

לעילו נשמת: אריה ישראל בן מרדכי ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
Rabbi Elimelech
Biderman
Shlita

Re'eh



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Parshas Re'eh

This week's *parashah* discusses the mitzvos of giving *tzedakah* and extending loans. It is proper and timely to discuss these mitzvos now that Elul has arrived, for *tzedakah* and *chesed* are primary aspects of *teshuvah*.

Apitropis — Legal Guardians

People wonder why they should give away their hard earned money to others. "I worked hard; it's mine, so why should I part with it?"

But is the money really yours? A portion of your money was given to you so you can help others.

An אפוטרופוס is a Talmudic word, referring to someone who takes care of other people's money. (A common *apitropus*, discussed in the Gemara, is when a trustworthy adult is appointed by the beis din to take care of the inheritance of young orphans. The orphans are too

young to take care of the money themselves, so an *apitropus* takes care of their money, until they are old enough to take care of matters themselves.)

The Alshich (this week's *parashah* "נתן תתן, א"י") explains that all wealthy people should consider themselves as *apitropsim*, legal guardians, appointed to take care of the money of others, and to allocate their money to them.

(Incidentally, it is therefore important to study *hilchos tzedakah* and to be in contact with *talmidei chachamim* who can advise you where you should give your money. Otherwise, it is possible that Hashem gave you money as an *apitropis* to help person A and B, and you end up giving it to persons C and D, which is also not correct.)

The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 131:) teaches that if someone writes in his will that he wants

only one of his sons should inherit his money, he means that this son should be the *apitropis* to take care of the money for all of them. We don't suppose he truly meant to give the money to one child, because why should a father single out one son over the others? Unless we know of disputes going on in the family, the assumption is that the father wants all his children to inherit his wealth, and one son should be the *apitropis*, have power of attorney, on the money and then to distribute the money among his siblings.

Based on this Gemara, the Chida (*Pnei Dovid, Re'eh*) writes: Every member of Bnei Yisrael is Hashem's child, as it states (in this week's *parashah*), בְּנֵי אֱתָם לֵאמֹר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, "You are Hashem's children." Does it make sense that Hashem wants some of His children to be wealthy while others should suffer from poverty? It is obvious that Hashem gave extra money to

the wealthy so they can help the poor. They are appointed as *apitropis* to allocate the money to those who need it.

The Skulener Rebbe zt'l, Reb Eliezer Zusya Portugal, told the following *meshal*:

Many people were seated at a large table at a wedding. The waiter came by and placed a tray with meat in front of one person. He didn't intend that this one person should eat all the meat. He wants that the food should be distributed among all the people seated at the table. Similarly, Hashem gives a lot of money to one person so he can distribute it to the others. He didn't want the wealthy person to keep it all for himself.

Internalizing these ideas will make it easier for you to part with your money. There are halachos regarding how much money one should give. It is also wrong to give too much tzedakah and become poor. However, when one when gives the amount

he should, he should believe that he didn't lose anything. He is just carrying out his mission honestly, distributing the money to where the money belongs.

Therefore, one doesn't really deserve reward for giving tzedakah. All he did was assign the money to where it was destined to be. Nevertheless, the Torah promises (15:10), **כִּי בִגְלוֹל הַדָּבָר**, הזה יברכה ה' אלקיך בכל מעשיך ובכל משלה ידיך, "For this mitzvah Hashem will bless all your deeds, and grant you success wherever you put your hand."

Reb Shimon Trop *zt'l* teaches:

When a person is a loyal *apitropis*, and he distributes the money to the poor, Hashem will trust him with even more money. This can be compared to a courier whose boss will trust him with more money after he proves his honesty.

However, if a wealthy person keeps all the money for

himself, Hashem may take the money away from him and give it to a more loyal *apitropis*.

A pauper once complained to Rebbe Shayale Kerestirer *zt'l* about his financial plight. Reb Shayale advised him to start a different business, which he did. In a short time he became extremely wealthy.

A year later he came back to Rebbe Shayele Kerestirer, this time with a different complaint. "So many people are nudging me that I should give them money. My relatives, my friends, even people I never knew before. They all come to me and ask me to help them. I don't want to give them anything, and they bother me constantly ..."

The Rebbe replied, "I see you aren't a loyal *apitropis*, so we will find someone else who will do a better job. Why does one need wealth, if not to distribute the money to the poor?"

Rebbe Shayale explained, "I will make a *gorel*. I will place the names of all residents of Kerestir on small pieces of paper, and put them all in a box. Your name will be there too. Then, we will choose one. Whoever is worthy to be Hashem's *apitropis* will be chosen by the *gorel*. He will become wealthy, and distribute his wealth to the poor. If you regret your ways and are prepared to help the poor, you will win the lottery..."

This man did sincere *teshuvah*. He made up in his mind he would help all poor people who came to him. He won the *gorel*.

