

**Succos 5785**

# Let My People **Shmooz**

Interactive Questions to Spark Your Shabbos Table Discussions

**You planned, you bought, you built,  
you gathered and now, you're here.**

Together! Under Hashem's shelter, enjoying the warmth  
of family and friends. Whether a host or a guest, you hope  
for the happiness of *Zman Simchaseinu*.

**And here's how to guarantee it:**

See those people around the table?

***Look deeper.***

There's a heart that wants your love.

A soul shining with Hashem's light.

A human being, a *tzelem Elokim*, a world in him/herself.

**Every person at your table is truly precious!**

*Open these pages* and discover how to sharpen your vision to see the goodness  
—the sincere, G-d-given goodness—of every Jewish heart.

And have a *Chag Sameach*, guaranteed!



**SEE THE GOOD, SAY THE GOOD!**

A special Yom Tov Issue of  
*Let My People Shmooz*, a part of the  
Aderaba Shabbos Positivity Program

Wednesday  
Night**First  
Night**ט"ו תשרי  
October 16

## Perfectly Imperfect

**H**ow many people do you know who are perfect? Most likely, zero. Everyone has flaws, and most of us know our own flaws best of all. The question is, what do we do with this information? If you see what's wrong with another person, does that make you think, "I'd better set him straight!" What about yourself? Do you ever think, "I'm no good!" because, like every human being, you have things to work on?

While none of us are perfect, many of us are perfectionists. This makes us critical of everything we do and unhappy with ourselves, yet we keep on fighting this fight we can never win. The Satmar Rebbe, Harav Yoel Teitelbaum, tells us, "Stop. This isn't

what Hashem wants."

And the succah is his proof. It's called *succas shelomecha*—the succah of Hashem's peace. One reason it earns that title is because it doesn't insist on perfection. It's a mitzvah that allows for many variations: You can make it of wood or canvas or even Legos. It can be missing a wall. The walls can be warped. Even if some of the *schach* is missing, it's still 100 percent kosher.

Just as Hashem accepts the succah with all its flaws and variations, we find peace when we accept each other's flaws and variations. There's no peace for a perfectionist; he's always on the lookout for what's wrong. People, like succahs, are 100 percent kosher, even when they're not 100 percent perfect.



Take it to the **Table**

If it's okay to be imperfect, what would motivate us to work on ourselves?

Heard from  
Rabbi Yoel Gold  
at the Chofetz  
Chaim Heritage  
Foundation 2018  
Convention

Thursday  
Morning**First  
Day**ט"ו תשרי  
October 17

## Shmiras Haloshon Belongs Here

**W**ho would speak loshon hora in a succah? We're sitting outside in the open air! Anyone could hear—maybe even the person you're talking about!

But there's a much deeper connection between the succah and shmiras haloshon. The Vilna Gaon

explains:

When we pronounce the letters of the *alef-beis*, we use five different parts of our mouth: the palate, the teeth, the throat, the lips and the tongue. Saying the word סוכה, we pronounce the letter "*samach*" using our teeth; the "*vav*" is from the lips;

the "*kaf*" is from the palate; and the letter "*heh*" is from the throat. No

# סוכה

letter in the word "succah" is created by the tongue. It uses all the other four parts of the mouth, but the tongue—meaning the evil tongue of loshon hora—has no place.

This is one meaning of the verse in *Tehillim* (31:21) תִּצְפְּנֵם בְּסֶכֶה מְרִיב לִשְׁנוֹת —Protect them in a succah (shelter) from the strife of tongues.

By keeping our conversation positive in the succah, we help to bring about the special Succos verse of *Bircas HaMazon*: Hashem will raise up the *Succas David hanofales*—the fallen Succah of David, meaning the Beis Hamikdash. And with shmiras haloshon at our Succos meals, we'll capture a piece of that joy right now, as we celebrate the *Zman Simchaseinu* together.

