



FEELING FOR A FELLOW YID (1)

CARING FOR ANOTHER

One day, when the Rebbe Rashab was five years old, he and his brother Reb Zalman Aharon, who was over a year older, decided to play "chossid and Rebbe." The Razo would act as Rebbe and the Rebbe Rashab would be the chossid coming into *yechidus*. The Razo sat on a chair, straightened his hat, and the Rebbe Rashab came to ask him for a *tikkun*.

"For what are you asking a *tikkun*?" the Razo asked.

The Rebbe Rashab replied, "This past *Shabbos* I ate some nuts, and later found out that the Alter Rebbe writes that it is good to refrain from eating nuts on *Shabbos*."

The Razo counseled him to make sure henceforth to *daven* from a *Siddur* and not by heart.

"Your advice won't help, and you're not a Rebbe!" exclaimed the Rebbe Rashab. "When a Rebbe answers, he is supposed to sigh. You didn't sigh, so your advice is no good!"

Retelling this incident, the Rebbe commented that when one Yid helps another, the assistance itself is not enough; what is vital is his sigh, empathizing with the other's pain. Doing a favor for another for the sake of perfecting oneself, for the sake of one's own *shleimus*, without feeling the other's heartache, is not kindness, but the opposite.

(תו"מ חכ"ז ע' 44)

During the Mitteler Rebbe's visit to the Yiddishe colonies he had established, the decree that Yiddishe children be drafted to the Czar's army was enacted. Sometime during this period, one woman knocked on the window of the Rebbe's lodgings and wailed loudly, "Rebbe, help me! My only son has been taken away." From great distress, the Rebbe fell sick, and eventually passed away from this sickness.

(רשימו"ד חדש 116)

A chossid called Reb Eliyahu Abeler was once asked by the Rebbe Maharash at *yechidus*,

"How is your business going?"

"*Boruch HaShem*," he replied, "but I am pained by the fact that a fellow villager of mine called Yosef has no success to enjoy. Misfortunes are constantly coming his way. A horse and wagon were bought for him so that he could travel to the city and sell some merchandise – but first a wheel broke, then the horse broke a leg, and finally his merchandise was stolen.

"Rebbe," Reb Eliyahu continued, "What can I do to help him?" And with a heavy sigh he cried out, "Rebbe, give him a *brocho*!"

The Rebbe Maharash responded, "You can help him! For when one Yid is pained by the pain of another and makes a request on his behalf, all harsh decrees and verdicts are quashed."

The Rebbe then gave a coin to Reb Eliyahu, saying, "I want to be a partner with you. May HaShem enable you to benefit another Yid and may your efforts be blessed with *hatzlocho*."

(סה"ש תש"ה ע' 95)

Even after the Yidden entered Eretz Yisroel, they were instructed to postpone the *mitzvah* of *bikkurim* until every Yid has been allotted his portion of land. The Rebbe explains that as long as there is even one Yid who is unhappy, one cannot truly rejoice in his own good. Even if he does not feel the other's pain, he should at least be ashamed of this and not display his joy publicly by bringing *bikkurim* to the *Beis Hamikdash*.

(לקו"ש ח"ט ע' 155, ש"פ תבא תשכ"ה הע' 10)

The Frierdiker Rebbe spent Yud Beis Tammuz תרפ"ה (1928) in a village near Riga. During the *farbrenge*, the Chassidim began singing the traditional niggun of "*pada b'shalom*", celebrating the Rebbe's release from prison on that day, a year earlier. The Rebbe stopped them and said, "As long as the Yidden in Russia are not free, I am unable to celebrate, for I am with them 'in one barrel'."

(לשמע און ע' 166)

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY

When Moshe Rabbeinu was growing up in Paroh's palace, he would often visit the suffering Yidden and sympathize with them. Seeing them carrying the cement, he would cry and speak words of sympathy, "Your suffering pains me! If only I could take your place!" and he would help each of them carry their loads. HaShem said, "You set aside your business to participate in the suffering of the Yidden, I will set aside the higher and lower worlds to speak to you."

(שמו"ר פ"א כז)

When the Yidden were exiled by Nevuchadnetzar and were being led to Bavel in iron chains, Yirmiyahu Hanavi would approach them and place his head in the chains as an expression of sympathy. The General Nevuzardan, who was instructed to spare him, would chase him away and would return to sympathize with the following group.

(איכ"ר פתיחתא לד)

The Frierdiker Rebbe recalled: My uncle Reb Zalman Aharon, the Razah, was a *baal middos tovos*, a person of refined character. He was strong hearted and despite his many troubles he was always smiling, never even shedding a tear over his situation. However, another's troubles would affect him deeply. When encountering a fellow Yid in trouble, his smile would disappear and tears would well up in his eyes. Naturally, he would also do all he could to help the sufferer.

(סה"ש ת"ש ע' 39)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Is feeling another's suffering an end in itself or is it a means to motivating a person to help his fellow?
- Is there benefit in there in expressing sympathy if you can't eliminate the suffering?