Collecting *Tzedakah* for the Poor
Chazal (*Bava Basra* 9) tell us, גדול המעשה יותר מן העושה, "Causing others to give *tzedakah* is a greater mitzvah than giving *tzedakah* yourself." It is repeated in the name of Rebbe Elimelech of Lizensk *zy'a*: "Going around the four corners of the city to collect money for the poor atones for

severe sins that deserve the four deaths issued by *beis din* (ארבע מיתות בית דין)."

Reb Aharon of Belz *zy'a* said, "Going door to door collecting money for the poor frees a person from *kares*." The shame one has doing this mitzvah atones and purifies him.

The Aruch HaShulchan (247:5) writes, "I have received the *kabalah* that when one collects money for others it will protect his future generations that they will never need to go around, door to door, collecting money for themselves."

Reb Getzel Berger *z'l* from London (*niftar* תשל"ה/1977) was a wealthy Satmar chassid who gave large sums of money for *tzedakah*. The Satmar Rebbe *zy'a* told him that he must speak with other wealthy people, and encourage them to give *tzedakah*.

Reb Getzel said he prefers to give more money for

tzedakah, than to speak with others, but the Satmar Rebbe insisted that he ask other wealthy people for donations. ¹

1. In honor of the Satmar Rebbe's *yahrtzeit*, on the 26th of Av, we will tell a few stories about this great tzaddik.

The Satmar Rebbe would go to his cheder from time to time to test the children. Once, he asked a child a question, but the child stuttered and didn't speak clearly. The Satmar Rebbe repeated his question a second time, and then a third time, but he couldn't understand what the child was saying. That is when the Rebbe understood that the child had a speech impediment. (The Rebbe was eighty-six years old at the time, his hearing was beginning to fail, and it took some time until he realized the child had a speech impediment.) The Rebbe feared he had embarrassed the child, so for the next half a year, whenever he saw this child, even from the distance, he would call him over, and speak with him.

The Satmar Rebbe was once by a *kiddush* in the home of one of his chassidim. This chassid was extremely careful with kashrus. Several times during the Kiddush, he emphasized how everything was homemade, and perfectly kosher. He asked the Rebbe, "Does the Rebbe want fish? It's *heimish* (homemade). How about some kugel? It's also *heimish* (homemade)."

The Rebbe pointed to the wine and asked, "Is the wine also *heimish*?" "No. The wine was bought."

The Rebbe said, "That's because *you* were supposed to make the wine." Making wine is generally the man's domain. The Rebbe was suggesting that although it's very good to be careful with kashrus, but when extreme caution causes the wife to work extra hard, one should reconsider.

An orphan once came to the Satmar Rebbe before his *chasunah* for a *brachah*. The Rebbe put his hands over the *chasan's* head and blessed him, crying copiously. He blessed him for about twenty minutes. Afterwards, someone asked the Rebbe, "I understand the importance of being extra kind to this *chasan* since he is an orphan – but why for so long?"

The Rebbe replied, "The success of the *chasan* and *kalah* in their marriage are the tears and the *tefillos* their parents shed before the *chasunah*. But this *chasan* doesn't have anyone to cry for him, so I cried and prayed for him."

There is a halachah that one should stand up for someone who is doing a mitzvah. Therefore, the Pischei Teshuvah (*Yorah Dei'ah* 256:1) writes, "One must stand up for the *gabai tzedakah* when he collects money from people."

Perhaps this is one of the reasons people stand during *ויברך דו*. Often in this part of the *tefillah*, the *gabai* goes around the *beis medresh* collecting money. Therefore we should stand for him, as he is performing this mitzvah.

Maskil el Dal

In *Tehillim* (41) it states, אשׁרִי מִשְׁבִּיל אֵל דָּל. One must be *משביל אל דל*, think and contemplate about the needs of the poor, so he can help the poor in the very best way.

Someone was telling the Satmar Rebbe *zt'l* about his financial struggles; how hard it is for him to support his family, and to cover the expenses of an upcoming *chasunah*.² The Satmar Rebbe asked, "How much do you need?"

(It is worth remembering this story before leading your child to the chuppah. The children's success in their marriage and in their life, is largely dependent on the *tefillos* and tears of the parents before the *chasunah*.)

Regarding *shalom bayis*, the Satmar Rebbe taught, "We have a *kabalah* (tradition) that the one who is *mevatar* wins." Sometimes there are differences of opinion between a husband and wife. The one who gives in to the other one is the winner.

2. Someone in Eretz Yisrael was thinking of moving to America. He explained to the Satmar Rebbe, "When it comes to *chasunos* it is much easier in America. The amount of money the Yidden in Eretz Yisrael have to pay is impossible."

The Satmar Rebbe replied, "The truth is, all *chaunos* – in Eretz Yisrael or abroad – need miracles. According to the rules of nature, it isn't possible to earn enough money for the *chasunos*. The difference between Eretz Yisrael and America is that in Eretz Yisrael the miracles are obvious, while

“Thirty-thousand dollars.”

he is happy with the amount he received.”

The Satmar Rebbe gave him twenty-nine thousand dollars.

This is an example of אשרי אל דל משכיל אל דל, to give charity to the poor in a way that will make them happy and not distressed and upset.

