

Is a Man Permitted to Go on a Bus If He May Inadvertently Bump Into a Woman?

**Question 1:** Is a man permitted to ride on a crowded bus or train if he knows that he may inadvertently bump into a woman?

**Answer 1:** This question was asked to Rav Moshe Feinstein by a young man who was leaving Kollel to enter the workplace and was nervous about riding the bus for this very reason. Rav Moshe told him that touching a woman is only forbidden if it is done "*derech chiba*", in a lewd or affectionate way, and not if it is done incidentally. Since bumping into someone by accident is not *derech chiba*, Rav Moshe told the man that he need not be concerned about it.

**Question 1:** Would that mean that it is permitted for a man to shake hands with a woman?

**Answer 2:** No. Rav Moshe felt strongly that it is prohibited for a man to shake hands with a woman because shaking hands is by definition considered *derech chiba*.

Although he forbids it, in one *teshuva* he notes that some people do shake hands with members of the opposite gender, and he says they must be doing so under the assumption that shaking hands is not *derech chiba*, but he himself feels otherwise.