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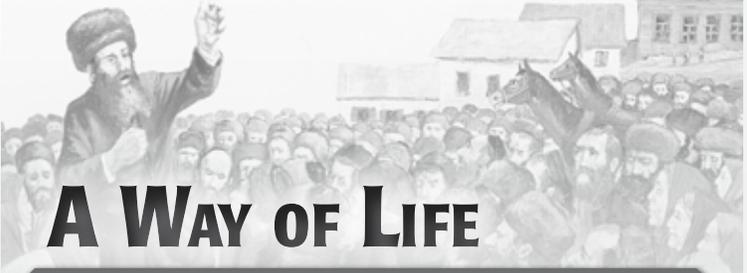
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A WAY OF LIFE

“LO SEICHONEIM” (2)

Following last week's column: Does that mean that it is forbidden to tip a taxi driver or give a present or bonus to a non-Jewish worker?

- As mentioned, the *issur* of “Lo Seichoneim” is to discourage close friendship with *goyim*, causing one to be influenced in *goyishe* ways.
- Tipping is not an expression of friendship, but is a customary reward given for services one has received. More so, it would indeed be laudable to show appreciation for the worker's effort. Concerning a gift to a steady worker, there is an additional reason to permit it, since one can expect better service in the future as a result of the gift.
- The *halacha* is that one may assist the poor of the *goyim* to encourage peace (“*darkei shalom*”). We are expected to be sensitive and kind to all of Hashem's creations, and we are enjoined to assist non-Jews in need.
- Another aspect of “Lo Seichoneim,” is the *issur* to admire the qualities of a *goy* or his actions. One may not praise his appearance, talents or handiwork, since this may draw one closer to their ways. However, if his intention is to praise Hashem for the remarkable creation He has designed, it is permitted.
- **In conclusion:** When discussing the parameters of “Lo Seichoneim,” it is important to bear in mind the concept of the *mitzvah* – discouraging an endearment to *goyishkeit* and desire to emulate its ways. Obviously, it is imperative to avoid a *chilul Hashem* by doing something that may appear selfish or callous CH”V.

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CURRENT EVENTS

י"א חשוון

REB NACHUM OF CHERNOBYL

Reb Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl was a *talmid* of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid of Mezrich. He served as a *maggid* in a few towns until he came to Chernobyl. He was a poor man all his life, for whatever funds he received from the Chasidim he would give to *tzedakah*. He authored the *seforim* “Meor Einayim” and “Yesamach Leiv”. He passed away on the 11th of Cheshvan, תקנ"ח (1797).

A Yid from Lithuania once came to Reb Nachum, complaining that he had no money to marry off his older daughter, who was of marriageable age. Reb Nachum took out 50 gold coins and a silk garment and gave it to the man.

The man took the money and the garment and headed to the local bar, where he spent the money on spirits, drinking until he became totally drunk. When some chassidim saw this, they took the silk garment and the leftover money and rushed to Reb Nachum, to report that the man was actually a crook and a drunk. Hearing this, Reb Nachum cried out in a bitter voice, “I heard a voice in the supernal worlds that Nachum of Chernobyl holds by the attribute of Hashem who 'does good to the good and the evil.' Go back and return the money and the garment!” The chassidim exited and hurried to do the *tzaddik's* bidding.

Once, Reb Nachum came to a town and found out that there was no *mikva* there. The wealthy people, who could afford to travel, would go to the nearby city, and the poor had to use the local river which posed a severe hazard in the winter. Hearing this Reb Nachum was shocked, and he quickly went to the rich man of the town, demanding that he sponsor the building of a town *mikva*. The rich man, who was quite miserly, refused to comply and all Reb Nachum's pleas were to no avail.

When he saw that he was going to leave empty handed, Reb Nachum said, “Would you perhaps be a customer for my *Olam Haba*?” At first the man did not understand, but Reb Nachum calmly repeated, “I mean it literally. Would you be willing to buy from me my *Olam Haba*? It will be written and signed as a proper sale, and the proceeds will go for the *mikva*”. The *gevir* did not take long and said, “I agree Rebbe!”

They brought the scribe of the town and the sale was transacted. The incident spread throughout the town and people began questioning the Rebbe, “How could you have done such a thing? With what does this man deserve your *Olam Haba*?” The Rebbe answered them in an aggravated tone, “We say every day in *Krias Shma* that one should serve Hashem ‘*ub'chol meodecha*’, which chazal translate as, ‘with all your wealth.’ But how is it possible for a poor man like myself to fulfill this? The only riches I have, is my *Olam Haba*, for which I have toiled long and hard. So why should I not use my ‘wealth’ to fulfill the command that I say every day?!”

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

SOLUTION FOR MEMORY

Harav Mordechai Shmuel Ashkenazi, the Rov of Kfar Chabad, relates:

When I was learning in Montreal, in 5719, I went into *yechidus* for my birthday. After requesting a *bracha*, I asked the Rebbe for a solution to help me remember what I learn.

The Rebbe answered that firstly, I should be particular with my health, and secondly, to stop thinking how I don't remember. The Rebbe explained that when a person convinces himself that his memory is weak, this in itself ruins the memory!

During the remainder of the *yechidus*, I told the Rebbe who my classmates and *chavrusos* were. Regarding one, the Rebbe commented that he is a *chassidisher bachur*, and about the other, that he is very good with keeping to a schedule. I was amazed to see how the Rebbe knew every one of us.

לע"נ ר' אפרים ארי ב"ר אליעזר ע"ה ומרת דבורה בת ר' משה ע"ה

