Halachos of Daily Living

vayeira

I have a snow removal service that cleans out my office parking lot. I don't tell them when to come. They come when they want. Are they permitted to come on Shabbos?

We have seen in a previous Halacha Yomis that shoveling snow might not be a *Melacha* (forbidden activity on Shabbos), and provided that there is an *eiruv*, there are leniencies to have a non-Jew shovel your walkway. However, in the case of a parking lot, even if it is in the *eiruv*, it is not practical to clear the snow with a shovel. Asking a non-Jew to clear the parking lot is equivalent to asking him to plow, which is a violation of *Amira L'akum* (the prohibition of asking a non-Jew to do a *Melacha* on Shabbos). Although there is a leniency in cases involving public danger, that would not apply to an office parking lot on Shabbos.

If the parking lot is within the *Techum* (walking distance on Shabbos) of a Jewish neighborhood, even if a non-Jew came on his own to clear your parking lot you would be obligated to send him away. There is a concern that Jews might see the work done on Shabbos and assume that non-Jews were asked to do this. This is forbidden due to *Maris Ayin* (giving the impression that one is violating the *Halacha*). Therefore, if one hires a snow removal company, they must tell them in advance that if it snows on Shabbos, they may not plow until after Shabbos.

In all situations, if the snow is in an area where people may walk on Shabbos (such as the driveway or parking lot of a shul) and the snow may be slippery, it is permissible to arrange for a non-Jew to remove the snow, even with a snow plow. As noted previously, *Amira L'akum* is permitted to avoid a public danger.