

The Weekly Farbrengens



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EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

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*.

(סה"ש קי"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, תר"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.

CONSIDER

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

"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*."

(סה"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?"

(סיפ"ח זיון תורה ע' 66)

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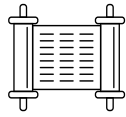
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GOOD NEWS.



IDOLATROUS SYMBOLS

Can I allow workers to enter my home wearing a cross?

An object that is worshiped by the gentiles has the din of avoda zara. Benefit from it is forbidden and one may not even derive pleasure from looking at it. One may not allow a non-Jew to bring it into one's property.

Poskim debate the status of a cross. Some argue that it is merely a symbol to remind them of their faith and heritage and isn't the object of deity. Others hold that that it is indeed worshiped and is at the very least a safek avoda zara. It is not clearly prohibited to look at a cross, though it is praiseworthy to avoid doing so.

One is not allowed to own an actual cross due its religious connotations, but since people don't truly worship them nowadays, one may derive benefit from it. Though one should not do business with such jewelry, if one mistakenly came to own it, he may sell it provided that it wasn't actually worshiped.

Coins or stamps with a cross or chess pieces do not constitute avoda zara, as it's self-evident that people don't worship them. A cross symbol (e.g. the Red Cross) is not meant to have religious significance, though some avoid it especially on children's clothing. Likewise, though there is no halachic problem in making crossed Ts and plus signs, some are scrupulous to alter them slightly.

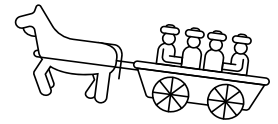
When Moshe Rabbeinu davened, he left the city with idols. While that isn't possible in most cities, one should avoid davening in a room with idolatry. If he must, he should face away from the cross even if it means not facing mizrach. One must also take precaution not to bow in the direction of someone wearing a cross.

Contemporary poskim posit that the prohibition against allowing a non-Jew to bring idols into one's home only applies when done on an ongoing basis, and not just a visit. This is especially so regarding a cross which has a doubtful avoda zara status.

In practice, one need not prevent a cleaning lady or the like from wearing a cross, though one should ask her to cover it if possible. In any case, one should be careful not to daven in their direction.

- 1. ראה שו"ע יו"ד סי' קמ"א, סי' קמ"ב
2. ראה רמ"א יו"ד סי' קמ"א ס"א וש"ך שם
3. שו"ת אג"מ יו"ד ח"א סי' סט ד"ה וגם לא.
4. ראה רמ"א יו"ד סי' קמ"א ס"א. שו"ת חלק"י ח"ד סי' ל'.
5. חת"ס מהד"ת על ש"ך יו"ד סי' קמ"א סק"ו.
6. שו"ת משנה הלכות ח"ב סי' מג. וראה המובא בשלחן מנחם ע"ד ל"ו הע' ח'.
7. ראש שלחן מנחם שם.
8. שו"ע"ר או"ח סי' צ"ד ס"י.
9. ראה משנ"ב סי' צ"ד סק"ל.
10. שו"ע או"ח סי' קי"ג ס"ח, שו"ע"ר שם ס"ז, וכף החיים סקכ"ה.
11. ראה שו"ת הר צבי או"ח ח"א סי' פה בנוגע כניסת כומר לבית הכנסת.

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



R. MEIR SIMCHA CHEIN

R. Meir Simcha Chein was a chossid of the Rebbe Rashab and the Frierdiker Rebbe. While being a serious chossid who learned Chassidus and davened ba'arichus with fervor, he was a wealthy merchant who gave large amounts of tzedaka. R. Meir Simcha was involved in community work under the constant guidance of the Rebbe Rashab. He passed away on the 4th of Shevat, תרצ"ד (1934).

them from doing so and predicted that those who would attend would return unobservant. Many backed out as a result, but several went ahead anyway, thinking that he was exaggerating. Sadly, R. Meir Simcha's warning proved to be true.

(חסידים הראשונים ח"ב ע' 177)

R. Meir Simcha was raised by his grandfather, R. Peretz, as his father passed away young. R. Meir Simcha was a studious young boy, and one wintry Motzaei Shabbos he entered his grandfather's room to get a sefer without greeting his grandfather.

R. Meir Simcha had initially wanted to learn Torah all day in the capacity of a rov, but his wife wanted him to go into business. He consulted with the Rebbe Rashab, who instructed him to open a large wholesale warehouse of basic food items such as flour, sugar and oil. R. Meir Simcha followed the Rebbe's advice and became extremely wealthy.

R. Peretz scolded him gently, "It seems that your "gut voch" froze with the winter freeze."

As he grew older and his children started working for him, he jumped at the opportunity to spend more time davening and learning. He would start his day with learning Chassidus and davening from the wee hours of the morning, and would not come to work until four in the afternoon. He would then review the mail, give instructions, send orders for the bank, and then return to learning Torah.

R. Meir Simcha would later say that his grandfather's words made a strong impression and taught him the importance of courtesy.

(חסידים הראשונים ח"ב ע' 170)

In the town of Nevel, some sincere youngsters decided to attend Russian university. R. Meir Simcha discouraged

(חסידים הראשונים ח"ב ע' 170)

A Moment with The Rebbe



DISASSOCIATION FROM ZIONISM

Notwithstanding, or perhaps as an extension of, the Rebbe's great love for Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe strongly opposed Zionism: the movement, the ideology and its symbolism.

Lubavitch Youth Organization saw the annual Salute to Israel Parade in the heart of Manhattan as a great opportunity to touch thousands of Yidden. Indeed, chassidim channeled the inspiration of many hundreds at these parades in the spirit of Jewish pride, towards fulfilling a mitzva.

Reb Hershel Fogelman related:

When the Frierdiker Rebbe became a citizen of the United States in 5709 (1949), the Frierdiker Rebbe's son-in-law, the Rebbe, explained it as follows: Since the State of Israel had just been established, the Frierdiker Rebbe wished to make a public statement that his stance on Zionism had not wavered.

However, an explicit directive was given from the Rebbe's secretariat that chassidim should not stand at the actual parade, to avoid an appearance of association. Anash and bochurim were told to work a few blocks away, or at a nearby subway station.

When the mitzva campaigns began,

(Leket Uperet, Yerushalayim 5776, page 114)