The *gaba'im* weren't surprised that the Rebbe gave so much money, because the Rebbe always gave *tzedakah* with an open hand. But they didn't understand why the Rebbe gave twenty-nine thousand dollars and not thirty thousand dollars.

It states (15:8), פתוח תפתח את ירך, לו... די מחסרו אשר יחסר לו, “Open your hand to the poor... and give him what he lacks...” Chazal (*Kesubos* 67:) explain, אשר יחסר לו means that if he used to be wealthy and he once owned his own horse and had a slave running in front of him, one must give these to the pauper. Because the pauper feels that he lacks until he gets the luxuries he grew up with and was accustomed to.

They asked him, “If you were already giving so much money, why didn't you give him just one thousand dollars more, so he can have the entire thirty-thousand dollars he requested?”

There was a pauper who came from a wealthy home. Hillel bought him a horse and hired a slave to run before him. Once he didn't find a slave to

The Rebbe replied, “If I had given him thirty thousand dollars, he would be upset he didn't ask for more. Now he is certain that he asked for exactly the right amount and

in *chutz le'aretz*, the miracles are dressed within the rules of nature. Isn't it better to live in Eretz Yisrael, where the miracles are obvious, than to live in America, where the miracles are clothed within nature?”

run before him, so Hillel himself ran before him.

Reb Chaim Shmuelevitz *zt'l* asks, it doesn't seem to be *kavod haTorah* for Hillel to run in front of the pauper. Furthermore, Hillel was a *nasi*. Is it proper that such an important person, politically and spiritually, should run before a pauper?

Reb Chaim Shmuelevitz answers that this tells us that we must consider our fellow man's needs to be as important as matters that are *pikuach nefesh*. One doesn't make any considerations when it comes to caring for a fellow man's needs.

Hillel's way is an example of *משכיל אל דל*, because he understood the pauper needed a horse and a slave running for him, and he understood that it was so essential for the pauper, until it was necessary that Hillel himself should run before him.

There was a person who

earned his *parnassah* by running a tavern, which he rented from a *poritz*. He earned enough money from the tavern to pay the *poritz* and to support his family. This arrangement went on for several years.

But then, someone asked the *poritz* to let him rent the tavern, and he promised he'd pay more rent. The *poritz* liked the idea, and said that he needed time to think it over.

The tavern keeper heard that he might be losing his *parnassah*, so he ran to the Ba'ch, and told him his plight.

There was a wealthy person who learned *hilchos tzedakah* with the Ba'ch every day. The Ba'ch summoned his wealthy student and told him, "You're friendly with the *poritz*. Convince the *poritz* that it is in his interest to remain with the present tavern keeper, who paid the rent on time for years. Convince him to let things remain as they are."

The wealthy man said he would take care of it. But outside the Bach's house, the wealthy person told the tavern keeper, "I have to go to the Leipzig fair. I will take care of your request as soon as I come back."

The tavern keeper cried, "While you're away my competitor could sign a contract with the *poritz* and take the tavern away!"

"I understand your fears, and I'm sorry, but I must go immediately to Leipzig. I give you my word, as soon as I come back, I'll speak with the *poritz*. I won't even go home before I speak with the *poritz*. Anyway, remember, everything is in Hashem's hands. Your competitor can't take the tavern away from you if it isn't decreed in heaven..."

The lessons of *emunah* and *bitachon* comforted the tavern keeper, and he went home joyfully. He told his wife the good news. "The *baal tzedakah* promised he will

speak with the *poritz* as soon as he returns from Leipzig."

His wife was frantic; afraid that by then it would be too late. He repeated to her the ideas of *bitochoh* he heard, but this didn't calm her. She screamed and insulted her husband for letting the *baal tzedakah* go to Leipzig. So now, in addition to their *parnassah* worries they had a *shalom bayis* problem.

True to his word, the *baal tzedakah* went straight from Leipzig to the *poritz*. The *poritz* was persuaded to keep things status quo, and in this way the *baal tzedakah* saved this family's *parnassah*.

On the night after that *baal tzedakah* was *niftar*, he came to the Ba'ch in a dream and told him the following:

"When I came up to heaven, I was greeted with joy and honor. The court said I can ascend to a very high level in Gan Eden where there are many tzaddikim. I headed

towards the gate that leads to Gan Eden, but there was a large, beautiful *malach* standing in my path, which didn't let me pass.

"The *malach* said, 'I was created when you spoke with the *poritz* on this man's behalf. You saved his *parnassah*, and this good deed created me. But you also did something wrong. You went to Leipzig first. You should have taken care of his needs, right away. While you were in Leipzig, he and his wife were very worried, and their *shalom bayis* was affected as well. Therefore, I request that the court judge you once again.'

"I was brought before the heavenly court a second time. The court ruled that for the amount of days the couple suffered, I have to stand outside Gan Eden. That is where I am now. I'm standing in the corridor to Gan Eden, looking towards the *tzaddikim* inside. It is extremely painful for me to be here while I'm

prohibited to enter. Each hour feels like many years."

In the morning, the Ba'ch gathered his community, and told them his dream. He emphasized to his community the necessity to do *chesed* for people immediately, without delaying. He taught them to *בשביל אל דל*, to understand their needs, and to help them in the very best way.

