

The Weekly Farbrengens

MERKAZ ANASH
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למען ישמעו • שמיני תשפ"א • 613
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

PERSONAL KINDNESS (I)

GEMILUS CHASSADIM

What *mitzva* could possibly be greater than *tzedaka*? Chazal say that doing kindly deeds, *gemilus chassadim*, is greater than *tzedaka* in three ways. Firstly, *tzedaka* is done with money only, while *gemilus chassadim* is done with money (such as by giving a loan) but also personally (e.g., by burying the dead, bringing joy to a *chassan* and *kalla*, or escorting a departing friend). Secondly, *tzedaka* is for the needy, while *gemilus chassadim* can be done for any person. Thirdly, *tzedaka* 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 according to 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 offered 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 forgiveness for the Yidden. Rabbi Yochanan told him, "Do not despair! For we still have an equal opportunity for *kapara* – by 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 *begashmius* and certainly *beruchnius*.

(היום יום ה' אייר)

In the year תס"ט (1699), 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 (1702), the Baal Shem Tov impressed upon them the importance of helping Yidden *begashmius*, even where it would not lead to an influence *beruchnius*. 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* (תע"ב)! May *brachos* come upon you for your *ahavas Yisroel!*"

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

CONSIDER

Which is greater: helping another *begashmius* or *beruchnius*? Why?

Why does one need special assistance from above to help another? How does having a *mashpia* help?

The Torah commands a Yid to follow in the ways of HaShem. Chazal explain that just as HaShem clothed the naked, visited the sick and buried the dead, we should do the same.

(סוטה יד ע"א)

THE NECESSITY FOR KINDNESS

The Frierdiker Rebbe related:

One morning, while on *datche* with my father (the Rebbe Rashab) in Alivka, I awoke at 3:00 am and sat down to learn. I noticed that my father 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 one can do an act of kindness – though one should *daven* that he not stumble upon unworthy people."

Later that day, two Yidden from Rudnia 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 (1922), when the Frierdiker Rebbe was in Petersburg, the *chossid* Reb Zalke Persitz told him:

"It is now 25 years since I became a *chossid*! In the year תרנ"ז (1897) the Rebbe Rashab told me at *yechidus*, 'Just as a Yid must put on *tefillin* every day, he must spend fifteen minutes a day thinking about himself, about whom he can help *beruchnius* or even *begashmius*.' 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, every day, I would record in a diary the act of kindness I had done that day, and on a day when I could not find someone with whom to do a favor, I would go to *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." A person's learning must bring him to help another Yid, otherwise his learning is deficient.

The Rebbe explained why helping another Yid is described as "work". Just as a businessman does not wait at home for others to approach him, but 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 opportunities to help another Yid.

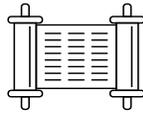
(סה"ש ת"ש ע' 115, לקו"ש ח"א ע' 260)

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HONORING PARENTS

My parents would like an extra couch at home. What is my obligation?

Honoring one's parents is a great *mitzva* in which one must be very cautious. *Beis din* doesn't coerce its fulfillment since the Torah promises great reward (longevity) to one who fulfills this *mitzva*.¹ Honoring them includes happily providing them with food, drink, and clothing.²

The *halacha* is that the parents must pay the cost of these things. If the parents don't have money, then the child must pay for his parent's needs under the rubric of *tzedaka*. Thus, he need not give beyond his *maaser* and he isn't obligated to collect money from others to cover his parents' needs.³ (Yet, one who has the means and uses *tzedaka* money instead is worthy of a curse, since it isn't right to support his parents from *tzedaka*).⁴ If there are multiple children, they should split the cost. If some are wealthy, they should bear the responsibility.

If the parents have money but they want to save it, the child is not obligated to support them.⁵ The same applies, if the parents are owed money by others and could collect this money.⁶

What about losing time from work?

