

**Interactive  
 Questions  
 for Your  
 Shabbos  
 Table**



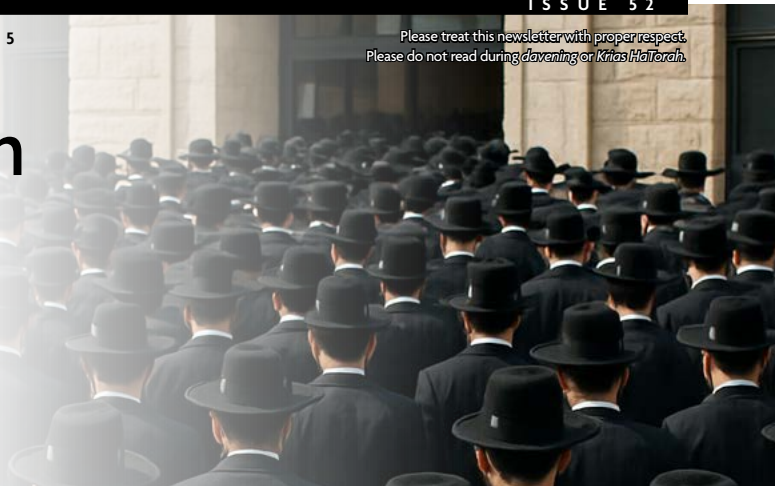
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 Please do not read during *davening* or *Krias HaTorah*.

# The Overrated Yeshivah

I recently returned from learning in a prestigious yeshivah—one that *bachurim* try to get into using every form of *protektzia* and every family connection that they can come up with. Through some miracle, I got accepted. I had a decent experience overall, but I don't think the yeshivah's stellar reputation matches the reality.

When people ask me about my experience there, can I tell them the truth?

—Shaul



## What's the Psak?

Do you know the halachah?

**A No,**  
 it's loshon hora about the yeshivah.

**B Yes,**  
 if you're careful about what you say.

**C No,**  
 it's just your personal opinion.

The halachah is **B**.

## Saying It **How You See It**

Speaking badly about a person or organization, even if it is accurate, is loshon hora—and it is forbidden unless there is a *to'eles*. But before saying anything, even *l'toeles*, ask yourself if you were disappointed because of objective issues: the learning level was lower than you expected or the food or the dorm were not as promised.

If your issues were subjective—the *shiurim* weren't your style of learning or you didn't meet *bachurim* you clicked with—then your negative report is *motzi sheim ra*, an untruth, because other students might have

been perfectly satisfied.

What should you do if someone asks how you liked the yeshivah? If it's just curiosity, there's no *to'eles*, and you can't report anything negative.<sup>1</sup> If someone is considering the yeshivah, you can speak if you meet the conditions of *to'eles*.<sup>2</sup> Describe your specific experience rather than characterizing the entire yeshivah as having fallen short. Also, start by saying "In my opinion," and "other *bachurim* might feel differently." To prevent veering away from *to'eles*, ask the questioner to specify what he wants to know.

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1 - Based on Be'er Mayyim Chaim, Loshon Hora 2:5 2 - Seifer Chofetz Chaim, Loshon Hora 4:10

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 *shailah* 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:  
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See the good in the heart of a Yid



Chaya was the first to notice. As she sat on a picnic blanket with her friends, digging into a bag of potato chips, she froze.

“What?” Gila asked.

“Shhhhhhh!” Chaya hissed, and then whispered urgently, “Don’t look behind you. There’s a skunk! It’s on the path, staring at us.”

The girls couldn’t “not look.” They had to look. Five sets of terrified eyes stared back at the creature.

“I told you,” said Gila. “It’s already getting dark, and it’s perfect skunk weather. My father saw one at the garbage can after Shabbos.”

“We gotta get out of here,” said Chaya. “We can’t go back on the path, so we’ll have to climb over the Cohens’

fence.”

The Cohens’ property extended to the thin strip of woods behind the development where the girls lived.

“Okay, but let’s go one at a time, quiet and slow,” said Bracha. “Devorah, you go first.”

