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MAN WAS CREATED ONLY TO HELP OTHERS

וַיֵּשֶׁא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו וַיֵּרָא וַיִּרְץ לִקְרֹאתָם מִפֶּתַח הָאֵהָל וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה...
וְאִקְחָה פֶת לָחֶם וְסֻעָדוֹ לְבָכֶם אַחַר תֵּעַבְרוּ כִּי עַל כֵּן עֲבַרְתֶּם עַל עֲבֹדְכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֵן תַּעֲשֶׂה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר

“And [Avraham] lifted his eyes up and he saw, behold, three men standing near him. Perceiving this, he ran to greet them from the entrance of the tent, bowing to the ground...’And let me fetch a morsel of bread that you may refresh yourselves; then go on -- seeing that you have come your servant’s way.’ They replied, ‘Do as you have said.’” (Bereishis 18: 2,5).

We recently spoke about the chashivus and chiyuv of chessed. But the problem is you can talk and talk, and for some reason, very few people actually fulfill this chiyuv, which Rabeinu Yonah calls *min hachamuros*, from the stringent mitzvos. Rav Chaim Volozhin’s son, Rav Itzele, writes in the *hakdamah* to *Nefesh Hachaim* about his father: וְכֵן הָיָה דְבָרוֹ אֵלַי תָּמִיד, My father constantly spoke to me and gave the following message.¹

Now, if someone would ask you what you think the constant message of Rav Chaim Volozhiner (1749-1821) was, what would you say? Rav Chaim was the *talmid muvhak* of the Gr”a and the *meyased*, the founder, of the great Volozhiner Yeshivah. He was a walking, talking *Sefer Torah*. A living *Sefer Torah*. So what would you think the constant message to his son would be? The logical, rational message would be Torah, Torah, and more Torah. That’s what you would have thought if you wanted to give a rational answer and not something out of the blue. But that wasn’t what he said. And don’t think that his son wasn’t a *talmid chacham*. Rav Itzele Volozhiner (1780-1849) became the *rosh yeshivah* of Volozhin. He was his father’s heir. His father told him constantly, שֶׁהוּא כָל הָאָדָם, - you want to know what the entire *adam* is about? לא לעצמו נברא, a man was not created for himself, but להועיל לאחריו, רק לעצמו נברא, only to help others. Can you imagine that? It’s mind-boggling! How much? ככל אשר ימצא בכוחו לעשות, as much as a person finds within his *koach* to do. This is one of the most mind-boggling statements!

¹ ז”ל בהקדמת לספר נפש חיים, שכתב על המחבר צ”ל: ולפי הוראת השעה שהיה נראה לו להוציא איזה דברים מבלי הצפינם. היה קורא ע”ע לא המדרש עיקר אלא המעשה (וממילא נשמע כוונתו על סיפא דמישנה זו וכל המרבה דברים כו’ (לשון רבי המלך) שממלל מלין לצד עלאה להגדילם בעיני השומעים (ועיני מדרש שמואל שם). בכל דרכיו. היה ממעט כבוד עצמו להרבות כבוד שמים. הן במילי דצבורא. בפרט בעיני הכלל. מודעת שהשליך נפשו מנגד ועסק הרבה יתר על כדי כחו. ואף כי זקן היה. היו ידיו אמונה. עד בא השמש. ואף ככלות כח הר”ל גם על משכבו בחליו. רעיוניו סליקו. ועיניו היו נושאות השמימה. לשתף שם שמים בצערא דהכלל והפרט. בגנוחי ואנחות בשברון מתיים. ואנחותיו הרבות בזה היו שוברות כל גוף השומע. (והיה רגיל להוכיח אותי על שראה שאיני משתתף בצערא דאחרניא. וכה היה דברו אלי תמיד שזה כל האדם לא לעצמו נברא. רק להועיל לאחריו ככל אשר ימצא בכוח לעשות). ודן והורה. אוהב שלום. ורודף שלום. אוהב את הבריות וקרוב לתורה. וזה היה דרך למודו בקדש מעודו. הן בתורה. והן בדרכי ה’ הישרים שהיה מורה. הניח כבוד עצמו. ובחר לו ללמד באשר יטיב להם לאחריו. אשר קטן כגדול ישמעון. בכל רובי תורותיו אשר זכה וזכה את הרבים. לא הניח ידו מלהגיד לבני עירו אחר תפלת השחר פרשה מסדרא דשבוע יום יום. וכל הנכנסין לביהמ”ד יצאו מלא דבר כאשר כ”א קלט לפי דרכו. אוהבי הפשט קלטו עומק פשוטו במקרא. ודורשי הרשומים. דרוש דרשו ממה שלקחה אזנם. מה שנזרקה מפיו מדי דברו בקצרה. וכל השומעים שמחו במתק שפתיו אשר ברור מללו כקורא הפרשה לפני תשכר. וכ”כ היתה מצוה זו חביבה בעיני שהניח כל דבריו בקדש והוה רהיט לבי מדרשא בעוד שכל הצבור מתפללין וקטן וגדול שם הוא וחדותא שלימתא הוה חדי מינה. בארמו בלאגמורי דבר הצריך לתמוד. לאו כולי עלמא גמירי. וזאת התורה כל אפיין שוין באבנתא. ומטיב לכולם. ועלץ לבו בה. ילמדו ענים דרכו, וכו’.