Take it to the **Table**

What topics of conversation can you think of that would keep everyone at your table interested and positive?

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*L'ilui nishmas Yehuda ben Pesach z"l*  
*L'ilui nishmas Silvia Tzaada bas Ruby a"h*  
Dedicated by Abraham and Sandra Getzel

As a *zechus* for  
Ezra Yehuda ben Nechama Yael n"y



Thursday  
Night  
**Second  
Night**  
ט"ז תשרי  
October 17

## It All Depends on Who Did It

**N**obody wants to think of themselves as picky or petty. When someone gets on your nerves, it's for a *real* reason! Who wouldn't be irritated at someone who davens just loud enough to distract you? Or someone who's always borrowing and forgetting to pay you back? Or someone who lets her kids run wild around your house?

Where's their *derech erez*? What kind of people do things like? With these thoughts roaming around in your head, it's hard to feel or say anything nice about such people.

But you might also notice that when someone else does the exact same thing, it doesn't bother you at all. You chalk it up to human nature. You might even find it cute or funny.

Why can't we adopt this kind,

accepting attitude toward everyone? Often, it's because when we like someone, we focus on their good points and let their flaws pass under the radar. But when we lack that warm feeling, we zero in on their flaws like a powerful zoom lens.

The solution is to pull back and look at the big picture. We'll see that there's plenty of positive in it. And that's where we need to focus. When we do this, the warmth and happiness we feel when we're around people we like will expand; the bitter, critical voice will shrink. And with that, we'll even see ourselves in a more positive light.

Adapted from  
*Master Your  
Words, Master  
Your Life,*  
(Day 25)  
a project of  
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Take it to the **Table**

What could **motivate** you to **shift your focus** in the moment, when someone is getting under your skin?

Friday  
Morning  
**Second  
Day**  
ט"ז תשרי  
October 18

## He's Right Here!

**D**id you ever notice someone looking right, left, and all around before talking into someone else's ear? It's a trademark sign that loshon hora is about to be spoken. The speaker is making doubly sure that the person he's about to talk about is nowhere nearby, because what he has to say would be hurtful to the subject.

That tells us something. No matter how we might excuse our loshon hora, we know it would hurt the person we're talking about, and anyone who cares about him, too. That's why we look around. We don't want to be caught in an embarrassing

situation and be forced to explain ourselves.

This fact gives us a great way to stop loshon hora in its tracks, before it comes out of our mouths. Imagine that the person you're about to talk about is standing right there, listening to every word. His face is turning red as you hold him up for ridicule and point out his mistakes. He hears everyone analyzing him and adding their own opinions. He's standing there shaking his head, silently begging you, "Please, stop it!"

Don't look around before you talk. Just look inside.



Take it to the **Table**

Why is gossip **harmful** (in addition to being forbidden) even if the person being talked about **never finds out** about it?

Adapted from  
*Master Your  
Words, Master  
Your Life,*  
(Day 26)  
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Publications

Friday  
Night  
**Shabbos  
Chol  
Hamoed  
Night**  
י"ז תשרי  
October 18

# Why Was I Invited?

A great Rebbe was coming to town and had accepted the Mandelbaum family's invitation for the Friday night seudah. Mrs. Mandelbaum prepared her best recipes, making sure the kashrus of all her ingredients was top-notch. Everyone's clothing was clean and pressed and the table was perfectly set.

*After shul, the Rebbe arrived. Everyone sat down at the beautiful table filled with delicious food, but as the conversation began, the Rebbe was puzzled. The family was speaking in a strange language he had never heard.*

*The Rebbe looked from one to the*

other as they chatted with each other, and he understood not one word. After bentsching, he thanked his hosts and went on his way, wondering, “Why did they invite me?”

The Zohar teaches that this is what the Shabbos Queen wonders when she sits at our table surrounded by mundane, or even negative, talk. She speaks the language of *kedushah*, and by bringing Aderaba to our table, we can make sure we're speaking her language.

