

## Greeting Others:

### The Mitzvah:

1. The rabbis instituted that people should greet their friends and inquire after their well being using the word "**shalom**" - one of the divine names of Hashem. This is called "*She'alas Shalom*." By saying shalom, we are giving the other person a blessing that Hashem help him, and we are keeping Hashem on our minds throughout the day. Many people will say "**Shalom Aleichem**," while people will respond "**Aleichem Shalom**."
2. One should make an effort to say *Shalom* and not merely say "Good morning."
3. Using the word *shalom* to honor our fellow man is not considered disrespectful to Hashem's name; we can even use shalom in greeting non- Jews.
4. We show our esteem to a talmud Chacham by doubling our *Shalom* ( "*Shalom, Shalom*).
5. If you are about to meet person who always greets you, we must try to give him our *shalom* first, as it says " seek peace and pursue it."
6. If someone gives us Shalom and we do not respond in kind, we are considered robbers. When we bless our friend with a warm greeting, we are blessed from Hashem.
7. We should not limit our greetings to friends and close neighbours - we should be the first to greet everyone (like R' Yochanan ben Zakkai).

### Put on a Happy Face:

1. Mumbling the word shalom with a grumpy face does not achieve the purpose of increasing love and goodwill among people.
2. Shammai taught " greet everyone with a warm smile."
3. The Talmud teaches that a warm, white, toothy smile is greater than giving your friend a nourishing drink of frothy, white milk.
4. The Talmud tells us that if we give someone all the gifts in the world with a sour face, it is as if we gave him nothing; but if we greet him with a warm smile, then even if we give him nothing tangible, it is as if we gave him all the gifts in the world.
5. One should use their sense of humour to cheer up others who are feeling sad, or use their skills to bring rivals back together by lightening the atmosphere with a good joke.
6. Greeting others is so vital that at times it is permissible to greet another or to respond to his greeting even in the middle of *Krias Shema*.

### Auxiliary Effects:

1. Silence sometimes breeds suspicion between people. These feelings melt away with a warm greeting.
2. It is much more difficult to hit, curse, speak or listen to *lashon hara*, or even hurt with words, someone whom we greet regularly. It is much more difficult to give pleasant

reproof and expect the recipient to feel it's for his own good if you don't even greet him when you see him.

3. The effects of greeting someone can be compared to a garment: two pieces of material are useless until they are sewn together as a garment. A greeting is like the thread that "sews people together" to build warm, productive relationships.

### **Exceptions to the Rule:**

1. It is forbidden to use the word *shalom* in a place where we are forbidden to say words of Torah and prayer, such as in a mikveh or in places where there is excrement lying around.
2. However, one may greet somebody with the word "Shalom" while his or the friend's head is uncovered, such as while taking a haircut. You may also greet someone whose hair is uncovered, who may respond with the word "Shalom."
3. You may not give a person *shalom* before *shacharis*, but you may say "good morning."
4. Mourners should not greet anyone during the week of Shiva. The same applies to everyone on Tisha B'av.
5. The Rabbis said that men should generally not greet women; however, contemporary Poskim have permitted simple greeting, since it is considered basic manners and does not imply any degree of familiarity.
6. Similarly, a man may ask the woman's husband how his wife is doing, but should not send her regards. However, this all depends on the various local customs.
7. Someone who is not accustomed to greeting his friend would not be allowed to begin doing so when he owes him a debt, as this greeting would be considered payment of interest on the loan.

### **A Joyful Reunion:**

1. A person who sees his friend after not having seen or heard from him for thirty days makes the brooch of *Shehechyanu*.
2. If twelve months have elapsed, he recites *Mechayei Hameisim*.
3. Saying these brachos is contingent on the friend's being especially dear to him, so that he derives great joy in seeing him.
4. One may even recite the bracha of *hagomel* when his friend survives a danger.
5. Nowadays, with so many advancements in travel and communication, these brachos are rarely recited.