for which he loses his *chelek* in *olam haba*?³ Here is a *kollel yungerman*, a *tzaddik*. He learns Torah all day. He's לומד תורה מתוך הדחק for the *emes*. And what happens? What happens is somebody comes over and says, "What good, what benefit do I have from this guy? He sits there by himself, and he learns for himself. He's becoming a great man. What benefit do I have from that?!" You know what the *gemara* says? That he's an *apikores* and has no *chelek* in *olam haba*! Now, you may ask: "Isn't that an extreme label and a punishment?! Maybe the person doesn't understand. He doesn't *chap* the *koach haTorah*." You know what Rashi says? You know why he's such a terrible person? Because this *talmid chacham* who is sitting and learning is the source of this guy's *parnasah*. Whatever this guy has, he has from that *talmid chacham* who is sitting and learning *bedochek*. That's a *chutzpah she'ein kamoso*. You're belittling the hand that feeds you?! Do you know what that means? It's *mavhil al hara'ayon*. The *chessed* that somebody does to the world through Torah, especially if he's לומד תורה מתוך הדחק, is unbelievable!

The Chafetz Chaim was once at a meeting. *Balebatim* were building a hospital. So they were deciding how many beds each *gvir* was going to donate. Some could donate one bed, some two beds. Suddenly, a *yeshivah* man, a *ben Torah* came. He wanted to speak to the Chafetz Chaim. The Chafetz Chaim said, "Rabosai, wait a minute. I want to talk to this *ben Torah*." The Chafetz Chaim went out and spoke to him. He came back and they were all upset. They said, "We don't understand. We came for a very important meeting. Our time is very valuable. We're here to build a hospital. What is this guy going to do for the world?" Chafetz Chaim said, "That guy donated fifty beds." What!? Fifty beds! Not one of these guys came close to fifty beds. Chafetz Chaim explained what he meant. He said that from his Torah, fifty beds are empty. We need fifty beds less. Because of you guys, we need fifty more beds. You've got to pay for the beds because you make the people sick. You've got to cover the cost of your damage.

That's what a person has to know. Today we want to share with you an idea, so you can ingrain it in yourself, namely, that the benefits of a person doing *chessed* are such that you can't imagine it! If you look in *Sha'arei Teshuvah*, Rabbeinu Yonah writes in two places about *chessed* (1:47, 3:13): one as a general *mitzvah min hachamuros*, from the most *chashuve mitzvos* around, and also as one of the principles of *teshuvah*. A person who did a *cheit* and is engaging in *teshuvah*, that person also has to do *chessed*.

However, there is *chiluk* between the two. *Teshuvah* affords a person a certain level of *kapparah*. A person who did an *aveirah* needs *kapparah*. Rabosai, don't convince yourself otherwise for one second. For every single *cheit* you're going to pay like a *tattele*. Hashem is going to smile at you, but you've got to pay because you've got to pay for any charge you make on the 'credit card.' That's just how the rule goes. You charged the card? You've got to pay the debt. Unless somebody else stole your card and charged it. Then you get a refund, if you can prove it. Hashem says there's one way to get out of it (in combination with *teshuvah*): do *chessed*.

³ בשלמא למ"ד המבזה תלמיד חכם עצמו מגלה פנים בתורה הוי מבזה חבירו בפני ת"ח אפיקורוס הוי אלא למ"ד מבזה חבירו בפני תלמיד חכם מגלה פנים בתורה הוי אפיקורוס כגון מאן אמר רב יוסף כגון הני דאמרי מאי אהנו לן רבנן לדידהו קרן לדידהו תנו (רש"י ד"ה מאי אהני לן - והם אינן יודעין שעולם מתקיים עליהם)

CHESSED BRINGS KAPPARAH

Now a regular person doesn't have to go out and chase *chesSED*. If *chesSED* comes to you, then Rabeinu Yonah says you've got to do it diligently. You've got to be *amal*. You have to toil. You have to put forth your maximum extreme effort. But you don't have to go around the street looking for *chesSED* until it comes your way. But if you want to get *kapparah*, in addition to doing *teshuvah*, you have to *run* after *chesSED*.⁴

In the Avos DeRav Nosson (4:5) it says one time Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai was walking outside of Yerushalayim and Rabi Yehoshua was walking behind him and they saw the place where the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed. So Rabi Yehoshua said, "Oy vey, it was destroyed. This was a place where Klal Yisrael got their *kapparah*." אמר לו, He said to him, בני אל ירע לך, don't feel bad. אחת יש לנו כפרה אחת, we have another *kapparah* that's like it. What is that? גמילות חסדים זה זבח שנאמר כי חסד חפצתי ולא זבח.

