

The RYS Daily 10/9/06 Physical Health

From The Mussar Movement, Volume 1, Part 2, page 191

Conclusions about his observance of the rest of the mitzvot may be inferred from his attitude towards tzitzit and tefillin -- how far he would go in carrying them out. This accounts, too, for the very special care he paid to his physical health which too is a mitzvah of the Torah, ordained by "And you shall diligently guard your lives." The injunction, however, is not generally regarded as a specific Halachah pertaining to health; many disregard it. R. Israel for his part was quite amazed at this neglect, and would say: "A sick person is exempt from all mitzvot, except this: 'And you shall diligently guard your lives.' But here comes the evil inclination and incites him to disregard even this single mitzvah." R. Israel's care of his health was truly remarkable, to the extent of evoking astonishment.

A famous physician in Baden would relate with amazement that, of all his thousands of patients, he had only found one in his entire lifetime, who had taken his instructions seriously and fulfilled them to the letter. This was Rabbi Lipkin of Russia.