Rav Elya



Brudny adds another powerful reason to bring this program to the Shabbos table. Anything we do for our *ruchniyus* on Shabbos has double the power, because it impacts our *neshamah yeseirah* as well. Shmiras haloshon and Shabbos clearly belong together!

## Take it to the Table

How **do you feel** at a table  
where loshon hora is spoken?

Shabbos  
Morning  
**Shabbos  
Chol  
Hamoad  
Day**  
י"ז תשרי  
October 19

**W**e've just come out of the *Yamim Nora'im*. Our souls are pure and bright. We're filled with the kind of happiness that only a shining *neshamah* can bring. Can we possibly jump from this lofty height back into regular everyday life?



of all time—the *Usphizin*—come to be our honored guests.

But it's not the walls and the roof that create this incubator of holiness, where our reborn *neshamos* grow stronger and prepare for life in the "real world." Rather, it's us. We create the holiness with the Torah we learn, the *brachos* we make, and the words we speak.

Loshon hora has no place. It drives out all the beauty and holiness of the succah, leaving behind nothing more than a shaky, leaky structure.

As we move on to Chol HaMoed, we have the rest of the week to absorb the *kedushah* that surrounds us every time we enter our succah. We bring in our plates and forks, our *sefarim* and *siddurim*, our *lulav* and *esrog*, our blankets and pillows.

And if we leave negativity and loshon hora on the outside, we'll end Yom Tov ready for a new year on a whole new level.

# Our Holy Way Station

No! We need to absorb all this holiness into our bones before we dive back into work, school and business. And Hashem gives us the perfect environment for doing just that. It's our succah.

The space within these shaky walls, under the leaky *schach*, is so radiant with holiness that the *Shechinah* finds a place for itself inside. It's so inviting that the seven greatest Jews

# Take it to the Table

**Describe** how you feel when you're in a **holy place, like the Kosel, or in the presence of a holy person.** Does your succah give you this feeling? If not, how can you change that?

Wednesday  
Night  
**Shmini  
Atzeres  
Night**  
כ"ב תשרי  
October 23

## Good for You!

Adapted  
from Master  
Your Words,  
Master Your  
Life, (Day 29)  
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**T**he smartest kid in your class comes up with another “wow!” answer to the teacher’s question. You’re a little jealous. You didn’t even understand the question. But that smart kid—look at that weird old shirt he’s wearing! It’s from ten years ago for sure, because there’s a picture of your married brother wearing the same

shirt when he was in ninth grade. Silently making fun of that shirt makes you feel a little better. At least you know how to dress like a normal person!

Like this boy, most of us feel a little envious sometimes. When we feel that we’re lacking something, seeing



other people who have that thing can make us feel worse. But no one wants to feel low. Therefore, we might try to protect ourselves by proving that the other person isn’t really so great.

It’s easy to see how this upside-down solution takes us in the exact opposite direction from where we really need to go. It tells us, “See the bad” rather than “See the good.” Worse yet, instead of building us up, this kind of thinking keeps us down. We make ourselves comfortable with our

low self-esteem instead of working to appreciate the good in ourselves. Finding the faults of people we envy is like eating candy for dinner. It’s easy to grab and, at first, it’s sweet on our tongue. But it gives us zero nourishment. In the same way, looking down on people we’re jealous of doesn’t make us better. If instead we work on recognizing our own special strengths, we won’t feel threatened by others. We can be happy for them when they succeed—happy for them and happy with ourselves. It all adds up to a much happier life!

## Take it to the Table

How can we realistically **boost our self-esteem** when we’re feeling low?

Thursday  
Morning  
**Shmini  
Atzeres  
Day**  
כ"ב תשרי  
October 24

## What do I Really Know?

**Y**ou see a man jogging. He’s clumsy and slow. You think, “He’s so out of shape! He probably hasn’t exercised in years.” But you’re wrong. You don’t know that he’s recovering from an operation. Three weeks ago, he couldn’t even stand up. If you knew his story, you’d be amazed at his strength. If you cared about him, you’d be rooting for him. If you felt the aches and pains he’s feeling as he pushes himself to exercise, you’d think he’s a hero.

