**Well, That's Embarrassing...**



**#1**

A number of years ago, a new activity became popular in a number of bars: dwarf tossing. People would take turns throwing dwarves as far as they could to see who would win the contest. There was padding and the dwarves readily volunteered since they were paid well.

**ABC News, Give Me a Break: Dwarf-Tossing**

*Several years ago, Robert and Angela Van Ettan, members of a group called Little People of America, convinced Florida's legislators that dwarf-tossing should be illegal. The vote wasn't close...*

*Dave Flood is angry, because he says his rights are being violated: "I'm a dwarf and I want to be tossed," he said...*

**Question: If the danger was minimal and the dwarves agreed to take part, is there anything wrong with such an activity?**

**#2**

**Questions:**

**(a) Have you ever experienced public humiliation by a friend who likes to criticize you when there are others around to witness it?**

**(b) Do you get embarrassed when someone puts you down to make herself seem better or more important?**

**(c) There is an expectation of a certain level of service in a restaurant or on an airplane. When that level is not forthcoming, do you feel tempted to speak sharply?**

**(d) Have you ever embarrassed someone else publicly? How did he react?**

**(e) Why do we feel the need sometimes to embarrass people in front of others?**

**(f) Why are people prone to embarrass the ones that are close to them, like relatives, spouses, and close friends, and have a harder time doing the same to strangers even when they really want to?**

**#3**

**Pirkei Avos 3:15**

*Rabbi Elazar Hamodai says: He who desecrates holy things, who degrades the festivals, who humiliates his fellow in public, who renounces the Covenant of Avraham our father, or who distorts the Torah contrary to the Jewish law - even though he may possess Torah and good deeds, he has no portion in the World to Come.*

**Rambam, Hilchos De’os 6:8**

*It is forbidden to shame a person any time, even in private.*

**Rambam, Hilchos De’os 6:8, with Pri Megadim, Eshel Avraham, 156**

*The reason our Mishnah specifies shaming in public is because the severe punishment of losing one's share in the World to Come applies only when one shames someone in front of others.*

**Chofetz Chaim, Hilchos Lashon Hara, first note in klal 2**

*“Public”, in this regard, is not necessarily a hall filled with people: even three people suffice.*

**Pri Megadim, Teivas Gomeh, chakira 5**

*Since the instigator also counts as one of the three, shaming a person in front of two other people is already sufficient to forfeit one's portion in the World to Come.*

**Rambam, Hilchos Teshuva 3:14**

*This punishment only applies to one who repeatedly embarrasses people.*

**#4**

**Pirkei Avos 3:15**

*Rabbi Elazar Hamodai says:...he who humiliates his fellow in public...even though he may possess Torah and good deeds, he has no portion in the World to Come.*

**Talmud, Bava Metzia 59a**

*A person is expected to rather let himself be thrown into a burning furnace than to embarrass someone else in public.*

**Talmud, Bava Metzia 58b**

*Shaming someone is compared to killing the person.*

**Rav**

*“he who humiliates his fellow in public” -*

*Literally means “one who causes his fellow’s face to turn white.”*

*One’s face becomes red and then pale white when he is embarrassed.*

**Questions:**

**(a) Why is there such a harsh punishment for embarrassing others in public - losing one's portion in the World to Come?**

**(b) How can you compare shaming someone to killing - if one would kill another human being, he would not be around anymore - can't be productive, grow etc., but when embarrassing someone, life continues, and eventually the person will get over it.**

**(c) Even for murdering someone, one does not lose his portion in the World to Come. Embarrassing someone is then worse than murder?! Explain!**

**#5**

**Torah, Vayikra 19:17**

*You shall reprove your fellow … and do not bear a sin because of him.*

**Talmud, Erchin 16b**

*What sin is the Torah referring to? The Torah is referring to the sin of embarrassing someone.*

**Question: How is it possible to give someone positive criticism and not to make him feel embarrassed?**

***#*6**

**Question: What can we do to control our urges to embarrass others publicly?**