The greater the Jew, the greater the potential for atonement. The mitzvah of tefillah is a small thing like paying a bill late. People measure all Jews by the behavior of their great leaders. For this reason, the greater a person is, the greater the responsibility to act with great care.

Imagine the scene. A gentile has come to shul. He feels proud of himself. He comes to shul every day, and measures our actions accordingly. This obligates us to treat all people with proper courtesy.

It does not matter if you are not among the Gedolim, it does not matter if you are not a Rav, but most of the people do not know the difference. They will see your ways and they will say, “That is the action of an Orthodox Jew.” It automatically puts you in the category of a great person as far as others are concerned.

Adapted from: Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg suggests that in our times, every Orthodox Jew is considered a great person renowned for his piety especially a young rosh yeshivah. Whether we like it or not, we must realize that millions of non-observant Jews see all of us as holy rabbis serving Hashem, all day, every day, and measure our actions accordingly. This obligates us to treat all people with proper courtesy.

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Breaking the news to Shmuel’s family was difficult. His wife wept hysterically. Calming her was no easy task, but the congregants reassured her that, as soon as possible, they would get her husband released.

As they prepared to daven morning prayers, Boruch Weingarten, the town rabbi, reasoned that those ransomed were all learned, prestigious individuals; Shmuel was not only derelict in his religious observance, but contributed little to the community welfare. Satisfied with his “rationalization,” he turned to appoint someone to lead the morning prayers.

Just then R’ Yehoshua Heshkel Frankel, one of the city councilmen, entered the shul. Painfully aware of the ordeal these Jews had been through, he quietly and deliberately approached the rabbi, who turned aside the curtain, slowly opened the door and removed the silver crown resting atop the holy Torah. Holding the ornately designed masterpiece high above his head, he gazed at the people with intent and purpose. Then, he turned to the captured nobleman and addressed the wide-eyed deportee, "You are the crown jewel of the entire city and thus need no adornment. Forgive me as I remove your crown, but there is something more precious at this time that requires our immediate attention. A young Jew is being held captive by our hated adversaries. We are going to have to sell your crown in order to procure the funds to redeem him."

And just like that, to the astonishment of everyone in the shul, R’ Yehoshua Heshkel left the shul, crown in hand, and pawned it to redeem Shmuel. When the ḥasidim took him home to be reunited with his family, he informed him of the events that had led to his rescue.

"Do you understand that I removed the crown from the ḥasid for your sake? Does that give you an idea of how dear and cherished an individual you are?"

The sincerity of the ḥasid’s plea pierced Shmuel’s heart and he immediately began to conduct himself differently - like the crown jewel he now knew he was.

Adapted from: Touched by a Story 2 (With kind permission from ArtScroll)
Focus on Middos

Dear Talmid,

R’ Yitzchok Dov Koppelman was a true friend to his Rosh Yeshiva, R’ Shimon Shkop. Even when most of his students went from Grodno to learn in Mir, R’ Koppelman still chose to remain in Grodno. He felt that he could not leave his yechidus.

As the Nazis invaded Poland, most of his students went from Grodno to Vilna with their Torah books. R’ Shlomo Harkavy (a talmid of R’ Shimon) remained in Grodno with R’ Koppelman. When the Russians conquered Grodno and instituted anti-religious decrees, the Rebbe was forced to close.

On 5640 (1939), R’ Shimon addressed a meeting of his talmidim to determine what could be done about the current issues in Grodno. While davening Kaddish after the meeting, R’ Shimon suddenly collapsed, and his pure neshama returned to Hashem. Due to the ongoing war, very few people were able to attend the Bris.

R’ Koppelman, along with R’ Shimon’s granddaughter (R’ Zelik Epstein’s rebbe elitzih), buried him. After the war they both confirmed the exact burial spot and a proper mezuzah was placed over the spot.

During the most difficult war years, R’ Koppelman managed to smuggle his Rebbe’s kriyas manuscripts. He carefully sewed them into his clothing, and watched over them with amazing shevahikus. Even in the Siberian labor camp, and in the prison in Samarkand, his talmidim were his most treasured possession.

In the kapparah of R’ Shimon, his sons wrote, ‘May the name of our friend, the rebbe R’ Yitzchok Koppelman, a close and long-time friend of our father and one of the most outstanding talmidim of Grodno, be remembered for the good. It was only because of his tremendous tefillos that the manuscripts of our father were saved from the valley of tears and brought here to freedom.’

My talmidim, R’ Koppelman was the ultimate talmid, and his selfless shevahikus ensured that his yichus ‘lives on’ for all future generations. In truth, any talmid who emulates his yichus or parents’ good ways will cause them to ‘live on’ for all future generations.

Source: Yated

Understanding Davening

An introduction to Tefillot (cont.)

The contest: During the weeks leading up to Pesach, the Rebbe in his parshas hashokha, told us to learn at least one hour before every Shabbos, in either your school or local minyan. Each week that you learn for an hour or more will be considered another entry into the raffle.

The contest’s basic rules: There is no particular minyan to learn and you can even review your Gemara anywhere and anytime. However, if you can arrange for a group, and you have a minyan to learn with, especially about about Tefillot, you will receive an extra chance in the raffle each week that there is a group with a minyan.

If you are interested in joining this program, please send in your faxes signed by a parent by Monday 2:00 pm to 718 506 9633. Please include your name, grade, school, city and state. Please include your contact and fax number and your name will be entered into another drawing for a beautiful set of Mekoros.

Sage Sayings

More than just a talmid and master in teaching him, R’ Yitzchok Dov Koppelman was a talmid who felt responsible for every aspect of a talmid’s bracha. He watched the talmidim eat and would show his dismay if a talmid grabbed the food. Once, a talmid pulled out ketchup he had brought from home. R’ Koppelman reminded him of his Rebbe’s words. "Give me some of that very red stuff!"
The Munkatcher Rov took a good look at the chicken...

...and the Rov of my town here says that this chicken is kosher! Can you believe it? I found a clear halacha in Yorah Deah...

The woman returned home to tell her husband. Upon hearing what the Rov had said, he checked the chicken himself.

Oy, vey! This chicken is not kosher! How could the Rov think that this is kosher? What does the Rov know? Let me look it up in Yorah Deah...

The man left humbled and repentant for his lack of respect.

R’ Chaim Elazar Shapira of Munkacs was born in Stryzow, now part of Poland. He was a 5th from the founder of Munkacs, the kovei melacha Rabbi Yitzchak of Svisloch. He learned under his father, the author of the Morei Tzevi. He became the Rebbe of Munkacs in 1914. From his youth on, he completed the Talmud and all its commentaries every two years. He was a prolific writer. In addition to the Seder Eliyahu, he wrote many other sefarim which attracted hundreds of students. He was famous as a ‘Wonder Rabbi’ and was visited by many world leaders, such as the Czechoslovakian president and Queen Wilhelmina of Holland, who sought the Rebbe’s advice and blessing.

For any inquiries or comments please feel free to call 347-838-0869. Illustrated by: Yishaya Suval 718-395-9794