THE SHABBOS POSITIVITY MOVEMENT

אַדְּרַבָּה

ISSUE 111

SHABBOS PARSHAS TOLDOS 5787

Interactive Questions for Your Shabbos Table

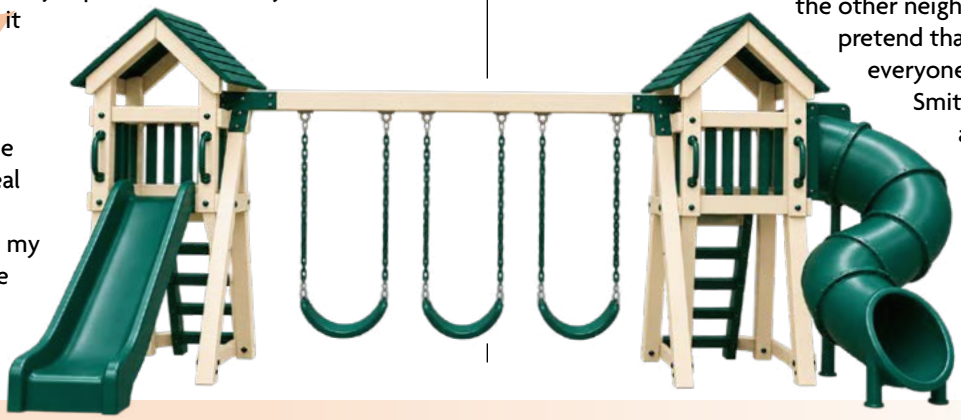
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Please treat this newsletter with proper respect.
Please do not read during *davening* or *Krias HaTorah*.

Who Didn't Chip In?

With five families—and loads of little kids—in our building, I knew everyone would be ecstatic about having a swing set in the backyard. So when I saw an ad for a free set with three swings and two slides, I jumped on it. The only condition was that we had to take it immediately and pay $350 to have it delivered. I moved fast before someone else grabbed the deal and, without even stopping to canvass my neighbors about the purchase, laid out the $350 myself.



I figured that no one would object to pitching in $70 towards having this swing set available right there in the backyard.

But I was wrong. One family, the Smiths, said very politely, "Sorry, but we didn't agree to this, and we won't be contributing." So, okay, I understand that I will have to foot the bill for the Smith's portion, but what am I supposed to tell the other neighbors? Should I lie and pretend that the set belongs to everyone? I don't think the Smith children should be allowed to play on the swings if their parents didn't contribute toward it, but can I tell this to the other families?

—Sarah

What's the *Psak?*

Do you know the halachah?

A Yes.
It's allowed, but it might lead to other problems.

B No.
It will give the other families a bad impression of the Smiths.

C Yes.
The Smiths didn't do anything wrong.

She Might Just **Have to Lie**

Each family had a choice. They could contribute towards the delivery and, therefore, get to enjoy the swing set, or they could choose not to contribute, in which case the set would not belong to them. It is not loshon hora to say that the Smiths did not contribute, because no one was obligated to do so. Sarah would not be saying that they did something bad; she would just be stating the neutral truth.

However, telling the neutral facts isn't always the path to peace. We have to be careful with our relationships with other Jews—and especially with our neighbors. It would be almost impossible to exclude the Smiths' children from a swing set placed in a communal backyard. Even kids who don't live in the building—and certainly didn't chip in—will most likely be playing there when they visit their friends who do live in the building. The only way to keep the Smith kids off the swings is to single them out, letting everyone know that the family didn't pay, and *that* will almost certainly lead to *machlokes* among the parents and teasing and fighting among the kids.

Thus, even though saying the Smiths chose not to pay is not technically loshon hora, the results are potentially so dire that Sarah may even lie and say that they paid.[1] This will keep the peace between neighbors, while telling the truth is bound to create *machlokes*. Besides, the Smiths' share was indeed paid—by Sarah!

