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Interactive Questions for Your Shabbos Table

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ISSUE 108

SHABBOS PARSHAS LECH LECHA 5787

Please treat this newsletter with proper respect.
Please do not read during *davening* or *Krias HaTorah*.

He Is Not Invited

My family lived in Baltimore until we moved away two years ago. My cousin Daniel, who still lives there, had his bar mitzvah a few weeks ago, and we went back to Baltimore to join the *simchah*. I was so excited to see my old gang of friends at the bar mitzvah. There were five of us in our old gang—my cousin and me, and our friends Moshe, Ari, and Reuven. Moshe was the first of the group to get there and he said that Ari was on his way. Then he said, "Reuven isn't coming. I'm not sure why he wasn't invited." I really wanted to know why, but I thought it might end up being loshon hora, so I didn't ask.



Was Moshe allowed to tell me that Reuven wasn't invited?

—Zevy

What's the *Psak?*

Do you know the halachah?

A Yes.
Daniel is not obligated to invite the whole world.

B No.
It implies that Daniel or Reuven did something wrong.

C No.
Zevy's instinct is correct.

Nothing Good Will Come of It

Saying that someone is not invited to an event doesn't convey anything that is objectively negative, but such a statement gets the wheels turning in other people's minds. Was there a falling out between the boys? Between their families? Was Reuven no longer a part of the "gang"? If not, why not?

This kind of statement does not precisely qualify as loshon hora, but it tends to cause the speaker or others to speak loshon hora. These statements are known as *avak loshon hora*—literally, the dust of loshon hora. *Avak loshon hora* is forbidden because it can be expected to lead to loshon hora or because, without saying anything outright, it implies something negative.[1]

There may be many innocent reasons why Daniel did not invite Reuven. It could be that in the two years since the boys were part of the "gang," Reuven had developed a different circle of friends based on new interests. Nevertheless, Moshe's comment implies something negative. Furthermore, if there is a juicy story behind Reuven's non-invitation, Moshe's comment will open the gates to let it all spill out. The result will likely be loshon hora about what Reuven did to Daniel or what Daniel did to Reuven.[2]

Zevy did the right thing by not reacting to Moshe's comment, and not asking anyone why Reuven wasn't invited. The rule against *avak loshon hora* teaches us to think a step ahead. Even if what we're saying is objectively innocent, where is it likely to lead? This, too, is our concern.

Answer: The halachah is **B** and **C**.

1. *Be'er Mayim Chaim, Hilchos Loshon Hora* 9:1; Addendum
2. *Be'er Mayim Chaim, Hilchos Loshon Hora* 9:2

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

We are an אַדְרַבָּה family

We **see** the **good**, **even** when it's **not obvious.**



אדרבה
SHABBOS PARSHAS LECH LECHA 5787
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See the good in the heart of a Yid

No Money? No Worries!

A small crowd of people sat in Dr. Nachum Kook's waiting room, which was also his living room. The humble doctor, who lived in Yerushalayim many years ago, kept it simple. He had no assistants, no nurses, no office; it was just him and his patients, whom he saw in his house. When he finished examining one patient, the one who had arrived next would enter the examining room—a spare bedroom.

The patients went by the honor system. Nobody tried to cut in front of anyone else. There was only one person who was seen out of order: the Chevron Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Yechezkel Sarna. Dr. Kook gave him precedence because of his stature as a Torah scholar and because he suffered from diabetes and visited the doctor often.

One day, Rav Sarna came in and took a seat. Soon, the previous patient walked out, followed by Dr. Kook. Rav Sarna got up to enter the examining room, but Dr. Kook stopped him and whispered, "Please let this patient go first," indicating a woman who had come before the Rosh Yeshivah.



When Rav Sarna's turn came, he told Dr. Kook, "I'm sorry. I got up before my turn."

"Sorry?" Dr. Kook exclaimed. "You have nothing to apologize for. I should be apologizing to you! I always take you as soon as you come in."

He paused. "But this woman is very poor, and I don't charge her. I was afraid that if she saw me take someone else ahead of her, she might think it was because she doesn't pay."

His voice softened. "I couldn't let her feel that her poverty made her less important."

Adapted from *Quill of the Heart*, a CCHF publication

See the good What's the Real Story?

He Caught the Bike Thief Red-Handed!

Shua loved his Friday visits to Aunt Temmi's old-fashioned apartment. Her old-fashioned oven baked the best chocolate chip cookies ever, and he could still taste them as he headed home for Shabbos. Best of all, he'd be riding home on his new bike, which he had locked to the iron fence outside her building.

As Shua stepped outside, he spotted the bike's shiny blue fenders. Then he stopped. A Jewish teenage boy was crouched beside it, holding Shua's padlock. It was open. Shua couldn't believe what he was seeing.

The boy looked quickly up and down the street. Then he grabbed the handlebars and began wheeling the bike away. Shua took off after him. "HEY! THAT'S MY BIKE!" The boy spun around, and Shua grabbed the handlebars.

Shua had seen the boy holding his open lock and wheeling away his bike. *Was he right about what he'd seen?*



Can you Crack the case?

"Two guys were messing with your bike a few minutes ago," the boy explained. "When they saw me watching them, they ran." He handed Shua the lock. It had been cut.

"I was afraid they'd come back. Your bike wasn't locked anymore, so I was trying to keep it safe until I could find out who it belonged to."

Shua glanced behind the boy. The boy hadn't been taking the bike away. He'd been wheeling it toward the entrance, to bring it inside Aunt Temmi's building.

The boy Shua had chased as a thief was the one who had saved his bike.

Adapted from a story submitted by an Aderaba participant

DEDICATIONS

לע"נ בתשבע רחל ע"ה בת ר' שמעון יבלח"ט • לע"נ חיים יחיאל מיכל בן רפאל פייוועל שניאור ז"ל, לע"נ יעקב זאב בן יהודה אריה ז"ל, לע"נ רבקה בת יעקב יוסף ע"ה

L'ilui nishmas R' Dovid Yihuda ben Shmuel Aharon *z"l* and M' Divora bas HaRav Sholom *a"h*

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