People are always looking for *kapparos*. There's no way out. You've got to have a *kapparah*. You did a *cheit*? You have to have *kapparah*, Rabosai. Whether you're young, whether you're old, you did a *cheit* you have to be cleaned. You can do *teshuvah* and you're a *tzaddik gamur* but *kapparah* is something else, especially for serious *aveiros*. Do you know what the best *kapparah* is? *Gemilus chassadim*.

CHOOSE YOUR KAPPARAH: GO COLLECTING

It's very difficult to put your hand out and go over to somebody and say: can you please help me? I'm raising money for a *talmid chacham* or for an important *inyan*. It's embarrassing to do that. It's humiliating. But if you do that, Rabosai, you're going to come to the next world and you're going to say, "Wow!" Your credit card is going to be knocked down. You may have not done

4 א. העקר השבעה עשר – לרדף פעלת החסד והאמת: כענין שנאמר (משלי ט"ו: "בחסד ונאמת יכפר עון ויבראת ה' סור מערע ונתנה התבונן בסוד המקרא הזה. כי האמנם אם החוטא לא שב אל ה'. לא יתכפר עונו בפעל החסד. כמו שנאמר (דברים י"ז: "אשר לא ישא פנים ולא יקח שחד. ויפרשו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה לא יקח שחד מצוה. למחול ולהעביר על העונות. ועוד אמרו כל האומר הקב"ה ונתן הוא ונתרו ח"ו. אבל מאריך אפים. ואם לא ישמעו. ימד פעלתם אל חסידים. אכן זה שאמר שלמה המלך עליו השלום בחסד ונאמת יכפר עון. על בעל התשובה דבר. כי יש עברות שהתשובה יום הכפורים תולין ויסורין מוקדו. כאשר יתבאר בשער הרביעי. והנה החסד יגן בעד החוטא וישמר עליו מן הסיורין. בשלגם הצל יציל מן המוות. כמו שכתוב (משלי י"ב: "ודקה תציל ממות. ונעוד יש עון והוא עון חלול השם. שהתשובה ויסורין תולין ומייתה ממרקת כמו שנאמר (ישעיהו כ"ב: "אם יכפר העון הזה לכם עד תמותו. והנה כאשר האדם משתדל לתמוך ביד האמת. ויעזר אחריו ויתעורר בדבריו. והופיע אור לעיני בני עמו. ויחזק ידי אנשי האמת. ונשא ראשם. ונתת השקר ויפילים יגיעם עד עפר. הנה אלה דרכי קדושה ה'. והוד והדר לאמונתו ועבודתו בעולם. ועז ותפארת במקדש שירתו. על כן בהרבות פעליו וקדש את ה' וילעורר האמת להכין אותו וילעודו. וינצל לו מעון החלול עם התשובה בשומו האמת לעמת אשמת החלול. מדת תשובתו נגד מדת משובתו. זה באור בחסד ונאמת יכפר עון (שערי תשובה א"מ:)

ב. ויש במצות עשה מן החמורות שאין המון העם נזהרים בהם כגון הזכרת שם שמים לבטלה שנאמר (דברים י"ב: "את ה' אלוקיך תירא ואמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה הזהרנו בזה שלא להזכיר שם שמים לבטלה. וכן גמילות חסדים שהיא מצות עשה שנאמר (שמות י"ח: "והודעת להם את הדרך! לכו בה זו גמילות חסדים. ואמרו גדולה גמילות חסדים יותר מן הצדקה שצדקה לעניים וגמילות חסדים בין לעניים בין לעשירים. על כן אמרו על שלמה דברים בעולם עומד על התורה ועל העבודה ועל גמילות חסדים. והנה הצדקה במקומו. וגמילות חסדים בין בגופו בין בממונו. כי ח"ב: אדם לטרח בדרישת טוב לעמו ולשקד בעמל נפשו על תקנת חברו אם לא יעשיר. וזאת מן החמורות ועל העקרין הנדרשים מן האדם שנאמר (מיכה י"ח: "הגיד לך אדם מה טוב ומה ה' דרש ממך כי אם עשות משפט ואהבת חסד. וכן מצוה להכנס לפניו משורת הדין שנאמר (שמות י"ח: "את המעשה אשר יעשו ואמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה זה לפני משורת הדין. ויש בענין זה דרכים רבים אשר תהיה בהן המצוה הזאת מן החמורות הפל לפי ענין הדין. כמו שנאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה אל חרבה וירושלים אלא על שהקעמדין דבריהם על דין תורה ולא נכנסו לפני משורת הדין (שערי תשובה ג"ג:)