Tall, athletic Devorah climbed the fence easily. Then Gila, then Chaya,

then Bracha. The skunk didn’t budge. The picnic would soon be his!

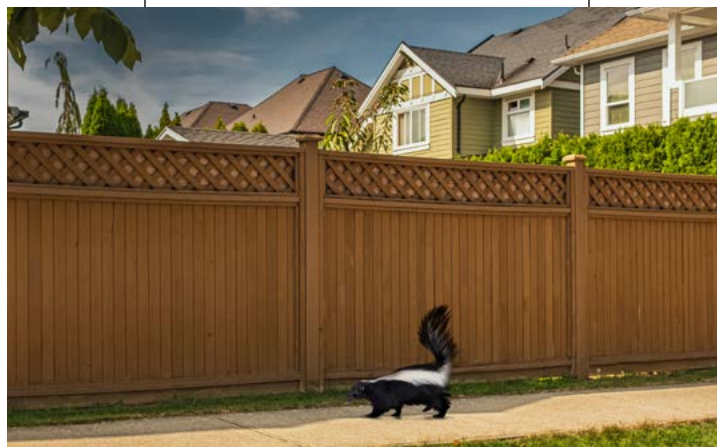
The last girl, Sarah, crept to the fence, got a foothold, and tried to boost herself up. But she wasn’t strong enough. Devorah tugged at her from the other side.

“You’re hurting me!” Sarah squealed. The skunk looked up from his feast and raised his tail. “No!” Sarah cried. “He’s gonna spray me!”

Chaya took charge. She climbed back over the fence and said, “We need a grown-up. You guys get Sarah’s mother, and I’ll stay with her.”

It was ten long minutes, staring down the skunk and davening for a quick rescue, until Sarah’s mother finally arrived. But Chaya could only imagine how much longer it would have felt for Sarah if she had faced the skunk all alone.

## The Right Way to Face a Skunk



See the good What's the Real Story?

Bedikas chametz was in just a few hours, and Nachum needed a minyan for Minchah. He headed to the nearest shul, the Bobover minyan in Monsey. The minyan began, and—to Nachum’s surprise—the baal tefillah was not a chassid. Perhaps the man had a yahrtzeit, Nachum thought.

But once the tefillah started, Nachum was shocked. The baal tefillah was not following the minhag of the shul. He was following

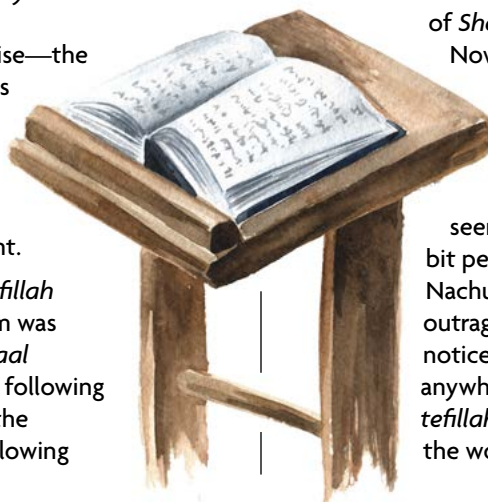
the yeshivah minhag of reciting Shemoneh Esrei out loud until Kedushah and then finishing the remainder of the brachos silently. There was no Chazaras Hashatz—repetition of Shemoneh Esrei.

Now Nachum was really annoyed.

No one else seemed the least bit perturbed, but in Nachum’s righteous outrage he didn’t notice. His mind was anywhere but on the tefillah, as he mouthed the words, finished

up, and got ready to go. On the way out, however, he just had to get some confirmation for his feelings. He asked someone, “What was with the fast Shemoneh Esrei? That’s not the way you do it here, right?”

## When In Bobov...



## Can you Crack the case?

“Well, you’re right,” the chassid answered. “But the Bobover Rebbe has this custom of the shorter davening just for the day of Bedikas chametz. It’s a way to show how eager we are to do the mitzvah. We cut it short and get home as fast as we can.”

Heard from Rabbi Henoch Ginsburg

### DEDICATIONS

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