

# Let My People Shmooz

Interactive Questions to Spark Your Shabbos Table Discussions



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SHABBOS PARSHAS SHEMOS 5785

We'd love to hear your feedback, stories, and ideas. Email us at [aderaba@cchfglobal.org](mailto:aderaba@cchfglobal.org)

## Is a Picture Worth a Thousand Words?

On our fifteenth wedding anniversary, we decided to flip through our family album. It had photographs of our wedding and the first ten years of our marriage. As you can imagine, not everyone



looks as neat and young as they did then. This led us to make a few comments, like:

"Amazing how much *koach* Rabbi Korn had back then!"

"I don't know how you fit into that dress, Savta!"

"Benny, look at this weird face you made when you were eight!"

**Are these comments permitted?**

— Perel with the pictures

What's the  
**Psak?**  
Can you guess  
the halachah?

- A **Yes**, those in the photo would agree that they were younger then — and it's just fun.
- B **No**, it's loshon hora to say that they've changed for the worse.
- C **No**, I don't know why, but it doesn't sound right.

## Calling It **Like You See It**

Looking at pictures and making comments can lead to loshon hora or *onaas devarim*. Those hearing the comment about Rabbi Korn might start thinking that he's past his prime, worn out and uninspiring—feelings they didn't have before the comment.<sup>[1]</sup> Loshon hora is forbidden even if it is true and the subject would agree, because it creates a negative impression of him and may cause him harm.<sup>[2]</sup>

In the case of Savta or Benny, the comments are not only loshon hora because they are being said in front of other people, but they are also *onaas devarim*, because they are bound to make the subjects feel bad.<sup>[3]</sup> Even if Savta puts on a brave smile, it might hit her later that people see how she has aged. Benny might resent his family focusing on his mischievous younger self instead of the young man he has become. These slights are especially likely if either Savta or Benny is sensitive.

Reviewed by Rav Moshe Mordechai Lowy.

Rav Avraham Yaakov Pam zt"l advised great caution when presenting halachic scenarios to the public, as each situation is unique. This *she'eilah* 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

## The Halachah

The answer is B.



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the heart  
of a Yid

שגרה מעלת חברים

## The Scent That Saved the Seder

The Green Seder was in full swing. The family had settled into their places around the beautiful table. Everyone and everything was as clean, pure, new and bright as can only be on the first night of Pesach.

Surrounded by their children and grandchildren, Adina Green and her husband were filled with *nachas*.

Just as everyone sang "*Kol dichfin yeisei v'yeichol*," inviting the poor to come to the Seder, they heard a knock on the front door. Although the Greens often had guests, no one else was expected that night.

It was Brunia Shneid, a lonely, elderly woman who lived nearby. Brunia could no longer take proper care of herself, and she thought of Mrs. Green, who was always kind to her, as

a friend. With no place to go for the Seder, she had come to the Green home and, of course, they invited her



together quickly.

"You know, on Rosh Hashanah we eat apples and honey to have a sweet year," she told Brunia. "And on Pesach, when the smell of *Gan Eden* comes into our house, our family has a special *minhag* of spraying perfume in the air." She got a bottle of perfume and, making it

seem like a special ceremony, she sprayed all around, making sure to include Brunia in the mist.

That night, the Green's modest Flatbush home truly smelled like *Gan Eden*.

## Take It to the Table

How did Mrs. Green come up with such a creative idea for covering up the smell without insulting the guest?

What would you have done in that situation?

What's  
the real  
story?

היידן לכף זכות



## There's a Hole in the Story

Lena, a recently widowed Russian immigrant who lived on Suri Nussbaum's block, needed a job. She offered to clean Suri's house, and Suri agreed to hire her.

Lena came on Thursday. On the Friday after Lena started, Suri went to do some Shabbos errands. When she came upon an old woman sitting outside the store collecting *tzedakah*, she dug into the change compartment in her purse, but it was empty. Where were the coins?

Suddenly, Lena came to mind. Did Suri really know her? Even if she was a good person, she needed money. Maybe she was overcome with temptation.



Instead, Lena was furious. She stalked out the door vowing never to speak to Suri again.

Did Lena take the money?

When Suri got home, she put a few more quarters into the change compartment. The next Friday, when Suri went shopping, she again discovered that she had no change for the old woman. There seemed to be no question that Lena was the culprit. But how could she discuss this without insulting Lena?

The next week when Lena came, Suri invited her to sit down at the kitchen table. She confronted her in the gentlest way possible, hoping Lena would just confess and promise never to do it again.

## Can you Crack the case?

The following Friday, Suri went out shopping, confident that her quarters would be there for the old woman. However, the compartment was empty! As she poked around in the purse, her finger slipped into a hole. Reaching in further, she hit upon a quarter. The coins had fallen through a hole in the lining!

### THE REST OF THE STORY

Suri bought Lena a beautiful bouquet of flowers for Shabbos and went straight to her door to apologize. "Since then," says Suri, "when I start making negative assumptions, I think of that hole in my purse."

## DEDICATIONS

L'ilui nishmas Tzipora bas Moshe Baruch a"h

In memory of Dovid ben Yosef HaKohen z"l • Dedicated by the Rozehzadeh family

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