5 ג. אמרת כיצד הרי הוא אומר (הושע ו) כי חסד חפצתי ולא זבח. ודבר המתחיל לא נברא אלא בחסד שנאמר (תהלים פט) כי גמירתי חסד חסד ויבנה שמים תכין ואבונתך בהם. פגע אחת היה רבו ויחנן בין זכאי יוצא מירושלים והיה רבי יהושע הולך אחריו וראה בית המקדש חרב (א"י"ו או לנו על זה שהוא חרב) מקום שמכפרים בו עונותיהם של ישראל. א"ל בני אל ירע לך יש לנו כפרה אחת שהיא כמותה וזוהיה זה גמירתי שנאמר כי חסד חפצתי ולא זבח שכן מצונו בניאל איש חמדות שהיה מתעסק בגמיה ומה הן גמיה שהיה דיאל מתעסק בהם אם תאמר עולות וזבחים מקריב בכלב והלא כבר נאמר (דברים יב) השמר להן פן תעלה עולותיך בכל מקום אשר תראה כי אם במקום אשר יבחר ה' באחד שבוטח שם תעלה עולותיך. אלא מה הן גמירתי שהיה מתעסק בהן היה מתקן את הכלל ומשמחה ומלווה את המת ונותן פרוטה לעני ומתפלל ג' פעמים בכל יום ותפלתו מתקבלת ברוצח וכו'.

a *cheit* in twenty or thirty years but for every *cheit* you did before that, you're going to pay like a *tattele*. But if you did *gemilus chasadim*, you're going to have *kapparah*. Every single one of you, whoever is hearing this, should undertake to commit to save himself and his family by doing *chessed*. There is nothing like *chessed*. Zilch! You're embarrassed. Your family doesn't like it. Forget all the *shtusim*. Save your soul. Save yourself. You should become synonymous as the *chessed* collectors. You should be the ones known as doing *chessed*. Every *bein hazmanim* you should do it, if you're wise. This is the best piece of advice I can help you with because there's no other way that you're going to be *zocheh* to *kapparah*; otherwise, you've got to endure *yesurim*. Do you know how much *yesurim* there is in the world today? Boatloads. You know why? *Kapparah*. It's a lot easier to humiliate yourself in this fashion than to have people *daven* for you in every *shul* and put your name out and hope you get better. It's not *pashut*. But if you went out and ran around collecting, you would have an atonement and it will protect you from *yesurim*.

I just met a *yungerman* in Lakewood. I was there a couple of weeks ago. One special guy, a fellow who's at every *chasunah*. He has a stack of bills in his hand, singles, and he stands collecting for *aniyim*. After years and years of watching the guy, I went over to him and said, "What's the story with you? Who do you collect for yourself?" No, he collects for *yungeleit* in Lakewood. I said, "Are you kidding? How often do you do it?" "Whenever there's a *chasunah*." I said, "In Lakewood, it's every night." He said, "I come every night." It's mind-boggling. I told the guy at a later time, "I want you to know I spoke about you. You're a very wise man. You don't have humiliation. If you do, I want you to know I have the greatest respect for you. You're a very wise man, and what you're doing is unreal." Everybody else is a tremendous *mechutzaf* but no one would do that to collect money. You know why? Because they are not *zocheh* to *kapparah*.

You know how easy it is? If a person is sick, you know what the simplest thing to do is? Make a few phone calls. Write a couple of letters to some friends and say, "Listen. I'm going through some suffering right now and I'm trying to alleviate my *yesurim*. Could you help me? I need a *zechus*. I'm trying to do *chessed* for somebody else. Maybe you'll do me a *chessed*." You know what kind of easy thing that is? It's easy as pie. It doesn't say you have to actually raise the money. You're doing the *chessed*. You're going out to do *chessed* for people. That's tremendous.

COLLECTING WILL OPEN GATES OF RACHAMIM FOR YOU

The Vilna Gaon writes in the *sefer Avnei Eliyahu* on the *siddur Ishei Yisrael* that there's a gate in every person's heart. That gate is called *sha'ar harachamim*. That's what it is. Now, usually when you open a door or gate, it either leads you out of somewhere or to somewhere. That *sha'ar harachamim* that Hashem puts in our hearts, if you open the *sha'ar harachamim* what does it do? Does it get you out of somewhere or does it get you into somewhere? You know what he says? When you open this gate and walk through this door, a *sha'ar harachamim* opens up in *shamayim* on the other side, and now Hashem sends down *rachamim* to you. Do you know what that means? That's mind-boggling stuff. It's amazing. You buy yourself cheap *rachamim*. Do you know what it is to sit laid up in bed? Do you know what it is to go to hospitals? You should never know, but if you don't do anything about it, you're not giving yourself a good chance to get *rachamim*. I tell people: "Open up. Open yourself up to *rachamim*. You need *parnasah*? Open for yourself *sha'ar rachamim*." You live in Lakewood or wherever you live, go collect

a couple dollars. Don't stop. Buy yourself cheap *rachamim*. The most somebody is going to tell you is, "I can't help you right now." People might ask you why you are doing this. You don't look like a *meshulach* type. You say, "You're right. I'm not. But I'm going through something now, and I need a *zechus*." If somebody came to you and told you that, how would you feel? Would you say, "Get out of here, I don't want to help you." Of course not. You'd say, "I feel bad that you need a *zechus*. Let me give you a couple of bucks." Do you know what that is? It's unreal!