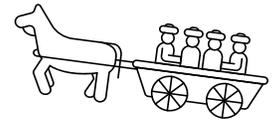
A child is obligated to personally honor his parents even if this will detract from his work time and earnings. However, if he needs funds immediately for that day, he may work since his own life precedes others.⁷ Some *poskim* add that one who doesn't have steady source of income is only obligated to take off time if he has sufficient savings to cover a month's expenses.⁸ In any case, if the child will lose his job, he is not obligated to do so to honor his parents.⁹

If the parents don't need their child's help but nonetheless tell him to come for no reason, the child is not required to go if as a result he will miss potential profit.¹⁰ Yet, he should visit and spend time with his parents from time to time even on the expense of his profits at work.

1. שו"ע ורמ"א י"ד סי' ר"מ ס"א.
2. שו"ע י"ד סי' ר"מ ס"ד.
3. שו"ע י"ד סי' ר"מ ס"ה.
4. רמ"א י"ד סי' ר"מ ס"ה.
5. שו"ת מהר"ל חדשות סי' ק"ז.
6. תש"ו הרשב"א ח"ד סי' ג"ו, וראה מהר"ל שם.
7. שו"ע י"ד סי' ר"מ סוף ס"ה.
8. ראשון לציון י"ד סי' ר"מ סק"ג.
9. שו"ת מהרש"ם ח"ג סי' קל"ג.
10. ראה פסקים ותשובות סי' ר"מ סק"כ"ג.

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REB NOACH ALTSHULER

Reb Noach Altshuler was a famous *talmid* and *mekushar* of Reb Mendel Horodoker. He was a decendent of Reb Yechiel Hilel Altshuler, the compiler of the *pirushim Metzudas Dovid* and *Metzudas Tziyon* on Nach. Some say he was married to the sister of the Mezritcher Magid. His son Reb Sholom Shachna married Rebbetzin Devorah Leah, daughter of the Alter Rebbe, and he was thus the Tzemach Tzedek's grandfather.

A few years after Reb Mendel Horodoker moved to Eretz Yisroel, Reb Noach boarded a ship en-route there. On the boat he fell gravely ill. Knowing the law to throw any deceased passengers overboard, Reb Noach requested from the captain that after he passes away, but before throwing him into the sea, he should be tied to a board while wearing his *talis* and *tefilin* with a note in his hand stating his name.

On one *motzaei Shabbos* Reb Mendel sent his *talmidim* to the shore commanding them to wait there and greet an esteemed guest — one of their colleagues who would arrive from abroad. After a few days of waiting they heard a great

commotion that a man wearing a *talis* and *tefilin* could be seen floating on a board near the shore. The chassidim recognized Reb Noach and brought him for burial in the nearby city of Chaifa.

(עדן ציון ע' קסא)

When Reb Noach came to *Beis Din Shel Maalah*, they found one thing that he didn't fix during his lifetime. He was given two choices: half an hour in *Gehinom* or to return to this world. Reb Noach said, "My entire life I never did anything without asking my Rebbe. Now too, I want to ask my Rebbe." The *Beis Din Shel Maalah* found his words to be true and gave him permission. Reb Mendel Horodoker was sitting with his chassidim and said, "Reb Noach is here now and asked me what to choose. I say better half an hour in *Gehinom*. What do you say, chassidim?" All the chassidim of course repeated their Rebbe's choice, "*Gehinom*." At that moment they heard a cry, "Oy Rebbe!" and a mark of a burnt hand was seen on the window frame.

(אוצר סיפורי חב"ד ח"ז ע' 294, רשימות דברים ע' 207)

A Moment with The Rebbe



ACCURACY

In the spring of 5751 (1991), when the Rebbe spoke fervently about the necessity for *Yidden* to beseech Hashem to bring Moshiach, chassidim were aroused to do all they could in this regard.

Mrs. Tziporah Simpson and Mrs. Golda Miriam Gansburg, who headed the *Mivtza Kashrus* department of N'shei Chabad, decided to do their part. They arranged for an exhibit on *kashrus* to be displayed at various Brooklyn malls, complete with kosher cookbooks and explanatory literature. Now, with this new

inspiration from the Rebbe, the hung a large sign over the exhibit with the words, "Longing for Moshiach will bring him here today!"

The organizers then sent a picture of the exhibit to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe received the picture and returned it a note with an instruction that the wording on the sign should be changed. The word "today" should be replaced with "sooner."

(Picture and handwritten note printed in *Simpson Teshurah, Elul 5771*)