



### **Did you ever face this dilemma?**

A man is walking down the street or in the store when he notices a female coworker. He feels a little lost – should he greet her or not? Will she get insulted if he ignores her presence? What should he do?

(The same scenario applies vice versa; i.e., if a woman is unsure whether to greet a male coworker in the street.)

**Preface:** In order to understand the proper approach to this common scenario, we must reiterate the underlying principle: It is permitted to greet a member of the opposite gender when required as per *middas derech erez*, but prohibited when it is done to show personal interest. Hence, in a situation where abstaining from greeting will *not* infringe on *middas derech erez*, one should avoid placing themselves into a situation where they will have to greet the other person, as that would inherently be a form of seeking a personal closeness.

### **Now, let us analyze the above scenario on a practical level:**

- A. The man is not *obligated* to notice the woman. If he can reasonably pretend to have not noticed her, that is optimal.
- B. If both are aware that they saw each other, but the woman will not be bothered if he does not greet her – i.e., she does not need the greeting and/or is equally uncomfortable – he need not greet her.
- C. If avoiding greeting her is not a feasible option, the man should greet her with a nod of the head, as is occasionally used as a greeting.
- D. If he feels that a nod is inadequate, he should use a simple, verbal greeting such as “Good morning,” “Have a good day,” etc.