

Tehilim Perek 41

Welcome to NachDaily, covering the entire TANACH one perek at a time. I'm Rabbi Shaya Sussman, and today we'll be discussing Tehilim, chapter 41. With this we finish the first of the five books of Tehilim.

We mentioned in the introduction that Dovid wrote five books of Tehilim corresponding to the five books of the Torah. He taught us that it's not enough just to study Torah—we need to actually daven to fulfill what was learned. When we daven for success in our learning, tefilah enhances our Torah.

Most Meforshim explain that Dovid said this chapter when he was dealing with serious illness.

Dovid praises the mitzva of bikur cholim – visiting the sick. People who perform this mitzva are rewarded with extra protection from Hashem when they become ill. Dovid attributes his sickness to his sins. In verse 5 he says, “Heal my soul for I have sinned against You!”

Dovid bemoans the fact his enemies are happy when he becomes ill. They constantly anticipate his death. In verse 11, Dovid asks God for emunah to “raise me up so I can repay them.”

Having felt a sense of betrayal during his sickness, Dovid gained a greater appreciation for those who give of their time and energy to tend to the needs of the ill. Dovid promises them that God will give them great reward for their selfless acts.

In verse 2 it says:

אַשְׁרֵי מְשֻׁכֵּל אֶל-דָּל בַּיּוֹם רָעָה יִמְלֹטֵהוּ יְהוָה:

Happy he who is thoughtful of the impoverished; may God save him on the day of evil.

Rashi, Radak and the Malbim all explain that a person who seeks out the needs of the poor or the sick is praiseworthy. The word “maskil” comes from the word “sechel,” intellect, because we need to constantly assess what those needs are. In this way, those whom we are attempting to help will be less embarrassed and not made to feel needier than they actually are.

The Ramad Walli says that the point of this chapter is to explain the great reward for taking care of those less fortunate than we. Taking the first letters of the words maskil el dal gives us the word “me’od – a lot, or great,” because of the reward received for this mitzvah.

He explains Kabbalistically that helping a poor person is considered as helping the Shechina, the Divine Presence that rests in the lower worlds.

Reb Nosson, in Hilchos Ever Min Hachai, explains that *Ashrei maskil el-dal - Praiseworthy is the person who takes care of the impoverished*, teaches us that the most important compassion one can show is to illuminate and reveal God’s light in this world. To teach the ignorant the Torah of Hashem is to illuminate their minds and teach them true da’as, intelligence, lessening the heavy burden of sin that weighs on their minds and hearts.

It is possible to have misplaced rachmanus, compassion. There are reshaim and people who don’t deserve it. Helping them is inappropriate because this may aid them to sin even further. The biggest rachmanus that we can demonstrate is to illuminate others with the wisdom of Torah, to bring them to Teshuva and wipe away their aveiros.

This is seen today in the world around us, with people showing compassion to terrorists by calling them “freedom fighters,” ignoring the reality of whom they are and glamorizing their mission statement.

If you want to have true rachmanus, therefore, show others the light of God. Teach them about Tzaddikim, emunah in Hashem and His Torah. You don’t have to look too far—a neighbor, friend, coworker, etc....



Let us merit having true compassion on those around us as well as on ourselves! May we have rachmanus on our own souls, and merit to take care of all its needs. Praiseworthy is the person who merits to eat a few chapters of Mishnayos and wash it down with a few perakim of Tehilim afterwards.

Thank you for listening and have a wonderful day.

While all the topic of helping out people less fortunate than you. I wanted to share the following insight about doing chessed.

I once heard a great insight from Rabbi Yochanan Zweig in Florida about this. It would seem Lot was a bigger ba'al chessed than Avraham. Because it says by Lot he would wait outside the city gates of Sdom in order to bring guests into his home. But Avraham only would wait outside his tent. So it would seem Lot went further out his way to chessed than Avraham.

Rabbi Zweig answered from here we see an insight on how to do chessed. Really Avraham was better than Lot. Why? Because when Lot would go outside the city gates. He would then say to his guests "look how far I went out of my way for you. Now, you need to come with me!" But Avraham would just quietly be sitting outside his tent. And when people would walk by. Avraham would say "please come on in. It's really no big deal. We're right outside by house anyways. It's really very easy."



Part of the chessed is to minimize the chessed. To not make someone who is less fortunate than you to feel they are a recipient of chessed! To make it feel natural