

הו מתונים בדיון

The following story appears in the book "Nifleotecha Asicha", by Rabbi Zilberstein, (Bamidbar pg 299) and is related by the person it happened to, excerpted from Rabbi Dov Brezak's Shehakol Program.

We are a group of working men that live in Bnei Brak and we have a 6 o'clock minyan for shacharit each morning. Davening at such an early time can be rather pleasant. It is early, quiet, and everything is still clean and untouched. On the other hand, we can be rather pressured to finish so that we can get to work on time.

One morning, an unfamiliar young man came into the beit hamedrash, put on tefillin, sat down on one of the benches and began davening fervently, together with our minyan.

This young man was moving back and forth enthusiastically as he was davening and the bench he was sitting on was making this loud aggravating noise every time he would do so. Apparently one of the bench's springs had come loose, and this was causing the nerve racking noise.

After a while people in the shul started giving him angry looks, as if to say, "What is the matter with you?! Stop already!" But the boy was totally immersed in the davening and he just continued swaying back and forth as the bench continued to sing (make noise).

As we approached the Shemone Esrei, Amidah prayer, I was one big bundle of nerves. Such a lack of sensitivity and courtesy! We are all mature serious people here and are in a hurry to get to work. Where did this young man think he was, in a kindergarten?!

At the end of the davening I went over to him, placed my hand on his shoulder to stop him from moving (which he still was) and to subsequently stop the terribly aggravating noise. I then raised my voice and said. "What is the matter with you?! Have you lost your mind?!" Many of my friends from the minyan stood around the boy glaring at him as well.

The young man looked at me with a puzzled expression as if to say that he had no idea what I wanted from him. He seemed confused and nervous about the fact that everyone around him (including myself) was so upset.

It was clear that he didn't know why.

You are making an unbearable noise with your shaking back and forth, I screamed loudly. I pointed to the spring in the bench that had come loose and I said, this spring and your swaying have been driving us crazy!

And then it happened.

The young man took out a hearing aid from his pocket.

'Please excuse me', he said gently. 'I can't hear', he kept repeating. He was speaking in a strange way; the way the deaf people speak. "I was in the mikveh before and I forgot to put my hearing device back on, he said.

There are no words to describe the anguish and feelings of guilt that I had at that moment. What I had done to this young man was unforgivable.

I pleaded with him to forgive me and he promised that he forgives me with all his heart, still, what I had done was unforgivable.

For days and weeks afterwards that terrible feeling accompanied me wherever I went and the confused look on the boy's face did not cease to haunt me

I have changed in many ways since then. It is my hope that the publicizing of this story and the inspiration of those reading it will help atone for my sin.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Was the man who screamed really to blame? (Certainly)
2. But the noise was driving him (and everyone else) crazy? Was he supposed to just sit back and do nothing? (No.)
3. What should he have done? (He should have gone about it in a respectful way that would not be hurtful to the young man.)
4. How could he have been respectful and not hurtful to the young man? (Instead of our suggestions please give your family a chance to come up with 3 alternatives to what the man did. Even if they do not come up with anything, the very thinking about how to show respect to and not hurt others, is a great benefit in its own right.)
5. Do we ever do anything similar to what the man in the story did? (When we are irritated become impatient and we lash out at others).
6. What about our siblings and our close family members? (We may get more irritated at them and be quicker to lash out at them more than others.)

DRAW A PICTURE TO ILLUSTRATE THE ABOVE STORY