



# Ask The Rabbi...

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**This issue is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Binyamin Ben Moshe (Bernard) Burnham, O.B.M.**

This edition contains: 1. Inviting a Shabbat Driver  
2. Hot on Shabbat

Harry Franklin from Los Gatos asked,

*Can I invite my friends for a Shabbat meal, knowing that they are going to drive on Shabbat?*

Dear Harry,

Your question has to be answered in light of several prohibitions:

- **"Lifnei iver"** — "Don't put a stumbling block in front of a blind person," meaning that you should not **provide the means** for others to violate the Torah.
- **"Meisit"** — **encouraging** someone to transgress.
- **"Mesayaya Ovrei Aveirah"** — **assisting** in a transgression.

Does inviting someone to your house on Shabbat violate any of these prohibitions?

Regarding someone who wanted to organize a Shabbat-*minyan* for children where the children would arrive by car, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, *zatzal*, ruled that it is forbidden: "Is teaching them about prayer more important than teaching them about Shabbat? This isn't *mitzvah*-education, it's the **opposite**, G-d forbid." In a similar case Rabbi Feinstein writes that if it is **impossible** for the children to come on foot, besides *lifnei iver* there is the additional prohibition of *meisit*.

If your question is to be compared to this case of the Shabbat-*minyan* for children, then no, you could not invite your friends.

On the other hand, we have the ruling of Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch, *shlita*, about a son inviting his parents for Shabbat. Rabbi Sternbuch suggests that "*lifnei iver*" depends on **intentions**. Just as a doctor performing an operation isn't violating the commandment against damaging others, here too the son isn't making his parents "stumble." On the contrary, he wants to draw them closer to the Torah. The son isn't **telling** them to drive, and if possible he should make arrangements so they won't have to drive. But if that's impossible and he feels this will bring them closer to Torah observance, *lifnei iver* wouldn't seem to apply. By letting them know the importance of Shabbat and the sweetness of keeping it, he will succeed in bringing his parents back to the right path — which is the greatest way to honor them.

Sources:

- *Iggrot Moshe, Orach Chaim 1:98, 3:71.*
- *T'shuvot V'hanhagot, Rav Moshe Sternbuch, Orach Chaim 1:358.*

Richard Alan from Chicago wrote:

*I was a guest at the home of a religious family this past Shabbat, and they served the tastiest delicacy into which I've ever sunk my teeth. Before it was even served, the intoxicating aroma wafted in from the kitchen, exciting our taste buds to unprecedented levels of anticipation. At last we dined on the molasses-colored potpourri. I believe they called it "Jolt." What is the significance of this tasty tradition?*

Dear Richard,

You mean "**Cholent**." I once read that the word Cholent comes from the French "*Chaud-Lent*" meaning "Hot-Slow." This aptly describes Cholent. The *Ba'al HaMeor* cites authorities who say that it is a Rabbinical enactment to eat hot food on Shabbat. Aside from the *mitzvah* of *Oneg Shabbat* (enjoyment of Shabbat), eating hot food demonstrates our belief in the Oral Law. How? The Written Law states, "Do not kindle a fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day." Some misguided sects said that all fires had to be extinguished prior to Shabbat. To negate this idea, the Sages instituted that on Shabbat we eat delicious food kept **hot** by a fire.

The *Ba'al HaMeor* concludes with the following poem in praise of eating hot food on Shabbat:

**Who prepares cooked foods  
And wraps them 'round  
Delights in Shabbat...Gains a pound...  
He's the one who's faith is sound;  
When Mashiach comes  
He'll be around.**

Sources:

*Ba'al HaMeor, Masechet Shabbat Perek Kirah.*

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**Ask The Rabbi** is written by **Rabbi Benzion Bamberger, Rabbi Reuven Subar** and various other Rabbis at Ohr Somayach Institutions / Tanenbaum College, Jerusalem, Israel.

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