



# PERSONAL KINDNESS (1)

## 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 *kapara* (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' אי"ר)

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* (ב"ה)! May *brachos* come upon you for your *ahavas Yisroel!*"

(אג"ק ריי"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* clothed the naked, visited the sick and buried the dead, we should do the same.

(סוטה יד ע"א)

## The Necessity for Kindness

The Frieddiker 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 Frieddiker 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 *maspia*,' 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)

## CONSIDER THIS!

- Why is helping another necessary for the provider?
- Which is greater: helping another *begashmius* or *beruchnius*? Why?
- Why does one need special assistance from above to help another? How does having a *maspia* help?

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# A WAY OF LIFE

RABBI CHAIM CHAZAN

## Hat for Davening

A person faced with a choice of davening with a *minyan* without a hat because he doesn't have one readily available, or to daven later with a hat but without a *minyan*, which option is halachically preferable?

- Chazal derive from the *possuk*<sup>1</sup> "prepare to meet Hashem" that one's demeanor and attire during davening must be as if one is standing before a king<sup>2</sup>. Since dignified dress varies based on the location and the time period, the appropriate dress for davening is subject to change. In earlier times in Ashkenazic countries, wearing a hat and jacket was standard dignified dress for both *Yidden* and *Goyim*. As a result the *Mishneh Berurah*<sup>3</sup> writes "nowadays, one must wear a hat above the yarmulke during davening".
- In today's western society wearing a hat is not the normative style of dress and people are not particular to don a hat when leaving their home, nor is such attire required when meeting important people. Therefore, if one belongs to a community where no one wears hats it would follow that a hat is no longer required for davening<sup>4</sup>.
- However, in communities where hats are worn when dressing formally<sup>5</sup> (such as when one approaches his Rebbe) one must garb likewise for davening<sup>6</sup>. This would be an example of a practice that despite it being merely a matter of routine, once one is accustomed to it, it actually impacts *halacha*. Failing to adhere to that standard is considered a lack of respect for davening.
- Moreover, some *poskim*<sup>7</sup> point out that the fall from grace of formal dress among society at large is a result of a general trend towards casual behavior and therefore shouldn't impact the way a *Yid* dresses, and hence are reluctant to sanction davening without a hat.
- Contemporary *poskim*<sup>8</sup> debate whether one should forfeit davening with a *minyan* when there is no hat available. One should consult one's *rov* for a *psak*.
- [There are additional Kabbalistic reasons to wear two coverings during davening. It would seem to this writer that this can be accomplished by placing something under one's yarmulke or a second yarmulke, but that would not suffice for davening due to the aspect of a hat being respectable].

1. עמוס ד יב.
2. שבת י. ברכות כה.
3. סי' צא ס"ק יב. וכ"כ בערוך השלחן שם.
4. ראה אריכות גדולה בכ"ז בספר הגיוני הפרשה (וסרמן) שמות, וע"ע בשו"ת מושנת יוסף ח"ד סי' ד, ועוד.
5. ראה צ"ץ אליעזר ח"ג סי' יג שהתלבט בגדר הדבר כי לשון החיי אדם הוא "כדרך שהולך ברחוב", אבל במשנ"ב כתב "דרך לעמוד לפני אנשים חשובים", וכדברי המ"ב כותב אדה"ז בס"ה לגבי רגלים מגולים.
6. אור לציון ח"ב פ"ז י"ג, ופוסקים דלקמן הע' 7 ועוד.
7. דברי יציב ח"א סי' ס, תשובות והנהגות ח"ד סי' כו.
8. באשי ישראל פ"י הע' לו הובא בשם הגר"ח קנייבסקי וכן כתב בספרו הליכות חיים סי' כ להמתין לכובע, אבל ראה ספר הליכות שלמה מהגרש"ז אור"ב ב, טו להתפלל עם המנין. וראה גם בספר תורת הישבה פ"ג ס"ח ושם הביא משו"ת אבני ישפה ח"א עמ' מז.

