



Lifting Up the Lonely

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E14)

Shabbos is also a time for kindness. A story can help warm our hearts to kindness.

Being kind and using your head

The Chofetz Chaim, in his great work, Ahavas Chessed, points out the central role of Chessed in the life of a Jew. He stresses that we are meant to not only *perform* acts of Chessed – kindness – we are meant to *love* Chessed and seek it out. One of the ways of seeking out and loving Chessed is by applying our minds and thoughts to doing Chessed intelligently, not just giving, but giving wisely.

'אשרי משקייל אל דל ביום רעה ימלטהו ה'

Praiseworthy is he who contemplates the needy; on the day of disaster Hashem will deliver him.¹²

Contemplating the needy means thinking as deeply and as thoroughly as one can about the needs of the other. What does the other person *really* need; what would help him or her in the best way?

Dovid HaMelech is telling us that a person who goes beyond just *doing* Chessed for the needy, but who thinks through the best way to do so, will be spared by Hashem on the day of Great Judgement.

Surely, it is worthwhile to spend a few minutes focusing on what it means to think about the

needy person and how best to help him or her. A story can bring this out perhaps better than any lecture about the subject.

Rabbi Salman Mutzafi

There was a great Rav and Kabbalist in Yerushalayim, Rav Salman Mutzafi (1900-1974). Among the many distinguished Rabonim who also lived at that time was a Rav who was confined to his bed. Rav Mutzafi, each week, would stop to visit this Rav at his home when he

left ליל after Davening בני ציון שבת. They would share Torah thoughts, and he would consult with the Rav about the questions and rulings that he had rendered over the course of the week. Of course, his visit would delay his meal at home as his family awaited his arrival.

Why on Shabbos?

Rav Mutzafi's family brought up the subject of the timing of the visit with the Rav. After all, the Rav was confined to his bed all week long. Why not visit at a time which did not conflict with the Seudas Shabbos?

Thinking about the other

The Rav described to them how nice it is for a Talmid Chacham when he is escorted home after

He would visit when the Rav at home would be most lonely and when a visit would serve most to lift his spirits.

¹ תהילים מא: ב

² Translation from the Artscroll Tehillim



KI HEIM
CHAYEINU
כי הם חיינו



Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

Davening on ליל שבת. Students and others gather for the escort. This one shared a novel Torah thought, this one raised a שאלה and received a פסק הלכה, this one just wanted to greet the Rav and receive his Brocha. It was a joyous time for a Talmid Chacham. And that means that this is an especially difficult time for the scholar who is no longer able to make it out to his Shul and is not escorted home. The infirm Rav surely would benefit from company at any time, but the time after Davening on ליל שבת is a time when he felt especially lonely and dejected. *That* is the time for the visit, to pick up his spirits and provide some of that atmosphere of sharing Torah and consulting on Halachic and communal matters.

Having thought the matter through Rav Mutzafi knew that the time was right, and the time was then. He would visit when the Rav at home would be most lonely and when a visit would serve most to lift his spirits. Now his family

understood and embraced their role; they were delighted to be part of the thought-through and well-timed Chessed.

Less time requires more thinking

Most of us are busy. It would be too easy to claim that we do not have time for Chessed; we are occupied with making a living and looking after our family. But everyone wants protection when standing before the blinding light of truth on the Day of Judgement. The rush in which we live makes the need to think ever more carefully about the needs of others. The rush does not exempt anyone, but it certainly requires that we use the precious resource of time carefully. Hashem assures us that if we think and analyze the needs of others, we will be shielded from the blinding light of judgement.

And it could be that just the right time is on Shabbos!

Takeaway: I will try to be on the lookout for ways to best address the needs of others.