

# RAISE THE BAR

*by Rabbi Raymond Beyda*

It is not unusual to see two people arguing and to observe that you have to be a fool to fight. Things that are said during a heated exchange may make sense to the combatants but rarely sound smart to others in the vicinity of the battleground.

When one loses one's temper, one usually loses one's mind as well. One of the big errors that many make is to argue with another who is not on their level intellectually. In Mishle [26:4] King Solomon advises "Do not answer a fool according to his folly." Today we would say "Don't stoop to his level." When you are trapped into dealing with someone who was not blessed with your "smarts" and refinement pull them up towards you rather than stoop to his or her level.

If one of those types gets your goat - keep cool and keep your head up at your level. You don't have to respond to all that they say -- silence is truly golden. And when you really must reply keep it "UP" at a level worthy of you -- not suitable to your adversary. It only takes a minute to seek your own level.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT

The Rabbis instituted the "Morning Blessings" [Birkhot Hashahar] every day, which are blessings regarding the constant order of creation and its conduct, because it is forbidden to benefit from this world without a blessing [berakha] and anyone who does benefit from this world without a blessing is considered as one who has trespassed or stolen from holy property.

The first blessing -- Elokai Neshama -- does not follow the regular formula of blessings as it does not open with the word "Barukh" and it does not contain the sovereignty aspect of blessings the words "Elokenu Melekh Haolam".

One should be careful to pause between the word 'Elokai' and the word "Neshamah" to avoid sounding as if one is saying that their Lord -- "Elokai" -- is named "Neshamah". [Source Halakha Berurah, volume 3. Siman 46:1 note1, 2]

## CONSIDER THIS FOR A MINUTE

Life is a balancing act. It is true that haste often makes waste but it is also true that delay allows good things to spoil. One must know when to run and when to walk slowly.

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