

Interactive
Questions
for Your
Shabbos
Table

ISSUE 25

SHABBOS PARSHAS MISHPATIM 5785

Please do not read during davening and krias haTorah.



What a Joke

I love my sister Elisheva to bits. We grew up sharing the same room. I was neat and organized, and she was fun and easygoing. My closet had everything arranged according to color and size. Her closet was one big jumble. And it continued like that into married life — in my home, everything has its place, — and in her home, everything is everywhere!



Last week, she sent me an ad for the “Decluttering and Home Organization Course” she is giving and asked me to forward it to anyone who might be interested. I nearly fell off my chair from laughter. I was about to send it to my mother to give her a laugh too, but I wasn’t sure if it’s *loshon hora*. May I send it to my mother?

—Tidy Tali

What's the *Psak*?

Can you guess the halachah?

- A **Yes**, Tali's mother knows Elisheva is not the neatest.
 B **No**, it's *assur* to mock someone.
 C **Yes**, but only if Tali has no nasty intentions.



The Answer

The halachah is B.
No — it's *loshon hora*.

Reviewed by Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Lowy

Be aware! When discussing *shmiras haloshon* issues, using personal examples may lead to unintended *loshon hora*. Keep it general to keep it kosher.

She's **NOT** a Joke

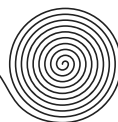
No matter how you say it, with words, a facial expression, an email, a picture, a WhatsApp, or even by pointing out an ad, *loshon hora* is forbidden.¹ But what if it's a good-natured joke about someone you love — someone you'd never want to hurt? It's still *loshon hora*!² Her mother might not think any differently about Elisheva because of the ad, but Tali is trying to get a laugh at her sister's expense. Lastly, who is Tali to mock her sister's business? Sometimes, the people who give the best advice are those who have had to work on the problem themselves. They know what it takes to conquer the issue. *Aderaba*, when you see someone working on conquering their nature, use it as an inspiration to change yourself.

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: 718-951-3696 2-3PM / 9-10:30 PM

My **אדרבה** moment

My son came home from shul complaining that the *baal tefilah* took too long.



Although I was curious, instead of asking who it was, I changed the topic.

See the
Good
What's the
Real
Story?

Every year on *Motzaei Shabbos* Nachamu, the Skulener Rebbe, zt"l, held a *melaveh malkah*. One year he held it in Gibbers, home of the Vizhnitzer Yeshivah.

As the Rebbe was leaving the event, he heard some men talking about a particular Vishnitzer *chasid*. "He doesn't care about anyone but himself," one man was saying. This came as a shock to the Rebbe, who knew the Vizhnitz community to be especially generous and welcoming. The Rebbe was pained that people were speaking *loshon hora* and asked the man what

caused him to say such a thing.

Who Towed My Car?



"Well, everyone who came for the *seudah* had to find parking around here, and it wasn't easy," the man explained. "A few people parked outside a Vizhnitz family's house, and the

homeowner had them towed! We saw it ourselves! Wait until those people find out they have to bail out their cars!"

Outrageous as the story sounded to him, the Rebbe knew there must be another side to it. So, he contacted the man who called the tow truck and asked him why he did it.

Can you Crack the case?

"My father, who lives with me, volunteers for Hatzalah," the man explained. "If he comes home in the middle of the night and there is no room on the street to park, he has to park far from the house. That could create a situation of *pikuach nefesh* for the next call that may come in. I contacted the tow truck company and had the driver bring the cars to the Vizhnitzer Yeshivah. It's just a few minutes' walk from my house. The car owners were directed to the yeshivah."

"But what about the cost of the towing?" the Rebbe persisted.

"It didn't cost them a penny," the man replied. "I paid for it myself!"

WordPower

The Manchester Rosh Yeshivah

HaRav Yehudah Zev Segal, זצ"ל

was the inspiration for the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation, the originator of the Shmiras Haloshon Yomi calendar and a living example of the heights of *ahavas Yisrael* a Jew can reach. This story is in honor of his *yahrtzeit*, Thursday, 22 Shevat, February 20th, 2025.



As a *bachur*, Rabbi Yosef Weiss, zt"l, had the honor of accompanying Rav Segal on extended stays in Semmering, Austria. Rabbi Weiss treasured these opportunities to build a close connection to the *tzaddik*.

One time, after spending eight weeks in Semmering, the Rosh Yeshivah and the young Yosef Weiss returned by train to Manchester. Reb Moshe Kupetz, zt"l, the Rosh Yeshivah's son-in-law, had organized a gathering of *bnei Torah* to welcome Rav Segal

Aren't I Still Important?

home. As the train pulled into the station, Yosef Weiss was impressed by the huge crowd and their big *Beruchim Haba'im* sign. Rav

Segal looked up, observed the scene, and turned his eyes back to his *sefer*.

When the two got off the train, Rav Segal was swept up into the crowd. Stranded at the platform, guarding the Rosh Yeshivah's luggage — after eight weeks as the Rosh Yeshivah's essential assistant and close companion — Yosef suddenly felt invisible. The feeling only lasted a moment, though,

because the Rosh Yeshivah had turned the crowd around and was headed back to Yosef.

"You know, this is really for you, too," he told the *bachur* with full conviction. "Look at the sign. It says *Beruchim Haba'im* (welcome) in plural, not singular." The Rosh Yeshivah grabbed his *talmid* and rejoined the group.

The Manchester Rosh Yeshivah taught a generation what it means to feel the pain, as well as to treasure the dignity, of our fellow Jew. May he continue to teach and inspire us.

זכר צדיק לברכה.

Heard from
Rabbi Yosef Weiss,
zt"l, at a
melaveh malkah
in honor of
Rav Segal's *yahrtzeit*

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