

PERSONAL KINDNESS

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לימוד הדבר תורה לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שני בן רבקה לגאולה קרובה מן המיצר אל המרחב

GEMILUS CHASSADIM

Chazal say that acts of kindness, *gemilus chassadim*, is greater than tzedakah in three ways. Firstly, tzedakah is done with money only, and *gemilus chassadim* is done with money (i.e. a loan) and with one's self (i.e. burial of dead, bringing joy to a chassan and kallah, escorting a friend). Secondly, tzedakah is for the needy, and *gemilus chassadim* can be done for any person. Thirdly, tzedakah is given only to the living, while *gemilus chassadim* can also be done towards those who have passed on.

The value of kindness is measured by the goodness of heart and effort invested in it. When one prepares food or delivers clothing to the poor, he is devoting thought and care for the other.

(סוכה מ"ט ע"ב)

Hashem said: All the kindness that you perform is more precious to me than the *korbanos* that Shlomo Hamelech brought before me.

Once, Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakai and Rabbi Yehoshua left Yerushalayim together. Seeing the destroyed Beis Hamikdash, Rabbi Yehoshua bemoaned the absence of a place of *kapara* (forgiveness) for the Yidden. Rabbi Yochanan told him, "Do not despair! For we still have an equal opportunity for *kapara* - through fulfilling acts of *gemilus chassadim*."

(ילקוט הושע תקכ"ב, אדר"ג פ"ד)

The Alter Rebbe learned the following teaching from the tzaddik Reb Mordechai who had heard it from the Baal Shem Tov: A neshama may descend to this world and live for seventy or eighty years in order to do a Yid a favor *b'gashmius* and certainly *b'ruchnius*.

(היום יום ה' אי"ר)

In the year תס"ט, when the Baal Shem Tov was only eleven years old, he joined the group of *tzaddikim nistarim*. Three years later, in the year תע"ב, the Baal Shem Tov impressed upon them the importance of helping Yidden *b'gashmius*, even where it would not lead to an influence *b'ruchnius*. Fifteen years later, seeing the great benefit which this approach brought, the *nistar* Reb Mordechai placed his hands upon the Baal Shem Tov's head and said, "*Tavo alecha bracha* (ב'תע"ב)! Brachos should come upon you for your Ahavas Yisroel."

(אג"ק רי"צ ח"ד ע' רצא, לקו"ש ח"א ע' 261)

The Torah commands a Yid to follow in the ways of Hashem. Chazal explain that just as Hashem dressed those without clothing, visited

the sick and buried the dead, we should do the same.

(סוטה יד ע"א)

THE NECESSITY FOR KINDNESS

The Friediker Rebbe related: "One morning, while on *Datcheh* with my father in Alivka, I awoke at 3:00 am and sat down to learn. I noticed my father (the Rebbe Rashab) woke up early and was preparing himself for davening. At 6:00 am, he invited me to come with him for a walk. As we were walking, he said to me, 'When one rises in the morning, learns and then davens, something is accomplished, but without the opportunity of actually doing a kindness for another Yid, the day is 'dry.' One needs to daven to Hashem that He send a Yid for whom he can do kindness; though, one must daven that he not stumble upon unworthy people. Later that day, two Yidden from Rudniya came to my father to ask him to do a personal favor for them. My father called me and said, "You see, if one desires truthfully, Hashem helps him."

(סה"ש תרצ"ט ע' 339, בבא קמא טז ע"ב)

In the year תרפ"ב, when the Friediker Rebbe was in Petersburg, the chossid Reb Zalkeh Persitz told the Rebbe: "It is now 25 years since I became a chossid! In the year תרנ"ז the Rebbe Rashab told me in *yechidus*, 'Just as a Yid must put on tefillin each day, he must spend fifteen minutes a day thinking about himself, who he can help *b'ruchnius* or even *b'gashmius*.' I asked the Rebbe, 'Rebbe, how is this possible?' To which he replied, 'For this one must have a Mashpia,' and the Rebbe suggested Reb Zalman Arsher. From then on, each day, I would record in a diary the kindness I had done that day, and on a day when I could not find someone with whom to do kindness, I would go to the shul and spend time with Reb Zalman."

(סה"ש תש"ד ע' 61)

The Baal Shem Tov explained the words of Chazal, "Torah learning which is not accompanied by work – will become invalid," that the learning must bring a person to assist another Yid, otherwise the learning is deficient.

The Rebbe explained why assisting another Yid is described as "work". Just like a businessman does not wait at home for others to approach him, rather he opens his store in a busy location, hangs a sign and tries his best to convince others of his product; so too, a Yid must actively pursue helping another Yid.