TORAH AND CHESSED CAN RIP UP A GZAR DIN

The *gemara* says in *Rosh Hashanah* (18a)⁶ a *peledike zach*, that there are some types of *gzar dins* from *shamayim* that Hashem gives you with a *shevuah*, and those things can't be torn up. If you get such a *gezar din* on you, you're basically finished. But the *gemara* says there's one way of getting out of it. You know how? Torah and *chesSED*. The *gemara* says there was such a *gezar din* on Beis Eili. Eili was a *kohen gadol*, but he had children who were *mevazeh* the *korbanos*. They let rich guys get in line first. They said to the poor guy, "You go to the back of the line." And they acted like the *korbanos* was their business. Hashem gave such a *shevuah* on them! He said, "Anybody from Beis Eili is not making it until twenty." Twenty years old!

The *gemara* says they had some great descendants. Who were they? Rabbah and Abaye. They both were descendants of Beis Eili. That means they had no chance to live past twenty. So the *gemara* says Rabbah who was totally *osek beTorah* lived to forty. Abaye who was *osek beTorah* and *gemilus chasadim* lived to sixty. Now it's a *pelah* because there's nothing greater than Torah! But Torah with *chesSED*? Psssh! Unbelievable! It gave Abaye an extra twenty years.

Now imagine you could know the chances of any of us living to 120 - they are about as great as you winning the \$1.6 billion lottery, because no one does. No one wins the lottery. No one lives to 120. Till a 100, maybe. But if somebody tells you you could be *ma'arich yamim* for doing *chesSED* and you don't do *chesSED*, you've got to be nuts. "It's not my type," people tell me. I ask them, "Is it your type to sit in a hospital? Is that your type? You want to sit with your child in a cancer ward, *rachmana litzlan*, or sit in some other kind of ward, a liver ward, an oncology ward, or a cardiovascular ward? You want to sit there? Is that better? Isn't it better to do *chesSED*?" Because with *chesSED* you get a *mitzvah*.

COLLECTING IS A CHANCE TO EARN RACHAMEI SHAMAYIM

Now I want to tell you something else. Rav Elya Lopian said this from a Zohar. The Zohar says: when Hakadosh Baruch Hu sees that there's a fellow who needs mercy, Hashem sees *middas hadin* is coming toward him because of his *aveiros*, so what does Hashem do? You would think Hashem zaps him. He gets out His big bug zapper and He points it right at his heart, gives a press and suddenly he goes into convulsions and has a heart attack. Or He zaps the guy's brain. He zaps his liver, his kidneys, his pancreas, or his colon. Hashem has

⁶ כָּרַב שְׂמוּאל בֶּר אַמִּי. דָּאִמֵר רַב שְׂמוּאֵל בֶּר אַמִּי. וְאִמְרֵי לֵה, אִמֵר רַב שְׂמוּאֵל בֶּר נַחֲמֵי אִמֵר רַב יוֹנָתָן: מִיָּנִין לְגַזֵּר דִּין שִׁישׁ עֵמֹל שְׁבוּעָה שְׂאִינוּ נִקְרַע - שְׁנֵאֲמֵר: "[!]לֵכֵן נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְבֵית עָלֵי אִם: תִּכְפַּר עָוֹן בֵּית עָלֵי בְּזָבַח וּבְמִנְחָה". אִמֵר רַבֵּא: בְּזָבַח וּבְמִנְחָה אִינוּ מִתְכַּפֵּר - אֲבָל מִתְכַּפֵּר בַּתּוֹרָה. אֲבִי אִמֵר: בְּזָבַח וּמִנְחָה אִינוּ מִתְכַּפֵּר - אֲבָל מִתְכַּפֵּר בַּתּוֹרָה וּבְגִמְלוֹת חֲסִדִים. רַבֵּא וְאֲבִי מְדַבְּרֵי עָלֵי קִאֲתוּ. רַבֵּא דְעִסַק בַּתּוֹרָה - תִּיהֵ אַרְבַּעִין שָׁנִין, אֲבִי דְעִסַק בַּתּוֹרָה וּבְגִמְלוֹת חֲסִדִים - תִּיהֵ שִׁיתֵין שָׁנִין.

do? You drove them away *al paneihem* and now you're screaming מכניסי רחמים רחמו. הכניסו רחמו. Maybe you even sing it nice. It doesn't help you. You slammed the door on yourself! You threw the book at yourself, that's what you really did. You've got to know this! This is an unbelievable *yeshod*.

