

The Daily RYS 8/6/06 Robbery and a Mitzvah

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Winter had come. Accompanied by one of the great rabbis of the time, R. Israel arrived at the entrance to an inn. The rabbi hurried to open the door for R. Israel and waited for him to enter. R. Israel quickly closed the door, and asked: "Does the possibility of performing a mitzvah set aside a definite mitzvah?" The rabbi did not understand. R. Israel elaborated: "Here some doubt exists as to who should honor whom. There is therefore some doubt as to whether you would be fulfilling the positive commandment of 'And you shall honor the face of an elder.' [41] On the other hand, holding the door open and allowing the heat to escape is definitely robbery, and it cannot be set aside even for a definite positive commandment." [42]

[41.] Lev. Chap. 19.

[42.] Sha'are Zion, ibid., No. 59

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