



# REBBETZIN SHIRA SMILES

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## Tremendous Tool

*Parashat Kedoshim* is replete with mitzvot regarding interpersonal relationships. “*Lo ta’amod al dam rei’acha*—You shall not stand by [the shedding of] your fellow’s blood.” (*Vayikra 19:16*) One may not stand idly by when his brother is in danger. We can find multiple layers of meaning in this mitzvah; let us see how it is relevant to all of us at all times.

On the most basic level, Rashi zt”l explains that this is an injunction not to passively stand by when someone’s life is threatened if one is capable of saving him. The Rambam zt”l clearly notes that this not only applies if one is physically able to save someone else but even if one has the means to procure help to rescue someone in trouble, one is obligated to do so, including hiring others to save another person. Also included is to warn someone of an impending danger and alerting him to take

the necessary precautions.

The Chazon Ish zt”l extends this idea even further. Even if a person does not have the wherewithal to save another, everyone has access to the most potent tool to help, namely, tefillah. Further, one who does not pray for the safety and welfare of another, is essentially preventing salvation from reaching the one in need.

One of the most practical areas where this is relevant to all of us is praying for the recovery of those who are ill. The Brisker Rav zt”l warns people to be careful about telling others that a patient is doing much better since naturally, when one hears such a response, he will think he no longer needs to pray for his recovery, and thus the ill person may be prevented from receiving one of the most beneficial remedies — that is, continuous tefillot. The Brisker Rav even suggests that one who doesn’t pray for another’s recovery may *chas v’shalom* be considered a *rodef*, one who intentionally causes harm to another.

Rav Weissblum in *He’arat Derech* quotes a novel idea offered by Rav Yerucham Levovitz zt”l. When a person feels the pain of another

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and one prays for someone else's welfare, he can alleviate a bit of his suffering, similar to when one visits the sick, he lessens 1/60th of the illness. Moreover, davening for someone's wellbeing does not solely apply when they are physically ill, it includes any and all distress a person may experience. We can't always help a person with his financial burden, or find her a shidduch, or give them children, yet we can all daven for them and must not stand idly by and watch them suffer.

The *Maharsham zt"l* learns another significant obligation, that of deterring someone from committing a sin, if we can. Likewise, the *Chofetz Chaim zt"l* understands this verse to support active *kiruv rechokim*, bringing back lost souls who have wandered from our faith and tradition.

So often, we hear of someone suffering from a terrible plight. We may say, "OY!" we may groan, we always feel so helpless. This verse can be our inspiration to activate the most paramount means to assist others in any situation in any circumstance. ■

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