

Swing State

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**Q** I hung a swing from a tree in my backyard by screwing a two-by-four to the tree and connecting the swing to the beam. May the swing be used on Shabbos?



**A** It is forbidden to make use of a tree on Shabbos (e.g., by climbing on it or placing an item on it), which is known as *mishtameish b'ilan*. *Chazal* were concerned that one who uses a tree may unintentionally pull off a fruit or branch from the tree, violating the *issur d'Oraisa* of *kotzeir* (harvesting). The prohibition also includes using an item attached to a tree (e.g., climbing a ladder leaning on the tree), known as *tzedadim* (sides). On the other hand, one may use an object attached to another object attached to a tree (e.g., placing an item inside a basket hanging on a hook attached to the tree). This is known as *tzidei tzedadim* (sides of sides) and is not called using the tree.

Consequently, it is forbidden to tie a swing directly to the tree and then use it on Shabbos. But you tied the swing to the two-by-four, which is attached to the tree, so it would be considered *tzidei tzedadim*. However, if the tree moves when someone rides on the swing, it is considered using the tree and forbidden.

Connecting two trees with a zipline has become popular. It would seem at first glance that riding such a zipline would be permitted on Shabbos as *tzidei tzedadim* if the ends were connected to the trees with intervening wooden beams, the way you installed the swing.

But this may not be the case. *Chazal* also prohibited using animals on Shabbos, due to the concern that one might tear a branch off a tree to strike an animal. The Mishnah Berurah (305:67) prohibits having animals pull a wagon with a board attached to it to carry a load; because the

wagon/board combination is one *keili*, this is not *tzidei tzedadim*. Our case would appear similar, but the specifics of each case matter.