Loans

This week, we discuss the mitzvah of giving loans to people in need. As it states (15:10), *נתון תתן לו ולא ירע לבבך* (15:10), *בתתך לו כי בגלל הדבר הזה יברכך ד'* *אלקדך בכל מעשך ובכל משלה ידך*, "Don't feel upset when you give him the loan, because Hashem will bless you with everything you do, and wherever you put your hand."

The Chinuch (480) writes, "The purpose of this mitzvah is to establish in our hearts the attribute of generosity, and to distance us - as far as possible from stinginess... Anyone who is familiar with the ways

of the Torah and comprehends, even slightly, its beautiful ways knows with certainty that when one is generous with his money he will gain more. And whoever refrains will lose. Because Hashem judges people according to their deeds... Being tight with money erects an iron wall which separates the person from Hashem's *brachah*. Generosity is, in itself, blessings, and therefore, those who act with kindness, receive [Hashem's] blessings."

The Chinuch is teaching that Hashem commanded us to give loans, and to do other deeds of loving-kindness, because generosity will bring us many *brachos*.

It states (15:11), *כי לא יחדל אביון מקרב הארץ על כן אנכי מצוך לאמר פתח תפתח את ירך לאחריך לענייך ולאביונך בארץ*, "There will always be poor people in the land, therefore I command you to open your hand to your brother, to the poor, and to the

paupers of your country." The Ksav Sofer translates the *pasuk* as follows:

כי לא יחדל אביון, Hashem will always help the poor. If we don't help the poor, Hashem will. So why does Hashem obligate people to give *tzedakah*? The answer is, *על כן אנכי מצוך פתח תפתח את ירך לאחריך לענייך ולאביונך בארץ*, "I am commanding *you* to open your hand to...the poor," so you can earn many *brachos*.

The Matteh Efraim *zt'l* was very wealthy and owned his own bank. Once, a poor person came in to the bank and asked for a large loan, to be paid back in a half year. The Matteh Efraim gave him a form to fill out, and told him that he has to find two co-signers, *areivim*, guarantors for the debt.

The poor person couldn't find an *areiv*. (Everyone knew the pauper probably couldn't pay back the loan, and they didn't want to be involved.)

So the pauper wrote on the line designated for the *areivim*, לִי הַכֶּסֶף וְלִי הַזָּהָב נְאוּם ה', צְבִקוּתָא, "I have silver and I have gold, says Hashem..." Implying that Hashem is the *areiv* for this loan.

The Matteh Efraim had *rachmanus* on him and agreed to lend him the money.

A half year later, the Matteh Efraim wasn't feeling well and he asked his wife to run the bank for the day.

That night, as they were discussing what happened in the bank, she told him that she lent a lot of money to a *poritz*. The Matteh Efraim asked, "How did you have money to lend him? I thought there was no money in the bank."

She replied, "Someone came in earlier and paid up a debt."

He checked his records and

remembered that the poor man's debt was due that day. The Matteh Efraim suspected that it was Eliyahu HaNavi who came in and paid the debt, to pay for Hashem's responsibility in the loan. He asked his wife, "Did the pauper, himself, pay the debt, or did someone come in to pay the debt for him?"

She told him that someone came and paid the debt for him.

The Matteh Efraim thought, "Where did I go wrong that I didn't merit seeing Eliyahu HaNavi myself?" He realized that it was because he asked the pauper to bring *areivim*. It must have been very stressful for the poor person to run from person to person, anxiously seeking an *areiv*. Since he caused the pauper this distress, he didn't merit seeing Eliyahu.³

3. David Friedman (not his real name) from Eretz Yisrael used to be wealthy. He ran a *gemach* (to give out free loans) with his own money. A few years ago, the stock market took a decline, and he lost most of his money.

The Chofetz Chaim ז"ל [hardships and suffering] wrote *Ahavas Chesed* to teach the importance, and the details, of the mitzvah of giving free loans.

The Chofetz Chaim writes (chapter 5, *hagahah*) "Now, that we are living in a time when the *midas gevurah*

reigns in the world, the only solution to be saved from troubles...is deeds of loving-kindness. These deeds will rouse Hashem's attribute of *chesed*...

"It states in *Tana d'Bei Eliyahu* (23), when the Yidden

But he wanted his *gemach* to flourish once again, so he traveled to America to collect funds for his *gemach*. Once, he and his partner passed a very large and ostentatious house. His partner told him, "The person who lives here is a *baal tzedakah*, but he doesn't give money to people like you and me. He only sees people by appointment, and only *roshei yeshiva*, Chassidic Rebbes, or leaders of large organizations. It's a waste of time to even try." "Let's try anyway," David Friedman said. "It will be our *hishtadlus*."

David Friedman walked through the elegant garden, and reached the front door, and his partner reluctantly walked beside him. A butler opened the door. "Please tell the man of the house that David Friedman is here to speak with him."

