



Bent out of Shape over Bashed-Up Boxes

I run a business that sells machine parts. One of the strengths of my business is customer service, and my delivery operations are a big part of that. For several years, I've been using Reliable Deliveries to package and deliver the parts to my customers. Dovid, the owner, gave me the best price for the service, but it seems that his boxes are of low quality. My customers often complain that the box arrives looking like it's been through



an accident, and the parts are sometimes damaged as a result. I told this to Dovid several times, but he hasn't upgraded his boxes. That's why I decided to change delivery services.

I just signed a contract with Lightspeed Deliveries. The owner, Kalman, knows I was using Reliable, and I want to tell him why I changed so that he will understand that the quality of the boxes is important to me. Can I tell him about the issue with Reliable Deliveries?

—Yanky

What's the Psak?
Do you know the halachah?

A No.
It's loshon hora to speak negatively about Reliable Deliveries.

B Yes.
It's a *to'eles* for Yanky so that he can avoid the same problem.

C Yes.
It's already obvious that Yanky has had some issue with Reliable Deliveries.

No Need to Mention It

One of the rules of *to'eles* is that we are only allowed to report negative information that is necessary for a constructive purpose. If we can achieve the same goal without saying the negative information, we may not say it.¹

Yanky has a constructive purpose, which is to make sure Kalman uses strong boxes—otherwise Yanky will have the same problem he had with Reliable. However, he can simply tell Kalman directly that this is what he wants. He doesn't have to compare Lightspeed's boxes with Reliable's to get the point across. This is a key rule of *to'eles*—**we may not speak negatively about someone else unless there is no other way of achieving the constructive purpose.** This is particularly important when speaking to someone about that person's competitor, because it is likely that the listener will use that information to further discredit him.² For instance, Kalman might tell a prospective customer, "I'm a little more expensive than Reliable, but my boxes are much stronger. People tell me Reliable's boxes arrive all bashed up."

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.

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It was the greatest news! The letter that the Alter of Novardok held in his hand was the answer to many heartfelt prayers. As the head of the Novardok network of yeshivos, the Alter was in constant need of money. But money was hard to raise—most Jews lived in poverty. So, the Alter spent much of his time fundraising.

But now, a wealthy German Jew had passed away, leaving his magnificent home to the yeshiva! With the money that would come from the sale of that house, new Novardok yeshivos could be opened.

He Stayed 900 Miles Away from Machlokes



Existing ones would receive money for heat, food, repairs—everything they were lacking.

The Alter needed to travel to Germany to complete the transaction. There were papers to be signed, a house to be sold—much to do. He packed up and set out on the trip, a 900-mile journey by train.

He had gone a great distance already when a message reached him. A representative of another yeshiva was also on his way

to claim this very house that had been bequeathed to Novardok!

“What could the explanation be?” he wondered. Perhaps the benefactor had asked for the proceeds of the house sale to be divided between the two yeshivos? Or was there some kind of mix-up?

Whatever the reason, the Alter made a firm decision, right in the middle of his trip. He got off the train and headed back to Novardok. No matter what he stood to gain, it would undoubtedly come to him only through a conflict—perhaps a *beis din* or perhaps a *machlokes*.

To the Alter, that completely erased the value of the house. Money won through *machlokes* would never truly bring about benefit, but by being *mevater*, he was certain he could not lose.

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

Many years ago, Zaidy Hill had an extensive *sefarim* library. That made him the go-to address for *talmidei chachamim* who needed any *sefer* that was hard to find.

One day, Zaidy told his grandson Yisroel Meir about a special *sefer* that he owned—about an *eiruv* in Odessa. It was a fascinating collection of opinions from many of the legendary Torah figures of the past generation.

Yisroel Meir wanted to see the *sefer*, but one of the community's leading

dayanim had borrowed it. Some time passed, and Yisroel Meir asked Zaidy Hill again, “Could I see that *sefer* about the Odessa *eiruv*?”

“It seems to be lost,” Zaidy replied.

“The *dayan* called to ask if he could borrow it again, and I told him that I thought he still had it. He said he

had returned it to me a while ago, and I trust him. But I don't have it, and I didn't lend it to anyone else, so I'm stumped.”

Did the *dayan* lose the book?

Things Don't Just Disappear!



Can you **Crack** the case?

A couple of years later, Yisroel Meir thought about that *sefer* again and asked Zaidy if it had been found. “It's a story,” he told his grandson. “Someone from Eretz Yisrael who had stayed in our house had borrowed a *sefer* on tefilin and was looking for a way to send it back. We arranged for someone to bring it back, and when I got it, I saw that the *sefer* on the Odessa *eiruv* was actually bound together with the *sefer* on tefilin as a single volume. I just didn't realize it was in there. So I did loan it out again. I just didn't know it.” Zaidy was glad he had trusted the *dayan*'s word. The whole thing didn't make sense...until it did.

Submitted by
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