

The Image And The Guest

One who deals kindly with himself/gomel naf'sho is a gracious person/ish hesed (Proverbs 11:17). This refers to Hillel the Elder who would conclude his teaching and then walk out in the company of his students. Once, his students asked him: Master, where are you going? He said to them: I am going to perform a commandment/mitzvah. Said they: And what mitzvah might that be? To wash in the bath house, he replied, to which they said: And that is a mitzvah?

Yes, Hillel answered. Consider the image of kings that they install in the theaters and in the circuses. Someone is appointed to polish and wash those images and is also paid for that service. Not only that, but he is esteemed among the attending dignitaries! How much greater should my incentive be seeing as how I was created in **the** image and **the** likeness?! After all, it is written: *For in the image of God did he make humankind* (Genesis 9:6).

Another interpretation of *One who cares for himself/gomel naf'sho is a gracious person/ish hesed* (Proverbs 11:17)—This refers to Hillel the Elder who would conclude his teaching and then walk out in the company of his students. Once, his students asked him: Master, where are you going? He said to them: I am going to deal kindly/*lig'mol nefesh* with a guest in the house. They responded: [We have asked you this before and your answer is always the same.] Do you have a guest in your home every day? Said Hillel: Isn't this poor soul a guest in the body? Today she's here and tomorrow, not.

Leviticus Rabbah 34:3