

LIVING KIDDUSH HASHEM

PRACTICAL GUIDE

IN TIMES OF PAIN AND ILLNESS

*For Visitors, Patients
and Helpers*

*"Don't just go through it.
Grow through it."*

— Rabbi Paysach Krohn

*"Remember the objective: to publicly
sanctify Hashem's Name in the
darkest, deepest places."*

*— Aharon Margalit, author of As Long as I
Live, after being diagnosed with cancer*

FOR VISITORS

Our ultimate mission of Kiddush Hashem is to be a *tzelem Elokim* — to reflect Hashem's *middos* in this world. Visiting the sick expresses His *midah* of *rachamim* and fulfills the mitzvah of "*V'halachta bidrachav*" (Sotah 14a).

- » **Keep visits short and sweet**—patients shouldn't feel pressure to entertain.
- » **Always check with family before visiting.** Your best intentions should align with the patient's needs.
- » **For Shabbos:** favorite foods, elegant plasticware, and heartfelt singing can create a warm, uplifting atmosphere.
- » **Photos** of loved ones and joyful memories on the walls bring comfort and a sense of connection.
- » Visiting a patient **after official visiting hours** can be a burden on the *choleh* and may also cause a *chillul Hashem*. Hospital staff may view religious Jews as people

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who abuse their privileges and who do not follow rules.

- » **Don't press for details about the illness.** Probing can be embarrassing or intrusive. Let the patient share only what they're comfortable revealing.

— Rabbi Paysach Krohn

“The Shechinah rests at the head of a sick person.” It's a powerful time to daven — not only for the choleh, but even for your own needs.

— Rabbi Binyomin Moskowitz

FOR HELPERS AND SUPPORTERS

- » **Don't Just Ask—Offer:** “Can I take your kids to carpool today?” is far more helpful than, “Let me know if you need anything.” Always suggest something specific.
- » **It's the Little Things:** Babysitting, carpools, errands, laundry, arranging meals — these small acts can make a huge difference. Helping manage the ordinary details of daily life can be the difference between calm and chaos for a family in crisis.
- » **Respect the Medical System:** Don't try the side door before knocking on the front. It's fine to say respectfully, “With all due respect, I'd like to get a second opinion before we proceed.”

Doctors expect parents and advocates to look out for patients. But transparency is key — going behind a doctor's back and having them hear about it from a colleague can undermine trust.

Be *yashar* — open, respectful, and communicative.

Explaining our cultural and religious needs to hospital staff can go a long way toward creating mutual understanding.

— Rabbi Sruli Fried, Regional Director, Chai Lifeline NJ

- » **Respect Personal Boundaries:** Many staff members intentionally leave last names off badges to protect their privacy. In today's social media age, privacy is a real concern. Even well-



“Most teenagers are focused only on themselves and struggle to empathize. It's remarkable that these boys were able to connect so beautifully with a three-year-old child, showing him such care and compassion. Mr. Bernstein (name changed), you are lucky to be part of the Jewish family!”

— Philadelphia hospital nurse, about yeshiva bachurim who came to cheer up a sick child

meaning questions like “Where do you live?” or “What’s your last name?” may feel intrusive. Honor their boundaries — show care through kindness, gratitude, and a smile.

“Many don’t realize there’s something called the ‘Blessing of the Hands.’ Staff would tell me how meaningful it was — they wanted to be blessed to care for patients with compassion and skill. A sincere prayer for their success is often deeply appreciated.”

— Jewish Chaplain



FOR PATIENTS

“From the aides to the nurses and doctors, each person who cared for me deserves a heartfelt thank-you letter after my recovery. I’m keeping a list of names — it’s so important to express proper *hakaras hatov*.”

— Rabbi Paysach Krohn

“The difference between pain and suffering is surrendering to Hashem.”

“Illness often brings out the purest qualities in a person. Families facing illness frequently display remarkable grace and *emunah*.

At first, they often feel unequipped — but then they discover inner strength they never knew they had.”

— Rabbi Sruli Fried

“We all looked forward to his room. He smiled, joked, and asked about our lives—even while in tremendous pain. When he left, I got down on my knees, cried, and said a prayer for his full recovery.”

— Nurse of R' Avrohom Menashe Siegal z"l

*“Every human being adds to Hashem’s kavod with every moment of his continued existence. For that reason, life is precious regardless of what form it takes, even if a person lives with minimal *bechirah* or none at all.”*

— Rav Elazar Menachem Man Shach zt"l, Lulei Sorascha, Parshas Vaeschanan

“You are Jewish – you wouldn’t understand. When you come here, your community takes care of everything for you – food, accommodations, companionship, and anything else you may need. When I come, I am all alone. You should appreciate your good fortune.”

— Mother in a Boston hospital waiting room

WHY DO GOOD PEOPLE SUFFER?

The answer may lie in the principle of Kiddush Hashem. It is the most fundamental, overarching mitzvah in the Torah, the foundation of all others. Everything we do should be directed toward bringing honor to Hashem.

Hashem created a world where every person has a unique role in this mission. Some face the test of wealth, others of hardship. Together, the Jewish people weave a magnificent tapestry of Kiddush Hashem.

It is possible that if the *neshamah* was asked, before it was sent down to the world, if it would prefer a life of ease and comfort or one of hardship and suffering, it might in fact have chosen the latter. After all, it may be easier for a person whose life is filled with pain to remain aware that this world is temporary, and to focus on the eternal.

— *Michtav Me'Eliyahu, Vol. 1, p. 22*

Hashem sometimes brings suffering to reveal the greatness within His people.

As the Torah says: "לְמַעַן עֲנֶתְךָ לְנִסְתָּךְ, לְדַעַת אֶת אֲשֶׁר" – "In order to afflict you and to test you, to know what is in your heart..."

The word *lenasoscha* (to test) shares a root with *neis* (banner) – the challenge itself becomes a banner, raising and revealing Klal Yisrael's true inner greatness for all to see.

— *Kli Yakar, Devarim 8:1,2*

A person's response to pain reveals their essence. In hardship, the refined soul shines through — responding with faith, perspective, and *avodas Hashem*.

Can there be a greater Kiddush Hashem than that?

— *Living Kiddush Hashem, ArtScroll/Mesorah*

"I see that these are people who thank G-d every day in their prayers. That's why they're able to live with such gratitude toward those around them."

— Doctor

"The hospital's experience with you made them more respectful of Jewish law — and those who observe it."

— Doctor

HOW SUFFERING AWAKENS THE SOUL

- » Softens the heart – Deepens emotional connection
- » Heightens sensitivity – Awakens empathy and the *Yud Gimmel Middos within*
- » Shifts focus – Diminishes attachment to materialism, awakening our spiritual core.
- » Shatters illusion of control – Reminds us that only Hashem is in charge
- » Reveals deeper meaning – Sparks introspection and longing for purpose
- » Builds appreciation – Cultivates gratitude for even the simplest blessings

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