NEED A YESHUA? GO COLLECTING!

Do you know how many people need *parnasah*? I tell people: sending out resumes is the stupidest thing you ever did. One resume, maybe. People send out hundreds of resumes. They spend whole days on the computer falling into this trap. What are they doing? Help yourself! Pick yourself up, go to the *shul* where you *daven*. If you're ashamed to collect in that *shul*, go to another *shul*. Take a few singles in your hand, put it in your hand and say, "*Tzedakah, tzedakah, tzedakah.*" Go around the *shul* collecting money for others. You know how fast you'll get a job then? Believe me, you'll get a job. That's *sha'ar harachamim*. In the Torah, we have this story. The Torah says you want children? Avraham and Sarah didn't have children. What was the *ma'aseh* that triggered their having children? Extreme *hachnasas orchim*, extreme.

I met a wonderful couple from Eretz Yisrael who didn't have children. They were *ois mentsch*. The lady was *mamas* beside herself. A terrible, terrible situation. I told her, "First, open a *gemach*." She said, "I have no money." I said, "Here's \$1,000. Go open a *gemach* now. I just started you off. Now you go collect the rest. Get some more. Open a *gemach* and take care of it. Now pray to get an extreme opportunity of *hachnasas orchim*. When you'll get an extreme opportunity of *hachnasas orchim*, you're going to know you're going to have kids. Writing checks is nice, but *hachnasas orchim* is real *chessed*. You know why? You give away your life. You give away your house. They take over."

The guy called me two weeks ago. He said, "Do you remember me?" I said, "What's your name? I don't remember you. Who are you?" He said, "I'm the guy." I said, "Oh yeah, I remember you." He said, "We just had an opportunity. An older person who's homeless needs a place to stay. Do you think it's okay if we put her in our house? It's only me and my wife. We don't have a big house, a little apartment, but we can take her in as a *chessed*." I said, "My friend, do you remember what I told you about that extreme *chessed*? This is it. Is your wife up to it?" "My wife's up to it." I said, "If your wife is against it, don't do it because you'll drive yourself crazy. But if she's willing to do that *chessed*, that's the key, my friend. That is the key." I hope this is the *machnisei rachamim*, this is the *malach harachamim* that Hashem sends them. (Ed. note: the couple had a baby after that).

Kapparah, all *brachah*, all *rachmanus* from Hashem. If somebody gets sick, I tell this to him on the spot. A guy came to me last summer. He had serious cancer. He was a painter. He didn't have a Jewish name either. He was feeling down. I said, "When you leave my house, go knock on doors and collect funds." He said, "Nah. I can't do it." I said, "You'd rather have chemotherapy? Do you like radiation better? Do you like bad news better? Would you rather lay in a grave shortly? You prefer that rather than going collecting? Go knock on doors and tell them my *rav* told me this is an *eitzah* on how to give me a *zechus*." He called me two hours later. He collected a couple hundred bucks already. I said, "My friend, you're a wise man. Don't stop. You just started to open the doors of *rachamim* for yourself. Don't stop."

Now the *yetzer hara* is going to try to stop you. You're going to get tired. People are going to say, "What? Since when do you collect money?" Say, "You know that I'm very sick. You know I have cancer, stage four cancer. I need a *yeshuah*." This is the key my friend. There's nothing like *chessed*. Hashem gives us such an opportunity to save ourselves. The biggest *tzaddikim* raised money for *lomdei Torah mitoch hadechak*. That was their thing. It was an insurance program, the best medical insurance you can possibly get. You look around with these doe eyes. What can I do about it? What's the big deal?

BE PREPARED FOR HUMILIATION

I'm extremely grateful to a fellow who pushed me into this business against my will. Looking back, I can now see that he was my greatest benefactor. I had come home from Eretz Yisrael, after my first trip there, looking forward to enjoying the summer up in the Catskill Mountains. I hadn't been home in a while. In those days, you didn't go home every year. I hadn't been home for a couple of years already. I'm relaxing a couple of days into my vacation and I get a letter. *Kevod harav hagaon hagadol ish eshkolios middos terumios* I said: "Oh boy. This is going to cost me. I don't know what it is, but this is going to be costly." I was a punk. I was 18 years old. Someone wrote me a whole long letter. He said: I hope you don't mind. I borrowed \$10,000 from so and so on your name. I told him that you went to America and you're going to raise money for me and when you come back to Eretz Yisrael you're going to bring the \$10,000. Please. Basically don't embarrass me, and don't embarrass yourself. Bring back the money.

