



PERSONAL KINDNESS (II)

Personal Involvement

The Baal Shem Tov said: The way to recognize lessons in *avoda* from life occurrences is to say 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 *parnassa*.

(ס"ה"ק"י"ז ת"ש ע' 73)

One Yom Kippur, in middle of *chazaras hashatz* of *Shacharis*, 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 an ailing woman who had just given birth. Entering the house, the Alter Rebbe took some twigs, lit a fire and cooked kasha for her.

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.

(רשימת היומן ע' שסא, תו"מ תשד"מ ח"ב ע' 627)

The Frierdiker Rebbe once described what had taken place while he was traveling 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.

"The following morning, my 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, my father returned and said that we were to pack up and leave for Pressburg.

"Upon our arrival there, we began walking down the street and met a *bochur* on the way, whom my 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 my father was reclining on the couch) and his family was now sitting *shiva*. We then walked to a nearby *Yeshiva* and went into the *beis medrash*, where my father began a learned discussion in learning with some of the *bachurim*, including the *bochur* we had met in the street. There was one student with whom my father spoke at length, and later praised him highly.

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

(ס"ה"ש תרפ"ד ע' 62)

No Exceptions!

The mother of the chossid Reb Refael Nachman Kahn related: "Once the Rebbe Rashab and the Frierdiker 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 young son in the other. At that time, I was also expecting a child. Sitting on the porch of his home, the Frierdiker 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 scene 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 *mitzva* of helping another? Was that *mitzva* 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 to let go of it, but the Rebbe replied, "Does [here the Rebbe said his own name] not have to fulfill the *mitzva* of helping another?!"

(בית חיינו ע' 229)

As a young married man, Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev lived in his father-in-law's 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 troubled himself when *goyim* could be hired to do such menial work.

"Tell me," said Reb Levi Yitzchok, "is it right to give a *goy* the privilege of doing the *mitzva*, and on top of that to *pay* him for it?"

(סיפוי"ח זוין תורה ע' 66)

CONSIDER THIS!

■ Is personally doing the kindness an advantage for the provider or for the receiver?



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A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin
Moreh Hora'ah - Beis Horaa Rechovot

Vitamins on Shabbos

May I take vitamins or food supplements on Shabbos?

- Chazal prohibited taking medication on Shabbos – except in specific situations – out of concern that one would grind the herbs from which the remedy is made (see issue 382 at length).
- It is only considered medication if is noticeable as such.¹ Food or drink which are normally ingested by healthy people without medicinal purpose is permissible on Shabbos even if one is now interested in its medicinal value. Thus, one may drink orange juice for vitamin C, milk for calcium, or tea for a sore throat, since these are normal foods.² The same is true for food supplements or meal replacements.³
- Exercise is a form of treatment and may not be done on Shabbos⁴ (in addition to the fact that it falls under the category of *uvdin d'chol*, mundane activity⁵). A leisure walk is permissible,⁶ but if one's intention is for exercise it is a *machlokes*,⁷ and it is best to be stringent especially when that intention is apparent.⁸
- There is a dispute amongst *acharonim* whether a healthy person may take a medication to boost his health and prevent an illness (e.g. vitamin C to prevent a cold).⁹ Some reason that since a healthy person isn't desperate he will not come to grind on Shabbos.¹⁰ However, other *poskim*, including the Alter Rebbe, do not differentiate and this too is considered medication.¹¹
- Are daily vitamins considered a medicine or a supplement? Some contend that daily vitamins which are taken by healthy people and not to prevent a specific illness aren't considered medication.¹² Some add that medication makes a direct improvement of health, whereas vitamins strengthen the overall body like food.¹³ However, others argue that since it is taken as a preventive health measure, one should abstain.¹⁴
- In practice it is best not to take vitamins on Shabbos (except when medication would be permissible), but a healthy person who wishes to take regular vitamins has what to rely on. Food supplements pose no problem and may be eaten on Shabbos.