This is true for everyone we see. If we really knew how it felt to be them, we’d see so much more good in them. Rav Yerucham Levovitz said that we would never think or say anything negative about another person if we



related to their pain. How hurt would they feel if they heard our critical words or thoughts? We’d never want to be the cause of that.

Instead of making ourselves into judges of other people, says the Mashgiach, we should get to know them and understand how they see things. This makes us feel closer to them. Then, when they have a place in our heart,

we will be far less likely to think badly of them or speak badly about them to others. Since the people we care about become part of us, we won’t want to do anything that would cause them pain.

Rav Yerucham’s idea gives us a powerful way to cut down on the critical, negative thoughts we have about certain people in our lives. Get to know them better. Find out what they’re feeling and imagine what it would be like for you to feel that way, too. When we feel someone else’s pain, we surely don’t want to add to it.

## Take it to the Table

Have you ever thought, “**No one understands how I feel?**”

What would make you feel better in such a situation?  
What would make you feel worse?



Thursday  
Night  
**Simchas  
Torah  
Night**  
כ"ג תשרי  
October 24

**“Y**itzy’s a great guy!” says his neighbor Yossi.

“Are you kidding?” says Ezzi, who works for Yitzy. “He’s so cheap! He keeps the office freezing cold to save on electricity. And he bought used laptops for his customer service reps. I’m surprised he doesn’t fire the cleaning staff and have us vacuum.”

Yossi now thinks, “Aha! There’s more to this Yossi than I knew. Just because he tells good jokes and everyone likes him in shul doesn’t mean that’s the real him.”

Who is the “real” Yitzy? To Ezzi he’s a miser. To Yossi he’s a nice neighbor. But once Yossi hears Ezzi’s report, his thinking changes. Maybe Yitzy is covering up a mean, stingy personality with all his jokes.

Somehow, when we hear about



someone’s dark side, we think we’ve uncovered the “real” them. But why is it any more real or true than the person’s positive side? Every person judges others according to his own personality; Ezzi might clash with Yitzy while

other employees think he’s brilliant.

Also, every trait has the potential for good or for bad. A strong person can be passionate or angry. An organized person can be efficient or rigid.

We see this in the Torah when Moshe calls the Jews a “stiff-necked people,” just as he’s asking Hashem to forgive them for the Golden Calf. They’re stubborn, it’s true; but that means they’ll be stubborn enough to keep the Torah for thousands of years.

Everything Hashem created, He called “good.” That means the good is there, waiting for us to recognize it. That’s the real truth.

## Take it to the Table

Let’s look at the opposite case:

What are some **good qualities** in another person that may **take some time** to uncover?

Friday  
Morning  
**Simchas  
Torah  
Day**  
כ"ג תשרי  
October 25

**I**magine: The Levy family is going on a trip around the world! First stop is a polluted river in France. Then it’s off to Bulgaria for a tour of the country’s largest garbage dump. In Lebanon, they’ll visit

Believe it or not, we sometimes take people on a depressing tour of the world. It happens when we complain to them day after day about how

the world—a good place filled with good people. Then, even if we run into bumps along the road, we can handle it. It won’t knock us over.



A positive view of the world and the people we share it with is one of the best gifts a family can give to everyone in their home. It’s true that depressing, ugly sights do exist. But why go there?

bad people are and how difficult life is. Everywhere we look there’s unfairness, foolishness, cruelty, carelessness. When this is the talk in our home, says Rav Yehudah Zev Segal, it’s as if we’re poisoning the food the family eats. We’re filling them up with toxic ingredients.

