

Flameout

Dayan Yehoshua Grunwald

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**Q** We leave our Shabbos night soup on the stovetop, where a gust of wind from the window blew out the flame. May I ask a gentile to reignite the stove?



**A** Asking a gentile to light the flame violates the Rabbinic prohibition of *amirah l'akum*. As a general rule, it is prohibited to instruct a gentile to perform a *melacha d'Oraisa*, even for the purpose of a mitzvah. Therefore, even if we consider the preparation of necessary Shabbos *se'udah* food a mitzvah, one may not tell a gentile to do it. You also can't direct a gentile in the manner of *remez shelo bederech tzivui*—hinting without mentioning the forbidden activity—as many *poskim* disallow this in the case of a *melacha d'Oraisa* in the home of a Jew. (See Sefer Amira Lenachri, end of ch. 37). Additionally, even if it were permitted, deriving benefit from *melacha* done on behalf of a Jew is forbidden, so you couldn't eat the food.

One may not wrap towels around the pot, as that would constitute *hatmanah* (insulating), which is prohibited *mid'Rabanan* on Shabbos. If the oven was turned off just before Shabbos and remains hot, you may insert the soup pot into the oven.

You must contend with another problem as well: Your stove is emitting flammable gas into your home, and that poses a hazard, so you should tell a gentile to shut off the gas. Even

if the dial will pass through “ignite” on the way to “off,” that’s not a problem of *amirah l’akum* because it is a *shvus dishvus*, as the ignition in this case is a *melacha she’ein tzricha legufah*, and for the purpose of safety it is certainly permitted. Additionally, the ignition is only a *psik reisha*—an undesired but inevitable consequence of a permitted act—which one is allowed to have a gentile do. If there is no gentile available, one may ask a child to turn it off with a *shinui* (variation), such as turning it with a spoon rather than the hand, as that would also be a *shvus dishvus*. If a child isn’t available either, an adult should do it.