When the butler heard him say "David Friedman" he immediately let them in, and brought them to the wealthy man's study. The *baal tzedakah* came downstairs a moment later. He was excited to speak with David Friedman – but a different David Friedman. He was waiting for David Friedman, a wealthy contractor. They had a business meeting set for that night, to discuss great business plans.

The *baal tzedakah* said, "Since you are already in my home, tell me why you came."

David Friedman said, "I also used to be wealthy, but I lost the money... Now I am here to expand the *gemach*..."

The wealthy man gave him \$150,000.

David Friedman did his *hishtadlus* and Hashem helped him in a marvelous way.

lived in Mitzrayim... they gathered and made a pact that they would do *gemilus chasadim* with each other...

“What is the significance of this pact? When they saw they had no way of escaping Pharaoh’s decrees and the labor in Egypt was getting harder each day, they gathered and sought counsel: What could they do about this? ... They made a pact that they would do *chesed* with one another. That would arouse Hashem’s *chesed* from Above, and automatically Pharaoh’s decrees would end.

“Their plan succeeded... As it states, נחית בחסדך עם זו גאלת נהלת עם זו, ‘You led them [out of Mitzrayim] with Your kindness...’ Chazal explain, נחית בחסדך refers to their *gemilus chasadim*...

“It also states (*Yirmiyahu* 1), כה אמר ה' זכרתי לך חסד נעורייך אהבתך, בלולתיך, לכתך אחרי במדבר, ‘So says Hashem: I remember the *chesed* of your youth, the love of your nuptials, your

following Me into the desert.’ Three factors are stated in this *pasuk*: חסד נעורייך, means [Hashem remembers] they did *chesed* with each other in Mitzrayim. אהבתך כלולתיך, refers to *mattan Torah*. לכתך אחרי במדבר, they followed Hashem into the wilderness...”

Reaping the Rewards

Chazal (*Vayikra Rabba* 34:8) say, יותר ממה שבעל הבית עושה עם, העני העני עושה עם בעל הבית. Loosely translated, this means, when a transaction of *tzedakah* takes place, the donor gets the better deal. The wealthy think they are helping the poor, but they are helping themselves even more, because they gain many blessings and success, due to their *tzedakah*.

As Rus told Naomi, שם האיש, “The name of the person who I helped today was Boaz.” She didn’t say “the name of the person who helped me...,” rather “whom I helped.” Because the poor help the

wealthy more than the wealthy help the poor.

Rebbe Zusha *zt'l* of Anipoli would say, “The wise take, the fools give.” The explanation: The wise know that when they give *tzedakah* they are taking and earning. The fools think they are giving and losing. They don’t realize how much they earn from their *tzedakah*.

It also states (*Shemos* 25:2), ויקחו לי תרומה, “Take a donation...” It should say “Give a donation.” It states “Take a donation” because whoever donates is taking and earning the most.⁴

We now list some of the benefits one earns by giving *tzedakah*:

1. Protects Your Money

The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 10) states, “Just as the amount of *parnassah* one will earn during the year is destined on

Rosh Hashanah, so is the amount of money one will lose during the year destined from Rosh Hashanah. If he has merits, he will give that money [that he is destined to lose] to the poor. If he isn’t *zocheh*, he will give the money to the government...”

Isn’t it a shame to work hard for money, and then to lose it the government, to doctor bills, to failed business ventures, and the like? Those losses are destined from Rosh Hashanah, and one can’t escape them. However, one can divert those losses. Instead of losing money to the government, to doctor bills, to bad business ventures, one can “lose” that money to *tzedakah* (which is really not a loss at all).

The Gemara tells that on *motzei Yom Kippur*, Reb Yochanan ben Zakai dreamed

4. The Sfas Emes *zt'l* explains that giving *tzedakah* habituates oneself in the attribute of generosity. Therefore, it is appropriate to call this giver “taking,” because he is taking a good trait.

that his nephew will lose seven hundred *dinars* that year. Reb Yochanan ben Zakai came to his nephew several times that year, asking him to give *tzedakah*. His nephew ended up giving 683 *dinars* to *tzedakah*.

On *erev Yom Kippur* of the following year the tax collectors came to his nephew. Reb Yochanan ben Zakai told him, "Don't worry. They won't take more than seventeen *dinars*" (683 + 17 = 700).

The nephew asked, "How do you know?"

"I had a dream..."

"Why didn't you tell me? I would have given the entire seven hundred thousand *dinars* to *tzedakah*."

"I wanted you to give *tzedakah lishmah*."

2. Deeds of Kindness Rouse Hashem's Compassion.

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 152) states, "Whoever has

compassion on others, will receive compassion from heaven. Whoever doesn't have compassion on others, won't receive compassion from heaven...."

Similarly, the *Zohar* (vol.1 104.) states, "When Hakadosh Baruch Hu loves a person, He sends him a gift. What gift? A poor person, so he can earn the mitzvah of *tzedakah* through him. Hakadosh Baruch Hu places a חוט של חסד, strand of kindness over [the host]...to protect him from danger..."

The Midrash (*Shemos Rabba* 45:6) states:

Hakadosh Baruch Hu showed Moshe all the treasuries of heaven. Moshe asked about one treasury, "Who is this treasury for?"

