

# CHARITY WITHOUT A CHECK

*by Rabbi Yaakov Menken*

This week's LifeLine is dedicated in memory of Nachman ben Zelig Fishel a"h, (Norman Fisch of Bradley Beach, NJ)

In the blessing given to *Yehudah*, *Yaakov* says "His eyes will be red from wine, and his teeth white from milk." [49:12] The direct meaning is, of course, that *Yehudah* and his children would be blessed with an abundance of good things.

Rabbi Yochanon in the Talmud (end of *Kesubos*, 111b), offers a lesson by changing one of the vowels in the text. The new reading is, "and to whiten his teeth, from [meaning: is better than] milk." He says: To whiten one's teeth to another - meaning to offer a warm smile - is better than giving him milk.

Too often, we think of charity as something to give to the poor, the sick, and the miserable - as if they were all the same. Is it necessary to be poor or sick in order to be miserable?

Certainly not - and our generation may have an abundance of material goods, but we also have an abundance of therapists. Many people today are lonely, sad - and in need of a warm smile. Yes, it's possible to give to a less fortunate person without writing a check! You can give to others every day - and find that many of them will give to you in return.

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