

Interactive
Questions
for Your
Shabbos
Table

ISSUE 39

SHABBOS PARSHAS BEHA'ALOSCHA 5785

Please do not read during
davening or Krias HaTorah.

What's The Harm in Asking?

"My best friend, Elisheva, just got married and their Shabbos sheva brachos is in my area. I can't host her, but I know that my neighbor, Shani, is going to be away for Shabbos—and the new couple needs a place to sleep.

I want to show Elisheva that I'm making an effort to help her, but I know that Shani doesn't lend out her apartment.

Can I suggest to Elisheva that she call Shani and ask her if she can use her apartment for Shabbos?"

—Helpful Hudis

What's the Psak?

Do you know the halachah?

A Yes,
It's fine—at least Hudis is showing that she's trying to help.

B No,
Hudis can't mislead Elisheva even though she wishes she could be helpful.

C It doesn't sound right,
but I can't put my finger on the issue.

The halachah is B. Hudis should NOT tell Elisheva to ask Shani if she can use her apartment.

False Hopes

If Hudis does suggest this, she would be liable for *geneivas daas* (literally, robbing someone's awareness) by misleading Elisheva, and *lifnei iver*, placing a stumbling block in front of Elisheva by giving her bad advice.¹ It might also be *onaas devarim* (causing pain with words) because Shani would be put in an uncomfortable situation.

There is a second issue here regarding *onaas devarim*. The prohibition includes needlessly raising someone's hopes only to have the person be disappointed. For example, going into a store and asking prices without the intention to buy anything gives the storeowner false hope of making a sale, and therefore is considered *onaas devarim*.² Likewise, giving Elisheva hope that her Shabbos housing issue is solved, sets her up for disappointment.

What Is Onaas Devarim?

O*naas devarim* is verbal assault—the causing of pain to another through the use of harsh, angry, or insensitive words. The Torah prohibits this type of speech in the *pasuk*, “*Lo sonu ish es amiso*—You shall not aggrrieve your fellow” - (Vayikra 25:17).

Rashi explains that this prohibition is directed at the words we use in our personal relationships. And it is a total prohibition; it offers no allowance for inflicting even the slightest pain for the briefest moment, unless there is no other way to accomplish an important constructive purpose.

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

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See the
good
in the
heart
of a Yid



Hakafos were over and Shmuly* waited at the designated meeting place for his friends. They were all going to have their *seudah* at the home of Rav Yerucham Olshin, a Rosh Yeshivah at Lakewood's Bais Medrash Govoha.

Shmuly waited and waited. The crowd was nearly gone, and it was getting late. **Where was everyone?**

Finally, he decided that he would go alone. Maybe his friends were already there, he thought. He walked through the dark streets and arrived at the Rosh Yeshivah's door.

Surprisingly, the house seemed quiet. Could the others have just decided not to show up? He knocked gently on the door and the Rosh Yeshivah answered with a warm smile and greeting.

"I'm sorry my friends didn't show up," he apologized. "There must have been some misunderstanding."

The Rosh Yeshivah didn't seem to mind. He invited his guest to the table and spoke to him while the *rebbe* got the meal ready. Soon Shmuly was enjoying delicious Yom Tov food and

Rav Olshin's inspiring words. The meal lasted for quite a while. At last, Shmuly got up to leave, thanking the Rosh Yeshivah and apologizing again for the absentees.

The next morning, when Shmuly saw his friends, he vented his frustration. "Where were you guys? How could you

leave me to go all alone to the Rosh Yeshivah's house and have a *seudah* by myself?"

The boys looked at each other, some of them shaking their heads in wonder. "This is unbelievable," said one boy. "Shmuly, didn't you know that the Rosh Yeshivah has his *seudah* after the third hakafah? We were waiting for you, but when you didn't show up, we went with Rav Olshin and had the whole meal."

"What? Do you mean that he ... that I ... that it wasn't even ..." he stammered.

"Yup. The Rosh Yeshivah did the whole thing all over again for you, just so you wouldn't be embarrassed," the boy said incredulously. "Didn't he mention anything to you?"

"Not a word," said Shmuly. "Not one single word."

* Names have been changed.

A Heaping Serving of Sensitivity



See the
good
What's the
Real
Story?



Temima Gold had a job interview. She was trying to find someone to watch her baby, but no one was available.

"Ma, why don't you call the Engels?" suggested Mrs. Gold's daughter. Rina Engel was her close school friend, and Rina's older sister Dina was home for a few weeks, getting ready to leave for seminary.

Mrs. Gold called the Engel's home and asked for Dina. "I need a babysitter for tomorrow at two," she said. "Are you by any chance available?"

"Sure," said Dina.

"Great," Mrs. Gold sighed with relief. "Please be here by two. I have to leave right on time."

Dina agreed. At 2:00 the next day, Mrs. Gold stood at the door with her coat

on, waiting for Dina to arrive. Then it was 2:03, then 2:05, then 2:07. "Where is that girl?" Mrs. Gold thought. "How can she be so irresponsible? This isn't right!"

Mrs. Gold's husband called. "Just want to wish you good luck," he said. But Mrs. Gold wasn't feeling

cheerful. "I'm standing here waiting for this Dina, who is already ten minutes late! What's wrong with teenagers today?"

"Why don't you call the house and see what's going on?" her husband suggested.

When Dina's mother picked up the call, Mrs. Gold began complaining about how late it was and how she had been very specific that Dina had to be there by two. "It's no joke!" she said. "I have a job interview and I absolutely cannot show up late!"

How Could She Not Show Up!



Can you
Crack the case?

"Oh! You're the one who needed a babysitter?" the mother said. "You told her the time, but you didn't tell her your name!"

DEDICATIONS

As a *zechut* for a *refuah sheleimah* for Orly bat Rechama Chana • As a *zechus* for health, mazel and brachah for Klal Yisrael. Dedicated by Greg Kalutsky and family

As a *zechus* for Dr. and Mrs. Dovid and Rachel Metz • As a *zechus* for all in need of *shidduchim* • As a *zechus* for our dear son Dovid upon his Bar Mitzvah

As a *zechus* for Chaim Yehuda Mordechai • לעיני חיים יחיאל מיכל בן רפאל פיינועל שניאור ז"ל