(סה"ש ת"ש ע' 115, לקו"ש ח"א ע' 260)

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לע"נ שרה רבקה בת ר' יוסף ע"ה

PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

The Baal Shem Tov said: The way to recognize the lessons in avoda from life occurrences, are through saying a kapitel Tehillim with a fiery heart, personally putting in effort to do kindness for a Yid, and having Ahavas Yisroel with Mesiras Nefesh. These are the keys that open the locks to the chambers of mercy, health, yeshuah and parnessa.

(סה"ש קי"ז ת"ש ע' 73)

One Yom Kippur, in middle of *chazoras hashatz* of *shachris*, the Alter Rebbe motioned to the chazzan to quicken his pace. After he finished, the Alter Rebbe removed his *tallis*, left the shul and headed towards the home of a woman who had just given birth. Entering the house, the Alter Rebbe took some twigs, lit a fire and cooked kasha for the ailing woman.

The Rebbe points out that although the Alter Rebbe could have sent others to help the woman; he chose to do it himself. In addition, he put aside his lofty davening on Yom Kippur to care for the needs of another Yid.

(רשימות היומן ע' שסא, התוועדויות תשד"מ ח"ב ע' 627)

The Friediker Rebbe told over what took place while travelling with his father the Rebbe Rashab: "One day, after lunchtime, my father was reclining on the couch and appeared to be in another world. He was not asleep but was leaning on his side and had an unusual expression in his eyes. This continued for many hours, until he suddenly awoke and asked me, "What day is it? What Parsha is it today?" and I answered these questions.

"The following morning, father said that he needed to take care of a few errands, so I stayed behind in the hotel. A short while later, a package of women's clothing was delivered to our hotel room, and throughout the rest of the day, many more packages were dropped off. In the evening, father returned and said that we were to pack up and leave for Pressburg.

"Upon our arrival in Pressburg, we began walking down the street and met a *bochur* on the way, whom father asked for directions to a specific hotel. The *bochur* directed us and told us that the hotel owner had just passed away (at the exact time when father was reclining on the couch) and his family is now sitting shiva. We then walked to a nearby Yeshiva and went into the Beis Medrash, where father began a discussion in learning with some of the *bachurim*, including the *bochur* we had met in the street. There was one student to whom father spoke with at length, and after their exchange, father praised him greatly.

"We then went to the hotel and my father spoke to the bereaving wife and her daughters. Father encouraged the widow to marry off her daughters. The woman began to sob, saying that she could not afford clothing for a chasuna and doesn't know of any appropriate matches for her orphaned girls. Father comforted her and proposed shidduchim for the girls. For the oldest daughter, father suggested the *bachur* with whom he had spoken to at length in the Yeshiva, and for the second daughter, he suggested the *bachur* that we had met in the street. In the end, the Rebbe personally arranged the shidduchim successfully and provided the clothing for both of the chasunas.

(סה"ש תרפ"ד ע' 62)

The mother of the chossid Reb Refael Nachman Kahn related: "Once the Rebbe Rashab and the Friediker Rebbe stayed near Liozna, in the town where I lived. One day, I headed toward the *shochet*, holding a chicken in one hand and my son in the other. At that time, I was also expecting a child. Sitting on the porch of his home, the Friediker Rebbe saw me struggling, and motioned to me to stop, and though he did not know me, he offered to *shecht* the chicken himself, sparing me from the walk to the *Shochet*."

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 193)

One day, while walking along Eastern Parkway toward 770, an elderly man carrying two heavy suitcases approached the Rebbe and said, "Can you please help me with one of my suitcases?" The Rebbe gladly took the suitcase, and they continued walking together. Hearing the man sigh heavily, the Rebbe asked the man what was wrong, and the man responded, "This suitcase is also too heavy for me." Immediately, the Rebbe took the second suitcase as well.

A passing chossid who witnessed the above approached the elderly man and whispered to him that the person carrying his suitcases was none other than the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The man was shocked; he stopped in his tracks and cried, "Gevald! What have I done?!" and began apologizing profusely to the Rebbe. The Rebbe responded, "What's with the mitzvah of helping another? Was this mitzvah only given to others and not to me?"

(ראש בני ישראל ע' 142)

On another occasion, a worker in 770 was carrying a ladder, when he suddenly felt it become lighter. Turning around, he saw the Rebbe holding the other end. He asked the Rebbe that he leave him, but the Rebbe replied, "Does MMS not have to fulfill the mitzvah of helping another?"

(בית חיינו ע' 229)

As a young married man, the tzaddik Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev lived in his father-in-laws house. His in-laws, who were wealthy, often hosted many guests, and Reb Levi Yitzchok would personally see to the needs of the visitors, preparing bundles of straw for the bedding and arranging the bed and linen. Seeing this, his father-in-law asked him why he troubles himself when goyim could be paid to do such menial jobs. "Tell me," said Reb Levi Yitzchok, "Is it right to give a goy the privilege of doing the mitzvah, and on top of that pay him for it?"

(סיפוח זיין תורה ע' 66)

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