1. ראה שוע"ר סי' שכו ס"א וסי' שכח ס"ל"ח ול"ט.
2. שוע"ר סי' שכח שכח סמ"ג.
3. ש"ש"כ פל"ד ס"כ, ארחות שבת פ"כ הע' קצ"ט.
4. רמב"ם שבת פ"א הכ"ח. וראה שוע"ר סי' שכ"ח סמ"ז. וראה ארחות שבת פ"כ הע' רכ"א בנוגע להיום שלא מכוונים לזיעה אבל מ"מ אסור.
5. רש"י שבת קמ"ז ע"א ד"ה אבל דו"ה לא.
6. רמ"א סי' ש"א ס"ב.
7. מג"א סי' ש"א סק"ה מיקל. ולהעיר מהלבוש וא"ר סק"ז שמחמירין בטיוול כשכוונתו להתעמל לרפואה, וראה משנ"ב סי' ש"א סק"ז.
8. ובשעה"צ שם.
9. וראה ארחות שבת פ"כ הע' רכ"ד.
10. בשו"ע או"ח סי' שכ"ח ס"ז מיקל, והמג"א שם סקמ"ג מחמיר.
11. וראה ילקוט יוסף שבת ד' דיני לקיחת תרופות בשבת סנ"ה שכתב להתיר וויטאמין לבני ספרד אבל המחמיר תע"ב.
12. ע"פ שוע"ר סי' שכח סמ"ג. וראה פסק"ת סי' שכ"ח סק"ב אופן הב'.
13. תשובות והנהגות כרך ה סי' צד (ע"ש שמצריך שינוי).
14. אג"מ או"ח ח"ג סי' נ"ד. ש"ש"כ פל"ד ס"כ.

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

OUR HEROES

Reb Shlomeh der Geler

Reb Shlomeh Beilin was a chossid of the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab, and a *talmid* of the Rashbatz. He was called "Der Geler" because of his blond beard. He worked as a *melamed* in Nevel, and although he had a hard life, he was always cheerful and happy. During *hakofos* in Lubavitch he would dance vigorously.



Reb Shlomeh worked as a builder's assistant, and he and the builder would discuss Chassidus while working. Once, while building a wall, they were so raptly engrossed in their discussion of Chassidus that Reb Shlomeh found himself unintentionally enclosed behind the wall! When they realized this, they had to break it down to take him out.

(סיפורים חסידיים ח"א ע' 201)

Reb Shlomeh would make his trips to Lubavitch by foot and would often say, "When chassidim arrive in the World to Come, *Malach* Michael will list their merits, including the fact that they traveled to the Rebbeim in Lubavitch. The horses and wagons which they used to travel will demand their reward as well, and Hashem who does not hold back the reward of even the smallest creatures will repay them too. In my "Lubavitch," horses or wagons will have no share. I myself am the horse and the rider."

(אג"ק הרי"צ ח"ו ע' רסט)

Reb Mendel Futerfas related:

In the hard times in Russia there was a shortage of *seforim*, especially of Chassidus. I once saw Reb Shlomeh going through the *sheimos* and he emerged with some ripped papers of Chassidus — each from a different *maamar* — and he immediately sat down to learn them. I asked him, "How can you learn like that, with no beginning or end, and no connections between the sentences?"

Reb Shlomeh replied, "There are three levels in learning Torah: to understand what is being learned, to toil in Torah, and an even higher level – to study the letters of Torah into which Hashem placed His Essence. The last level of learning is from the *pnimiyus hanefesh*, and through it we connect to Hashem's Essence which is above understanding. So what difference does it make if I don't really understand what it says? The main thing is that Hashem's Essence is in it..."

(ר' מענדל ע' 172)

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

Why Grow a Beard?

The only *bochur* with a full beard in Yeshivas Itri of Yerushalayim had a *yechidus* in 5733 (1973).

The *bochur* told the Rebbe that as far as he was concerned, he was happy to keep his beard. However, since he was under much pressure from family and friends to cut it, he wanted advice on how to respond to them.

The Rebbe expounded on the halachic and kabalistic virtues of growing a full beard, and suggested that he explain them to those who questioned him.

"However, there is another reason to grow a beard," the Rebbe added. "Sometimes a *bochur* could be in a store, and pick up something inappropriate. When he remembers his beard, he will feel embarrassed, and immediately put it down."

The *bochur* almost fainted. He later related, "That situation exactly happened to me a few weeks ago..."

(Harabi – Tziyunei Derech, p. 33)