the lights. She switched them off, but they wouldn't go back on. The players began shouting angrily. The counselor looked around and saw Aviva at the light switch.

She banned Aviva from the gym and sent her up to the bunk's empty classroom. Aviva was terribly embarrassed, and she sat alone for an hour in tears.

Aviva never forgave that counselor. Every year on Rosh Hashanah, she would think about dropping the grudge she was carrying, but it still hurt.

Eventually, the counselor graduated school and began *shidduchim*. But as the

years passed, her friends all got married and she was still alone. One Sunday, Aviva heard a powerful speech about giving *mechilah*, not just in the heart, but expressing it out loud. She knew that her ex-counselor was still single, and she began to wonder, was her grudge blocking this girl's happiness?

She said out loud, "Hashem, I forgive her with all my heart. Please let her find her *zivug!*" That was on Sunday. On Wednesday, the counselor was engaged.

* Name has been changed.



Take it to the Table

If you knew for sure that your grudge against someone was ruining his life, would you hold on to it?

If not, can you drop it NOW?



You're ready to soar! To become that person who sees the world as a positive, beautiful place. But a dark reality is sitting on the runway, blocking takeoff: People can be so hurtful! Maybe they don't intend any harm or maybe they have a real issue with *middos*.

Whatever the reason, you can't let go of your negative feelings.

But the person who

suffers the most from a grudge is the one who carries it. Our ability to forgive others determines whether we'll have a happy, calm heart, or one that's eaten up by hatred. (Note: Cases of abuse *chas v'shalom* require a different approach.)

The Tomer Devorah tells us that there's an even greater, forever benefit: When we go "above and beyond" to forgive someone, Hashem goes "above and beyond" to forgive us. Not only does

life look better, but it *is* better because nothing is blocking Hashem's *brachah*.

Forgiveness takes effort; it rarely happens instantly. But here are some steps that can get you there:

1 Hashem runs the world with the rule of *middah k'neged middah*—measure for measure. If you forgive someone, Hashem will forgive you for things you have done wrong.

2 Realize that although the person who hurt you may have been wrong, and will be accountable for it, there's always a Divine purpose. The wrongdoer might be the agent of a crucial *tikkun* that remains outstanding from a past *gilgul*, having nothing to do with your deeds in this life. Or he might be delivering a message from Hashem that will prod you to rethink your priorities, or provide a *kapparah* which helps you in the World to Come—And until we get there, we'll never really know.

3 Accepting hurt and embarrassment gives us a

powerful *eis ratzon* to *daven* for what we need in life. Write a letter to the person who hurt you, stating what he did and how you felt, and that you completely forgive him. Then write a letter to Hashem asking for the *yeshuah* you need. Seal them together in an envelope and throw them away.

4 The Torah tells us that the only dispute that was all one person's fault was the one between Moshe and Korach. Find the humility to own up to your part in the situation, even if it's only that you misunderstood the other person. Realize that you, too, make mistakes and want others to forgive you.

5 Low self-esteem, jealousy and other issues can make people do or say hurtful things. Look at it as if this person is locked in a bad *middos* prison. You might even end up feeling bad for the person.

6 When you are ready to forgive, it's important to say it out loud: "I'm *mochel*. I completely forgive (whoever hurt you)."

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DEDICATIONS