Hashem replied, "It is reward for those who do the mitzvos."

Then Hashem showed Moshe a very large treasury.

"Who is this treasury for?"

Hashem replied, “Whoever deserves reward, I give him his reward. And whoever isn’t worthy, I give him from this treasury. It is אוצר מתנת חינם, the treasury of free gifts. As it states, והננתי את אשר אחון.”

How does one earn the free gifts?

We can explain, והננתי Hashem gives free gifts and kindness, את אשר אחון, to the people who Hashem enables them the opportunity to do *chesed* and kindness to others. Hashem reciprocates and mimics their good deeds, and does kindness with them. (Based on *Avodas Yisrael, Ki Sisa*).⁵

In summary, the rule is:

When one does *chesed*, he receives *chesed*. When one has

compassion, he receives compassion.

3. *Kaparah*/Atonement

Avos d'Reb Nosson (4:5) writes, “Reb Yochanan ben Zakai was once walking in Yerushalayim, and Reb Yehoshua was walking behind him. They saw the ruins of the Beis HaMikdash. Reb Yehoshua said, “Woe to us! We used to bring *korbanos* in the Beis HaMikdash which would atone for all our sins, and now we don’t have anything to grant us our forgiveness.”

Reb Yochanan ben Zakai replied, “My son, don’t feel bad. We have atonement similar to the *korbanos*. That is *gemilus chasadim* as it states (*Hoshei’a* 6:6), כי חסד

5. In the desert, the Yidden complained about the manna, כלום ראייתם ילוד, אשה שמכניס ואינו מוציא, “Did you ever see a human being take in without giving out?”

The Satmar Rebbe *zt'l* (*Divrei Yoel, Ki Seitza*) explains that they were saying: Is it possible to take, without ever giving? One has to give to earn Hashem’s bounty.

זכה, הפצתי ולא זכה, "I want *chesed*, not *korabanos*."

4. Long Life

The Midrash (*Bereishis Rabba* 59.) states: Reb Meir went to Mamla and saw that everyone in that city has black hair. No one was white. There were no elderly people there. Reb Meir asked them, "Perhaps you are from Eli's family, which about them it states (I Shmuel 2:33), מדבית ביתך ימותו אנשים, 'the people of your family will die young?'"

They replied, "Rebbe daven for us."

He said, "Do *tzedakah* and you will merit long life."

He taught this from the *pasuk* (*Mishlei* 16:31), עטרת תפארת, שיבה בדרך צדקה תמצא, "The crown of elderly is found in the path of charity."

The Midrash (quoted in *Orchos Yosher, Gemilus Chasadim*) tells the following story:

There was a talmid chacham

who was traveling for business. An innkeeper saw him, and said, "Rebbe, if you want, I can travel with you."

The talmid chacham replied, "Come in peace."

As they were walking, they met up with a blind pauper sitting near the city. The talmid chacham quickly took out a coin and gave it to him, and he told the innkeeper to do the same. The innkeeper said, "I won't give him anything, because I don't know him as you do. It was good that you gave him since you know him, but I won't give anything."

The talmid chacham replied, "If you don't want to give, that's your choice."

They walked further and met up with the malach hamaves. The malach hamaves introduced himself, "I am the malach hameves" and they became very afraid.

The malach hamaves said to the talmid chacham, "You

gave tzedakah...therefore your life will be spared. You will live another fifty years."

The malach hamaves then said to the innkeeper, "But for you, your final day has arrived."

The innkeeper replied, "We traveled together. Is it right that he should return home and I should die?"

"Yes. He deserves to live since he gave tzedakah."

"Let me give tzedakah now!"

The malach hamaves replied, "Fool, if one didn't prepare provisions on land what will he have on the sea? Similarly, if someone didn't prepare in his lifetime, it is too late to prepare when he's dead. What happened, happened, now your time to die has come."

The innkeeper said, "Before you take me, allow me to praise Hashem for all the kindness He has done for me."

The malach hamaves replied, "Since you want to praise

Hashem, years have been added to your life."

From this story we learn the benefit of praising Hashem. It can add years onto one's life. The story also teaches us the importance of tzedakah. It can save one's life.

Someone who *lo alainu* had cancer came to the yeshiva where Rebbe Mordechai of Zvhil *zt'l* learned, gave him some money, and asked him for a *brachah* for a *refuah sheleimah*. Rebbe Mordechai of Zvhil gave him his *brachos*. Shortly afterwards, the man was healed.

Thirty years later that man's illness returned. (By that time, Rebbe Mordechai of Zvhil had already become the Zvhiller Rebbe.) Once again, the ill man took a lot of money and went to Rebbe Mordechai of Zvhil, requesting that he daven on his behalf.

The Rebbe replied. "Don't give the money to me. I

suggest you give the money to So-and-So. He will daven for you and *be'ezras Hashem* you will recover."

The ill person said, "Why can't I give you the money? Thirty years ago, I received my *refuah* when I gave you money, so I want to give you the money now again."