So, at first, I got a little ticked. This is ridiculous. My Rebbi had warned me about this guy. He said, "There's a certain Yid that's going to come and ask you almost every week to come to his house. My *eitzah* to you would be to avoid him because he's going to try to get his claws into you." I said, "Rebbi, how do you know?" He said, "I know this Yid from youth, and he has eagle eyes. He knows how to *chap* people who he thinks will be a ticket to his *parnasah*." He said, "You can help him, but he's trying to get you in a situation where you can't say no. Don't be *meshubad* to him." So I never ate by him, and now he sent me this letter. Before I left Eretz Yisrael he was trying to *chap* me, but every time he tried to *chap* me, I was busy with something, and he couldn't get ahold of me. So I asked my father what to do. My father said, "You're not *mechuyav* to do anything, but if you want, it's a nice thing."

So after hemming and hawing for a few days, I decided, okay. Motzei Shabbos, we're going to go collecting. I was thinking, "Should I start in my bungalow colony or another one?" I decided I'm not starting in my bungalow. I was too embarrassed. A *yeshivishe bachur* like me who came back from Eretz Yisrael - I'm not being like a *shnorer* over here. In the mountains people knock on your door all day long. So I decided I'm going to go down the road where there was a fancy bungalow colony, a famous bungalow. The people over there had money. I went there. I took one or two of my brothers and a friend, and we walked down to the bungalow colony.

I remember the first bungalow that I came to had a very wide porch, a screened-in porch. On one side, there were three ladies playing a game, and on the other side, a guy with a beard was reading a *sefer*. Baruch Hashem! A guy who learns a *sefer*. I knock on the guy's door, a thin porch door. The guy looks up, and he sees me and says, "Oh no." That was the *shalom aleichem*. I said,

“A *gute vach*.” He said, “You guys are worse than mosquitoes.” I said, “In what way?” He said, “For mosquitoes, they have spray, but for people like you there’s no spray.”

So I walked into the bungalow, and all the ladies started laughing at his funny jokes. I said, “I’m not collecting for myself. I’m here trying to raise money for a *talmid chacham* in Yerushalayim.” He said, “I don’t care where the money ends up. If your hand is out, you are the *shnorer*.” I got a little worked up at that point and I said to the guy, “If you’re a cheapskate and you’ve got a heart of stone, just tell me that: I’m a cheapskate. And I won’t bother you. Don’t make fun of me.” I said, “You know what? A *gute vach*.” I walked out of that bungalow. I took that door, and bamm! I slammed it and said, “Good riddance,” and walked away. I said, “I quit this job,” and started walking out of the bungalow colony and walking back up the road. I said, “Can you imagine that? That’s my *shalom aleichem*. I mean, tell me, ‘I can’t give you.’ Why do you have to mock me?” I said to myself and my brothers, “This has got to be a test. I never saw people treat others that way. How could it be the first bungalow I knocked on, and this is the *shalom aleichem* I get? Let’s go back.” My brothers said, “Are you crazy?! You’re a glutton for punishment here?” I said, “I’ve got to try this.”

I go to the next bungalow. It was pitch dark. I said, “Oh, this is the bungalow I want. No one is going to be home.” I knock on the door. I figured they went away for Shabbos. All of a sudden, the guy opens the door, and he goes, “Shhhhh! Shhhhh!” I said, “You’re making more noise with your shushing me than I am with my talking. I’m whispering outside your bungalow. Why are you shushing?” “Shhhhh!” This is ridiculous.

I think I made \$1 that night. I made nothing, I’m telling you. But that was the beginning of my career. I saw the best and the worst of Klal Yisrael. I’ll never forget going to one bungalow, and the mother sees me and she says, “Ruchi, *kim a her*.” Ruchi comes over and she says, “Give the *shnorer* the *zedakah*.” She gives me five pennies. She tells me, “Hold your hand out and bend down.” She puts the penny. And one penny fell on the floor. The mother said, “Pick it up.” I said, “I don’t bend down for a penny.” “Oh, what do you think you are?” I said, “For a penny, I don’t bend down. I don’t come for pennies.” And I said, “I want to tell you something, lady. If you think you’re being *mechanech* your kid to give *zedakah*, you’re not. You’re being *mevazeh* me here with these five pennies.” Another guy tells me, another *chassidische* guy, I’ll never forget, a *heimishe* guy. He said, “Do you have a letter?” I said, “I have a letter.” I pulled out the letter, but I couldn’t read it. It had a lot of *roshei teivos*. It was like the letter the guy wrote me about his problems. I started to break my teeth on it. He said *ich her ich her*. Five minutes later, when I have no teeth left, the guy puts his hand in his pocket. He has a whole pocketful of change. He takes out the change with two hands. He said, “Help yourself to a dime!” I said, “What did you say?” He said, “You could take a dime.” I had to control myself from hitting that guy’s hand and sending that change flying all over. I said, “Are you cuckoo? To take from that pile a dime? Please!”

