

WebMail - query/critique?

Delete File Create Reply Reply All Forward Previous Next Options Index

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Date Sent: Monday, April 15, 2002 10:28 AM

From: Barry Holtz <bholtz@nyc.rr.com> [Add to Address Book](#)

To: daroskies

Subject: query/critique?

Status: Urgent New

Dovid,

I hope you are well. I've been reading your letters, as best as I can keep up, so I'm somewhat on top of your various adventures. I look forward to seeing you on your return!

I want to raise something with you that concerns me. When anyone sends out a group email as you have, it seems to me that the level of care about lashon harah has to go up one notch. This isn't the same as shmoozing with someone at kiddush--these documents can be (and are!) circulated among many people, so what one says gets passed around rather widely. When you have been speaking about yourself and your life, you can of course be as self-revealing as you want to be. It's your business and it's a matter of your own style and comfort what you want to say. You can talk about visiting old girlfriends, flirtatious academics in Tel Aviv, etc. as long as Shana is not going to bat you over the head!

But in a recent letter it felt to me that you did something inappropriate. I am referring to your report of your conversation with Debbie Weisman and the issue of the new minyan that Tova Halbertal was partly responsible for starting. In that message you made it clear that Debbie was annoyed about this new minyan and even that Debbie took an only slightly veiled personal swipe at Tova in her comments about why such a minyan was started anyway. Since I know both Debbie and Tova and since a good number of people on your email list are likely to know them as well, I was bothered by this. I am happy to be corrected about the following, but I thought Debbie would not be very happy to have her private comment made to you about Tova broadcast across cyberspace. It feels in the realm of "motzi shem rah" and I suspect that Debbie would not want herself quoted in such a manner. When a journalist interviews someone, the person knows that everything is liable to be "on the record" unless you ask for it to be ruled out of bounds. But Debbie may not be aware that you are emailing people these mayases, and wouldn't have thought

to say that this is just "between us." Because of that I think you need to have a special level of responsibility in publicizing what others may say to you since most people don't send public email reports out to the world.

Now, it's possible that Debbie has publicly stated these same views. In that case, I withdraw my critique. You understand, I hope, that this is stated in a spirit of friendship and in the hopes that you won't be the unintentional cause of hurt to others.

Best,

Barry

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