The Zvhiler Rebbe replied, "Thirty years ago I was poor. You became better in the merit of *tzedakah*. But now, *baruch Hashem*, I don't lack money. Give your money to the poor. The merit of *tzedakah* will help you recover."

5. Olam HaBa

Obviously, the primary gains of giving *tzedakah* will be earned in Olam HaBa.

The Me'il Tzedakah (431) tells a story about a *rasha* who committed many *aveiros* throughout his life. Once, he was very ill, he had not eaten for several days. His family urged him to eat something.

He said, "If you will cook an egg for me, I'll eat it."

A pauper came to their door just then, begging for food. The miser said, "Give him the egg." That was the first time in his life that he gave *tzedakah*.

The Me'il Tzedakah reveals that the pauper was on the brink of dying from starvation, and the egg saved him. Thus, all the mitzvos that this pauper did subsequently, and all the children he gave birth too after that episode are attributed to the miser's merits, for he granted him life.

The miser died three years later. He came to his son in a dream and told him, "Give *tzedakah* so you will merit Olam HaBa. My entire life, I gave *tzedakah* only once, when I gave that egg to the pauper who came to our door. That one mitzvah turned my fate around and I merited Olam HaBa, despite my many sins."

The Ben Ish Chai *zt'l* tells:

Two poor people became wealthy. When they met, one asked the other, "What did you do to become wealthy?"

He replied, "Our rabbi told us, עשר בשביל שתהעשר, if one tithes his money for *tzedakah*, he will become wealthy. I followed this *segulah*, and I am now very wealthy. Now tell me how you became wealthy."

He replied, "Our rabbi told us, אוקירו לגשיכו כי היכי דתתעתרו, 'Honor your wives and you will become wealthy' (*Bava Metzia* 59:). I followed this counsel and I became wealthy. I see that the counsel my rabbi offered is better than yours, because all my wealth remained in my home, while your money left your house and went to the poor."

The wealthy man immediately went to his rabbi and complained. "Why did you tell us to give *tzedakah* to become wealthy? You should have told

us that there is an easier route. One can become wealthy by honoring one's wife!"

The Rabbi replied, "You are right: both paths result in wealth. However, the one who honors his wife is wealthy in this world. The one who supports the poor earns dividends in both worlds.

This is hinted at in the *pasuk*, אל תירא כי יעשיר איש כי ירבה כבוד ביתו. This can be translated, "Don't be afraid if you see someone becoming wealthy because he honored his wife." (כי לא במותו יקה, because *bitu* means wife). הכל לא ירד אחריו כבודו, because when he dies he won't take the wealth with him. But those who become wealthy by giving *tzedakah* will have spiritual wealth in *Olam HaBa*.

It is also hinted at in the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 112:3), הון ועושר בביתו, הון ועושר עומדת לעד. We can translate it הון ועושר בביתו, if one honors his wife the wealth remains solely in his home. It doesn't come with him to his

grave. וצדקתו עומדת לעד, but *tzedakah* remains forever.

6. Joy

The Yesod HaAvodah of Slonim zy'a was once walking along the roadside. A carriage drove by. "Rebbe!" the elderly Yid in the wagon called out, "climb onto the wagon and come with me. Why walk? I'm going in your direction."

"I don't mind walking," the Rebbe told him.

"Please come," the elderly Yid pleaded. The Yesod HaAvodah realized that he won't accept no for an answer, so he boarded the wagon.

Once inside, the Yesod HaAvodah asked, "Why is it so important for you that I join you?"

The elderly Yid pointed to his ears, "These ears heard Rebbe Moshe Kobriner zy'a say, 'A day one doesn't do chesed is a dead day. Since then, I seek to do a chesed each day.'"

Chazal teach: There are four

types of people whose חייהם אינן חיים, lives aren't considered a life. They are: (1) the childless (2) lepers/tzaaras (3) the poor (4) the blind.

We can explain that they are compared to the dead because they aren't able to do chesed.

Someone with tzaraas lives in isolation. In quarantine, he certainly can't help others. The blind are also limited in how much chesed they can do for others. The poor can't help others with money. The childless don't have on whom to bestow their love. The inability to do chesed makes these people feel dead, rachmana litzlan, therefore, they are compared to the dead.

In contrast, helping others is from the greatest pleasures in life.

7. Wealth

Shulchan Aruch (*Yorah Dei'ah* 247) writes, "No one ever became poor, and nothing negative ever happened, because of giving

tzedakah... *Tzedakah* makes people wealthy..."

The Dubno Magid *zy'a* told the following *mashal*: Someone lost a gold coin. He traced his steps, returned to all the places he walked that day, but he couldn't find the coin. However, in his quest to find the lost coin, he found two other gold coins.

If he is wise, he will thank Hashem for the loss, because it resulted in two gold coins. Before he only had one. If he is a fool, he will say, "If I wouldn't have lost my gold coin, I would now have three gold coins."

Now, think about a person walking through a field carrying a sack filled with seeds, and there's a small hole in the sack. As he walks, the seeds gradually fall out and become planted in the ground. The seeds take root and sprout

produce. Now even a fool will understand that he only gained from his loss. The crops wouldn't grow if it weren't for the loss.