I remember one of the best *kalabas panim* I got - and I mean it. A Satmar *yungerman*, at a Satmar colony made up of *kollel yungeleit*, said to me, “You know you’re doing a *moradige zach*. A *moradige zach*.” He said, “Come to my bungalow.” He took me to his bungalow. I’ll never forget it. He gave me Saratoga Vichy spring water. Oh, was I excited. I’d heard about it on the radio, but I’d never had it. The guy gave it to me, and he gave me a piece of kugel. He told me,

“*Mamash*, what you’re doing is amazing.” I told the guy, “My friend, you don’t have to give me a penny. You just made me feel like a human being, finally.”

I went like this for weeks. I went for weeks. I finally made the money. I don’t think I had all the money, but most of the money. I remember thinking *shrek*, “When I come back to Eretz Yisrael, I’m going to go back to that guy and say something that I thought he didn’t do for me.” I did it myself. But I can’t tell you how thankful I am to him because that started my career. I’ll never forget it.

My grandfather used to raise money every month for many *tzaddikim muflagim* in Yerushalayim. When I went to Yerushalayim I met *tzaddikim* who knew him. I said, “How do you know him?” My Zeida used to send them money every month. He used to connect families with poor *tzaddikim*.

If you’re smart, you’ll do this. Save yourself from *yesurim*. Save yourself from all this suffering. But you’ve got to *mutche* yourself. The Satmar Rav used to force his *chassidim* to go collecting. Until today, the Satmar *chassidim* go around collecting. Fancy guys in Lincoln Continentals. *Grosse* Suburbans. They’re not collecting for themselves. People would beg the Rebbe, and say, “I’ll give you a check. Just tell me what number. I’ll give you a check instead of collecting. I’ll never collect in fifty years.” He said, “You have to go yourself. It’s a *kapparah*. I’m doing you a *tovah*. I’m being *mechanech* you to be *mechaper daled misos beis din*.” Go collect.

Rabosai, do yourself a favor. Save your souls. Do you need kids? Here is the answer. Do you need a job? This is the answer. Do you need better *parnasah*? This is the answer. Do you need *kapparah* from your *aveiros*? Trust me, this is the best way. Cash in. *Chap arein*. Be *matzliach*.



❧ IN SUMMARY ❧

In Rav Chaim Volozhin's sefer *Nefesh Hachaim*, Rav Itzele quotes his father as saying that man was created only to help others. For this reason, we should push ourselves to do *chessed* for others. It is a giant statement since mostly we act for our own benefit. The greatest *chessed* is carried out by the *talmidei chachamim* who learn Torah, which brings sustenance to the whole world, yet take the smallest amount of sustenance from the world for themselves. The fact that a ben Torah learns Torah *mitoch dochak* is what sustains the world, and it is considered *apikorsus* if anyone says, "What benefit do I have from that Torah learner?" Another tremendous facet about *chessed* is if we want to have a *kapparah* for an *aveirah*, the answer is to run after doing regular *chessed*. Chazal say, the best *kapparah* is *gemilus chasadim* - doing *chessed*. Every one of us should run after *chessed* opportunities until people know we are the person to go to for *chessed*. The *mitzvah* and humiliation gained by doing *chessed* is a *kapparah*, and it can replace the *kapparah* of any deserved *yessurim*. It's so worthwhile - and often easy - to cook up some *chessed* opportunities to gain a *zechus* and become spiritually cleansed through them. There is a gate in everyone's heart called the *sha'ar harachamim*. When we do *chessed* the gate opens, and Hashem can send us *rachamim* from the *Shamayim*. Abaye and Rabbah, who were descendants of Eli Hakohen, both lived beyond the age of 20, only in the merit of their Torah and *chessed*. Abaye was also involved with *chessed* and lived 20 years longer than Rabbah who learned only Torah. Such is the protective power of doing *chessed*. And we get *mitzvos* too! Opportunities that arise to do *chessed* and give *tzedakah* are gifts from Hashem to - perhaps to ward off deserved *din* from sin and - gain *rachamim*. When opportunities to have *rachamim* on someone suddenly open up, we should ask ourselves if possibly there is a *din* in *Shamayim* and we are being given the perfect opportunity to gain some *rachamim* for ourselves. Collecting for needy people and doing *hachnasas orchim* for people are two ways to do real *chessed* and gain real *brachos* in our lives. The people who ask for donations, and who need *chessed*, are the "*machnisei rachamim*," the *malachim* who bring *rachamim* into our lives. This week, I will (*bli neder*) try and grab opportunities for *chessed*, be it learning Torah, collecting funds by knocking on doors, making phone calls or writing letters for a needy person or organization - there are always opportunities for *chessed* if we open our eyes. In this merit, may Hashem *bentch* us with *parnassah*, *kapparah*, children and anything else we might need.

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