

The Daily RYS – Concern for Others II

From "The Mussar Movement by R. Dov Katz, volume 1, Part 2 Pages 214 - 215.

By the way, there is a fire hydrant near my house. I wish I had a dollar for every time I have seen someone park in front of the hydrant so that he could daven in the shul on the next block that is not far from me. Once I saw a fellow parking at the hydrant, and spoke to him about it. I told him what he was going to do was "A Mitzvah Haba B'aveirah." The young man looked at me for a second, replied, "I don't think so!" finished parking, and went to daven. Perhaps we need a special Al Chait for those who violate parking rules "to do mitzvos."

R. Israel took the greatest pains to avoid committing this type of transgression [hurting someone while doing a mitzvah, YL]. Usually, when people are given the opportunity to perform one of the normally accepted and observed mitzvot, they become so eager and enthusiastic as to neglect taking precaution against infringing upon the rights of others, whether it be their money, honor, benefit, or anything else. Some even inadvertently "perform a mitzvah by means of a transgression," which retroactively nullifies the entire value and significance of the mitzvah, and falls within the scope of "the robber recites a blessing but despises the L-rd." [27] This admonition is hardly directed at the masses, who are ready, for the sake of being called to the Torah or leading the prayer service or to say Kaddish, to start an argument and to become enmeshed in a tangle of iniquities, both in their attitudes and actions, such as anger, baseless hatred, stubbornness, evil gossip, insult, denying the community or individuals their rights, etc., etc. Such behavior is beneath all criticism and needs no special admonition. Yet it happens that even outstanding Torah scholars, who punctiliously observe every mitzvah, light or grave, fall prey to such failings - through force of habit - because they pay no special attention to such matters.