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

לזכות הילד יעקב יצחק הלוי לאנג שי' שיגדלוהו הוריו לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט

לזכות הת' אברהם דוד גודעלסקי וב"ג נעכה לעוויטאן  
שיחיו לרגל בואם בקשרי שידוכין בשעטמו"צ

# OUR HEROES

## Reb Yekusiel Leipler

Reb Yekusiel Leipler, a salt merchant from Liepli, was one of the great *chasidim* of the Alter Rebbe, Mittlerer Rebbe, Tzemach Tzedek, and for a short while, the Rebbe Maharash. He was a *baal midos* and great *baal hispaalus* (full of life). Though a simple man by nature (he even found it difficult to learn Chumash with Rashi), his toiled tremendously until his understanding developed, and for him, the Mittlerer Rebbe wrote the "Imrei Bina," a very profound essay in Chassidus.



When he first came to the Alter Rebbe, Reb Yekusiel heard a *maamar* about the *chahal hasemali*, the left ventricle of the heart where the *nefesh habahamis* resides. He climbed up to the second floor window, while the Alter Rebbe was wearing Rabbeinu Tam's *teffilin*, and cried out, "Rebbe! Cut out my left side! I cannot 'deal' with him!" The Alter Rebbe responded, "It says 'Ve'ata mechayeh es kulam', and You give life to all."

From that moment onward, Reb Yekusiel became a different person and his heart opened, for the Alter Rebbe "shined" into his *neshama* the ability to see *Elokus* as one sees something physical.

This 'shine' of his *neshama* (which he would refer to as "the chossid") would come and go and his *avoda* would vary greatly depending on the current expression of his *neshama*. If while walking down the street, his would start to 'shine,' he would start to dance, exclaiming, "Chossid *prishol*, the chossid has come!" Once while standing in the Borisov post office, waiting to have something done for him, his *neshama* began to shine, and he broke out in dance with the post office clerk...

Traveling through Liepli, one of the young *Chassidim* stayed over for a number of days, and each day he *chazered* a *maamar* of the Mittlerer Rebbe. Due to his sharp mind and eloquence, he made a strong impression on his listeners, yet Reb Yekusiel was unable to grasp the *maamorim*.

Totally crushed, Reb Yekusiel kept the *yungerman* back for three weeks to teach him the *maamorim*, but it was to no avail. Out of desperation, he left his store in the hands of his family, and traveled to Lubavitch.

Upon arrival, he encountered tens of *yungerleit* learning Chassidus diligently, yet he could not comprehend the *maamar* the Rebbe delivered. Reb Yekusiel stayed up all night crying, fasted and said Tehillim. Afterwards, he went for *yechidus* and told the Rebbe what had been happening.

The Rebbe told him the ultimately everything was up to his desire; if there is a will there is a way. Reb Yekusiel decided to stay in Lubavitch, and for four months, he toiled tirelessly in the study and contemplation of the Mittlerer Rebbe's Chassidus. His efforts bore fruit, and his mind opened; as Reb Yekusiel later described, "I felt like a new creation."

(אג"ק אדהר"י צ"ח ג' ע' ש"ד)

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

# A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

## Sensitivity

A person once came for *yechidus*, and stayed in the Rebbe's room for more than forty minutes. To get the Rebbe's individual attention for such a long time was unheard of. The *mazkir*, seeing that the visitor would not leave by himself, knocked on the door and told him that it was time to go.

The guest, being that it was his first *yechidus*, was unfamiliar with the accepted protocol. He looked very offended. The Rebbe, ever sensitive to another *Yid*, saw his crestfallen face, and immediately explained to him in light humor, "The secretary does not want you to leave; he simply wishes to interrupt our meeting, so that we could meet up twice!"

The guest left with a smile.

לזכות השליח שלום דובער בן לובה