



# SHABBOS MENU

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • SHABBOS PARSHAS BEREISHIS 5784 • ISSUE 360

## “WHO IS HE TO TALK?”

*Someone who is ignorant of matters of halachah, and has misinterpreted a situation, nevertheless weighs in on the matter. May you tell the person that he has wrongly disparaged?*

T H E

### DILEMMA

**T**he Edelsteins are the most elitist family I ever encountered,” says Ephraim to his friend, Daniel. “They threw away a whole bottle of expensive wine just because their non-Jewish housekeeper opened it for them. Here the poor woman thought she was doing them a favor and they told her she wasn’t allowed to touch the wine. Then Mr. Edelstein dumped it down the sink!”

“There’s a bit more to it than that,” Daniel answers. “There are some *halachos* involved when it comes to wine.

“I don’t care what you say,” Ephraim responds. “The Torah doesn’t tell a Jew to disgrace a non-Jew.”

Ephraim had only become religious in middle age, three years prior. He is still learning the ins and outs of *halachah*, but he feels certain that his sense of outrage is justified. After all, he is an intelligent man—a successful corporate attorney—and he knows right from wrong.

Daniel feels that the Edelsteins should know how badly the episode had been misconstrued by their guest. Since Ephraim is, for all intents and purposes, an *am ha’aretz*—an unlearned Jew—and his conclusion is clearly wrong, Daniel doesn’t think there’s any problem with *rechilus* in repeating the story. Is there?

T H E

### HALACHAH

**D**aniel may not relate the story. The fact that the speaker is an *am ha’aretz* or that his conclusion is flatly wrong does not change the prohibition against *rechilus*, which is what would result if Daniel told the Edelsteins that Ephraim criticized them.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim, Hilchos Rechilus 7:2*



Reviewed by Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Lowy. 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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“Even if a person bears you

*ill will,*

extend a greeting of

*peace*

to him.”

– Sefer Shmiras Haloshon, Shaar HaZechirah, ch. 11

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MALKA BREINDEL A" H BAS SHMUEL FISHEL YLCH" T



**R**abbi Bernstein\* had an issue he wanted to clarify. When he met Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky at the chassan's tisch of a wedding, he decided to ask the gadol's advice. Rav Shmuel, who was to be the mesader kiddushin at the wedding, suggested that Rabbi Bernstein meet him in the reception hall after the chuppah.

On the way to the chuppah, Rabbi Bernstein found himself following behind Rav Shmuel. As they walked through the spacious lobby, they passed a bar that was being tended by an African-American man. Rav Shmuel paused and acknowledged the man. "How are you today?" he asked.

"Not good!" the bartender blurted out. "But I'm sure you don't really care. Everyone says, 'How are you' to me, but no one really wants to know. They're all just being polite."

"But I really do care," Rav Shmuel said sincerely. "I am going to officiate at this wedding ceremony, and when it's over I will come back to speak to you."

When the chuppah was over, Rabbi Bernstein headed to the reception hall to wait for Rav Shmuel. After about 20 minutes, he went out to the lobby to see if he could find him. Much to his surprise, Rav Shmuel was seated on a barstool, listening intently as the bartender poured out his woes.

What Rabbi Bernstein witnessed was a living example of a *talmid chacham's* sincere regard for another person. No one would have known about Rav Shmuel's conversation with the bartender had Rabbi Bernstein not seen it and related it to others.

But to Rav Shmuel, there was nothing worthy of a report; it was just a matter of a Jew treating a fellow human being like a human being. Like Yosef HaTzaddik, who took time out to hear the woes of the baker and the wine steward, Rav Shmuel heard out the bartender.

## sage advice

# FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED: SHALOM CHALLENGE TO THE RESCUE

*So many of the words we regret saying fly out of our mouth before we have a chance to think. But what if there was a voice in our head that said, "It doesn't have to be this way. You don't have to fight." And what if that voice made itself heard just in the nick of time, before we said those words we'd soon regret?*

*For thousands of Jews around the world, the Shalom Challenge is providing that voice. A participant describes what it can accomplish:*

I was waiting for my brother to get back to me with a breakdown of expenses on a specific project. He kept on pushing me off, saying, "I'll get around to it tomorrow."

I didn't want to pressure him, so I sent gentle text reminders or casually mentioned it on the phone every so often.

After five weeks of this, I called him and reminded him that I was still waiting for the breakdown. "Stop with all the pressure!" he yelled at me angrily.

I was shocked. I was going out of my way not to pressure him, and this was something he really needed to do. Although I was hurt, I didn't defend myself.

As I considered the situation, my mind turned to the Shalom Challenge video clip with the two men on an airplane. (A passenger was relentlessly criticized by his seatmate, only to find out that the angry man was dealing with a difficult personal issue.) I also thought about the clip with the Holocaust survivor who, to keep the peace, let go of a business dispute with his brother.

I told myself, "I don't know why he yelled at me that way, but it has nothing to do with me. He's probably upset about something and let it out on me." Thanks to the Shalom Challenge, this incident didn't become a feud!

### TALK ABOUT IT

How do frequent reminders like the Shalom Challenge help to neutralize our anger or frustration?



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## "TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT"

The Gemara (Brachos 17a) tells us that "Nobody ever preceded Rabbi Yochanan

ben Zakkai in giving a greeting, not even a non-Jew in the marketplace." Rather than gazing past the anonymous passersby, he saw human beings, created in Hashem's image, worthy of a friendly greeting. As Rav Shmuel demonstrated, when we make ourselves pleasing to others, we make ourselves pleasing to Hashem.

### TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think holds people back from giving a friendly "Good morning" or "Good Shabbos" to people they encounter?

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