

## Is It Permitted to Say a Restaurant is Crowded if It Will Stop someone From Eating There

**Magid Shiur: Rav Baruch Meir Levin**

**Question:** What if the person being spoken about didn't do anything wrong, but it would be beneficial to relate some information about him? For example, if you know that a restaurant is very crowded or expensive, are you allowed to inform your friend of this, knowing that hearing this information may convince him not to dine there?

**Answer:** In order to be able to answer this question, we have to clarify the definition of *Lashon Hara*.

Based on the Rambam, the Chofetz Chaim explains that there are two categories of *Lashon Hara*:

1. It is forbidden to speak derogatorily about someone, even if it won't cause him any harm.
2. It is forbidden to say something about a person that will harm him.

Saying that a restaurant is crowded is not derogatory. In fact, it could be considered a testament to the eatery's popularity. It could, however, cause the restaurant harm, as it may prevent people from going there and giving them business.

Many Poskim, however, permit this. They note that an individual has the ability on his own to decide not to go to a certain restaurant. If he did his own research and found out the place is crowded, he can choose not to go there. This would not be considered a loss to the restaurant, as they are not entitled to his business. Accordingly, his friend can also act on his behalf and provide him with information to make his own decision. Since this is not considered to be harming the restaurant, and it is not derogatory, it is permitted.