



I Think They Got It All Wrong

On Friday nights, my father takes home a Shabbos newsletter that someone distributes in our shul. Sometimes they include quizzes to test yourself on the *parashah* or halachah questions to test your knowledge. Last week, there was an interesting halachah question, and everyone at the table was busy trying to figure out the answer.



Everyone was arguing their points until my father finally read us the answer. Since the question was on a topic I had learned about recently in school, I was sure that I knew the answer. But it turned out that the newsletter's answer was different. I think it was just plain wrong. Not only that, but probably about ten thousand people got this newsletter and now have the wrong idea of the halachah! Am I allowed to say that I think the answer is wrong?

—Michelle, an Aderaba participant

What's the *Psak*?

Do you know the halachah?

A It depends
on why you argue
against it.

B No.
It's loшон hora
about the people
writing the leaflet.

C Yes.
You're only saying how
you view that idea and
understand that halachah.

Open for Discussion, **Not Derision**

The purpose of these leaflets (like Aderaba!) is usually to make the readers think about and to become aware of certain matters. It's meant to open a discussion, so everyone is certainly allowed to express his or her own view! You heard a different *psak*? Ever since Hillel and Shammai, we've embraced the viewpoint that different *poskim* arrive at their answers via different routes, sometimes coming up with a different result. Saying, "I learned it differently" is not loшон hora. You can also say, "I think the answer is wrong. I'm going to call them and check it out."

However, that is different from being critical of a publication. We may not speak with the intention of degrading the publication or its writer.¹ Even though they have published their view for all to see, it is forbidden to reveal an error or to criticize a viewpoint to others for the purpose of degrading them.² If you think there is indeed a serious halachic error or misjudgment, the first step is to contact the publication to see if perhaps there's a misunderstanding. If you confirm that there is a halachic or hashkafic mistake, it is a *to'eles* to tell people so that they will not inadvertently sin—but it must be done in a constructive and delicate way.

Answer: The halachah is A.

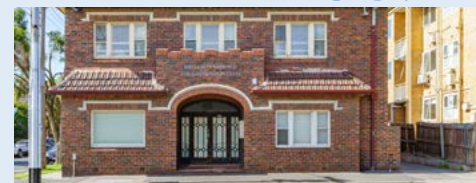
Reviewed by Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Lowy

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**

DO YOU HAVE A RAV?

It is an obligation to have a *posek* whose expertise we can count on to steer us correctly. At Aderaba, Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Lowy, *shlita*, he reviews the Halachah Questions and Answers carefully so that we can feel confident that we are providing accurate information. Since the slightest difference in the details can change the *psak* dramatically, anyone with a *shailah* should consult his own *posek* or the Shmiras Haloshon Shaila hotline to ensure that he receives an answer that fits his circumstances.

THANK YOU!



YESHIVAT MAOR YISRAEL

OF MONTREAL FOR DISTRIBUTING ADERABA EVERY WEEK

Be the
good
Pursue
Peace

In Yerushalayim, Shimshon Levy* was becoming a minor legend. He was considered one of the top young *talmidei chachamim* in his *chassidus*, and he had shown that his strength wasn't limited to the *beis midrash*. Someone had demeaned his Rebbe publicly, and Shimshon had risen mightily to his defense. He spoke out in protest, fearlessly shaming the man who had insulted the honor of his Rebbe—the honor of Torah!

That Yom Tov, Shimshon was with his Rebbe. Rav Gad'l Eisner, who had once been Shimshon's rebbi, was also there. He noticed Shimshon telling other *chassidim* how he had taught a lesson to the man who had insulted the Rebbe.

Rav Gad'l took Shimshon aside. "Are you the one becoming famous for protecting your Rebbe's *kavod*?"

"Yes, that's me!"

Figure Out What You're Fighting For

Shimshon replied.

"Let me ask you something. If this person had insulted a different Rebbe, would you have also protested?" asked Rav Gad'l.

Shimshon, stunned by the question, quietly answered, "Of course not."

"Well then," said



Rav Gad'l, "it was not for the Rebbe's honor that you protested. It was for your own honor. Your unbridled reaction was no different from that of those who don't know how to rise above their *middos*."

We can easily fall into Shimshon's trap of convincing ourselves that a bad *middah* is really a righteous cause. Rav Gad'l gives us a simple test: **If the situation were exactly the same but involved different people, would we react the same way?** If the answer is no, that's a strong sign that it's not the principle that's driving us. It's personal.

*Name has been changed.

Adapted from
the Hebrew
sefer *Aderaba*,
by Rabbi Yaakov
Yisrael Posen

See the
good
What's the
Real
Story?

As Zev walked along Main Street in Kew Gardens Hills, Queens, a car pulled up at a corner near him. An elderly woman got out, clutching some envelopes. She looked around, seeming to be a bit confused.

"Can I help you with something?" Zev asked her.

"Wasn't there a mailbox on this corner?" she asked.

Can You Trust Him With Your Mail?

"Yes, there was, but they took it down a few years ago," he told her. "But I'm on my way home, and I'll be passing by another mailbox. If you'd

like, I'll take your envelopes and mail them there."

In the driver's seat of the car the woman had been riding in was a younger

woman, most likely the older woman's daughter. Hearing Zev's offer, she motioned to her mother, "No. Don't

give him your mail." Nevertheless, the mother handed Zev her mail and told her daughter, "Don't worry. Don't you see he's a religious Jew?"

But when Zev got to the mailbox, he did something strange. He thumbed through the stack of envelopes, looked around to make sure no one was watching, and slipped them into his pocket.

Was this seemingly kind-hearted Jew stealing an elderly woman's mail?

Can you Crack the case?

Happy to do a mitzvah, Zev wanted to be sure he was doing it right. He checked each envelope, as he did with his own mail, to make sure they were all addressed and stamped. But they weren't! The woman had forgotten to stamp them. Had he dropped them in the box without looking at them, her bills would have gone unpaid. Concerned that the suspicious daughter might have followed him in her car, Zev looked around before he tucked the envelopes away in his pocket. Then he went home for some stamps, went back to the mailbox, and completed the mitzvah.

In loving memory of our father **Herbert Englander**
Dedicated by Sarah & Steven Jacoby

L'zechus **Perel bas Yocheved** and
Chaim Mordechai ben Yocheved



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