And even though Sarah ended up spending extra money, Hashem will surely pay her back for her actions, since the Gemara[2] applies the blessings of the verse, "One who pursues *tzedakah* and kindness will be granted life, righteousness, and honor"[3] to one who pursues the ways of peace.

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.

The Shmiras Haloshon Shailah Hotline: 718-951-3696 2-3PM / 9-10:30 PM

1. *Sefer Chofetz Chaim, Rechilus* 1:8 2. *Kiddushin* 40a 3. *Mishlei* 21:21

Say the good word power

Shmiras Haloshon Comes To the Rescue

The rabbi slept in his succah. The homes and streets of Sderot were quiet and dark, as if resting up for the upcoming Simchas Torah festivities.

That night, the rabbi dreamed that the Chofetz Chaim and another person were debating. "*Levatel* (nullified)," said the Chofetz Chaim. "*Lo levatel*," the person responded. The Chofetz Chaim concluded, "*Levatel*, *levatel*, *levatel*!"

"What was that about?" the rabbi wondered when he opened his eyes at 5 a.m. He perceived the Chofetz Chaim actually walking out his succah as he awakened.

By 6 a.m., the Gaza terrorists had launched their barbaric invasion. Bullets and missiles began flying.

Unaware of the full extent of the danger, the rabbi went to shul, reasoning that this was life in Sderot, and Yom Tov must go on.

Suddenly, he heard a gunshot nearby. He ran outside to see if someone needed help, and a bullet whizzed past his head. Then a bullet struck him in his chest and exited through his back, breaking ribs and tearing through organs. He ran back into the shul, hemorrhaging and in agony.

Yigal, a congregant who had arrived early, called for an ambulance, but to no avail. The only option was to drive to an MDA station. The rabbi's car was parked right outside. Yigal grabbed the keys, rushed the rabbi into his car, and made it to the station, where medics stopped the hemorrhage.

One last available armored ambulance then took the rabbi to the hospital. Awaiting complicated surgery to repair his organs, he dreamed again of the Chofetz Chaim, who repeated his *levatel* decree.

"That's it!" the rabbi realized. "I'm on the operating table, not in my grave, because the Chofetz Chaim defended me. But why? Perhaps because of the shmiras haloshon *shiur* I give in my shul between Minchah and Maariv."



Adapted from a live interview on the CCHF Tishah B'Av 5786 program

See the good What's the Real Story?

How the Merchant Trapped The Thief

The sun was already scorching at 7:30 a.m., when Saadiah arrived at the marketplace to sell his eggs. He was a real professional; he took excellent care of his chickens, his eggs, and his customers. He was also a devout Jew who spent the earliest hours of the morning in shul.

Yerushalayim, at the time, was ruled by the Ottoman Empire. The Jews were desperately poor, and Saadiah needed every coin he earned to feed his family. So, when he discovered that one tray of 30 eggs was missing from his overnight storage area, he was angry.

Who would do such a thing? Since there was no evidence of a break-in, he concluded that the theft was an "inside job" by another merchant. Yossel, the merchant whose stall was next to his, was the prime suspect. Saadiah "knew" he was a crooked man who sold infested flour.

Saadiah watched and waited. Each morning, he found one tray of eggs empty. He was ready to publicly accuse Yossel and shame him into paying for the stolen merchandise.

Instead, his Jewish heart told him to consult the *gadol* Rav Shmuel Salant, who offered what seemed like odd advice: "Boil a tray of eggs and leave them on top of the other trays."

"I should cook the eggs for him?" Saadiah silently wondered. But he followed the rav's advice and discovered the culprit. Who was it?



Adapted from a story in *Y*, the Yated Ne'eman magazine

Can you Crack the case?

The morning after he placed the boiled eggs in his storage area, he arrived to find a gigantic viper lying dead on the floor, with crumbled eggshells in its mouth. As Rav Shmuel had suspected, the snake choked itself to death trying to consume the cooked eggs. Saadiah was shaken: he might have ruined the reputation of an innocent man had he not put the matter in the hands of a *talmid chacham*.

DEDICATIONS

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