

The RYS Daily 11/9/06 Avoiding Hurting Others

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Not only was R. Israel opposed to the performance of the finer points of mitzvot at the expense of human beings. He held that one had no right even to perform the essentials of a mitzvah or even extricate himself from grievous sin, if he thereby inflicted suffering on someone else. A question was submitted to him: Someone had sinned in secret against a friend of his by speaking evil of him. Was it permissible for this person now to go to his friend and seek forgiveness? In so doing, however, he would have to disclose what he had said to the friend he had maligned. R. Israel ruled, that although the questioner would absolve himself from grievous guilt by seeking his friends forgiveness, he had no right to pursue his own good by hurting his friend - enhancing his righteousness at the expense of causing distress to someone else.

This is the extent to which R. Israel took the feelings of others into account, how he engaged in complicated calculations so as to avoid giving any hurt or distress to others.

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