For us to go out into the world happy and confident, we need to feed each other a healthy view of

the war zone and in North Korea, they’ll check out the prisons. They stop in Hawaii on their way home to see the ruins of a town that was destroyed by a volcano.

What family would plan such a depressing trip, filled with ugly, disturbing sights? Why not take the children to see all the beautiful places in Hashem’s world: majestic mountains, vast oceans, interesting historical sights, exciting zip lines and roller coasters?

## Take it to the Table

Share two things that had a **positive impact** on you today—something that lifted your mood; something nice someone did for you; something you’re happy you did for another person.

Adapted from Master Your Words, Master Your Life, (Day 70) a project of CCHF published by ArtScroll/Mesorah Publications

**Isru Chag  
Friday  
Night**

כ"ד תשרי  
October 25

**S**even-year-old David found a soccer ball in his front yard. Where did it come from? He didn't know. It had the initials B.G. on it. He ran into his house and told his mother, "I'm doing *hashavas aveidah*! I found a ball! I'm keeping it on the porch for the kid who lost it."

His five-year-old brother said, "I want it!" But David answered firmly, "You're not allowed to use it."

**It's Not  
Yours!**

It's not yours!"

Every Jewish schoolchild learns this. You can't use what's not yours. But imagine how this *halachah* could change the world if it applied to people's names. If we stopped our mouths

from talking before another person's name crossed our lips, before we used someone else's name as a subject of our gossip or criticism or jokes as if it belonged to us, *loshon hora* would be conquered!

This is an especially useful idea when we're talking about family members, because it's easy for us to think that really, they *do* belong to



us; they're our parents, our sisters and brothers, our children, and their stories are ours to discuss. But it's not true. Like everyone else in *Klal Yisrael*, they're protected by *shmiras haloshon*.

People's lives—just like their soccer balls, toys, cars, jewelry, and houses—belong to them alone. If we can make that idea firm and solid in our mind, we can cut out a great deal of *loshon hora*. And with that, we'll make the whole world so much brighter.

Take it to the  
**Table**

What **long-term harm** can come from a **group discussion** of someone's struggles?

**Isru Chag  
Shabbos  
Day**

כ"ד תשרי  
October 26

**T**he words of Bereishis (2:7), "And man became a living being," are said by the Targum Onkelos to mean "Man became a speaking spirit." This means that speech is the power that makes a human being human. It enables us, with just a few words, to be people who comfort, build, and inspire others, as this story by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman illustrates:

When I was growing up, our *yeshivah*

had a small playground, large enough for a game of punchball. I rarely got to base, and almost never hit the ball well.

Our sixth-grade teacher, Mr. Stone, was a soft-spoken man, who, rumor had it, had once played professional baseball. On nice days, he would take us outside for extra recess.

One sunny afternoon, we went outside to play punchball. When it was my turn to hit, Mr. Stone said, "Finkelman, hit that ball over the

fence!"

"Mr. Stone," I responded respectfully, "I can't hit the ball over the fence."

"Yes, you can," he replied confidently. "Now hit it!"

Those words gave me a surge of energy. I hit the ball well ... and someone caught it right in front of the fence. I was out, but I felt good about hitting the ball so well. And I never forgot how my teacher's encouraging words helped me to do better than I thought was possible.



Take it to the  
**Table**

Think back on the past couple of hours. What have you said to **compliment** or **encourage** someone?

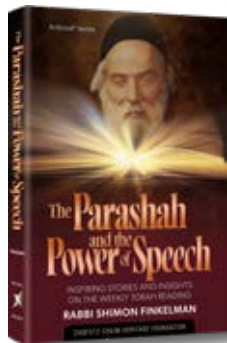
Adapted from the new book **The Parashah and the Power of Speech** by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman, a wonderful new resource of the Aderaba Shabbos Positivity Program, published by ArtScroll/Mesorah Publications



**They  
remember  
the mood  
more than  
the food**



## Aderaba tools to shift the conversation at your Shabbos Table and make it extra positive



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