Tzedakah is called planting, as it states (*Hosheia* 10), ורעו לכם לצדקה, because the money one gives to *tzedakah* flourishes, and one can earn wealth from it.

"Give *Maaser* so you will become Wealthy"

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 119) teaches that the wealthy people of Bavel earned their wealth in the merit of honoring Torah. The people in other countries earned their wealth because they honored Shabbos. The wealthy people in Eretz Yisrael earned their wealth because they were cautious to give *maaser*. As it says (in this week's *parashah* 14:22), עשר תעשר - עשר בשביל שתתעשר, 'tithe [your money] so you will become wealthy.'⁶

6. Reb Moshe Feinstein *zy'a* teaches that just as we should tithe our money, Torah scholars should donate one-tenth of their learning hours to teach Torah to people who aren't able to learn well on their own.

The *pasuk* (*Malachi* 3:10) adds, *בחנוני נא בואת אם לא אפתח לכם ארובות השמים*, “Test me in this regard and see that I will open up the windows of heaven...” One is permitted to test Hashem in this regard, and to see that by giving *maaser*, one becomes wealthy.

The Vilna Gaon *zy'a* taught, when one gives one tenth of his earnings to *tzedakah*, that money will come back to him. When one gives a fifth of his money to *tzedakah*, he will become wealthy.

Reb Chaim Volozhiner *zt'l* would give a fifth of his money to *tzedakah*, as the Vilna Gaon advised. Once, he wasn't certain whether he gave a fifth. He was certain that he gave a tenth, but he didn't remember whether he gave

another tenth. He decided he wouldn't give more *tzedakah*, since he was certain he gave the primary amount of a tenth.

Suddenly, some of his belongings fell into a well, and he couldn't get them out. Reb Chaim evaluated the loss; it was exactly one tenth of his earnings. He immediately gave another tenth to *tzedakah*. Soon afterwards, the lost objects were retrieved from the well.

The Dubno Magid *zt'l* tells the following *meshal*:

A merchant docked from a distant land with many bolts of cloth in the hold of his ship. Some of the bolts were thick, others were thin. The merchant said, “Each bolt has at least sixty meters of cloth

After the Holocaust, a survivor, who didn't have the opportunity to learn Torah during the war years, came to a yeshiva in London to study Torah. All the students were far more advanced in Torah than he was, and they didn't have time or patience to study with him. He relates that no one helped him, other than two *bachurim*: "Tuvya and Moshe." He was referring to the two *gedolei* Yerushalayim, Reb Tuvya Weiss *Shlita* and Reb Moshe Shternbuch *Shlita*. They tithed their time to help others learn Torah.

on it.” Based on that amount, he set a set price for each bolt.

But people suspected that perhaps there wasn't sixty meters, and they asked him to measure the cloth before them.

He didn't have time for that. He wanted to finish his sales there, and travel off to other cities to sell his merchandise there. So he said, “I will measure the thinnest bolt before you. You will see that even that bolt has sixty meters. That will be your sign that the thicker bolts certainly have more than that.”

The *nimshal* is, Hashem gave us 613 mitzvos. But how does one know he will gain from keeping the mitzvos? Perhaps one loses out?

Hashem answers, take the mitzvah of *tzedakah*. From all the mitzvos, this mitzvah seems to cause the greatest loss, since he gives his money away to the poor! Test this mitzvah and you will see that

it results in wealth. This is your indication that one only gains from the mitzvos. One never loses.

(For example, some people think that the time they spend learning and davening takes away from their work and *parnassah*. Let the mitzvah of *tzedakah* remind them that one doesn't lose from keeping the Torah.)

Elul

Rebbe Avraham Yaakov of Sadugeira *zt'l* taught: ראה is *roshei teivos* ראש אלול היום, today is the start of Elul.

The *parashah* begins, ראה אנכי היום נותן לפניכם היום. The Trisker Magid *zt'l* explains, ראה, take note, אנכי נותן, I am giving you Elul לפניכם היום, before Rosh Hashanah.⁷ This month was given to you, to help you prepare for Rosh Hashanah.

The Arizal writes, כי אז נהפך הקב"ה לידיד ואוהב אל האדם השב בתשובה, "On these days,

7. The Zohar calls Rosh Hashanah היום

Hakadosh Baruch Hu becomes a friend...to the person who does *teshuvah*." As it states, אֲנִי לְדוּדֵי וְדוּדֵי לִי, "I am to my Friend and my Friend is to me," and the *roshei teivos* spell אלוּל.

The Panim Yafos zt'l teaches: there are twelve hours by daytime. Hashem compassionately considers each hour of Elul to be like a day. Thus, in the thirty days of Elul, one can attain atonement for the entire year. Because $12 \times 30 = 360$.

The Vilna Gaon (Esther 1:4, רִיחַ רִמּוֹ) calls Rosh Chodesh Elul, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur the three יְמֵי צַעַר, painful days, for the *yetzer hara*, because people do *teshuvah* on these days.⁸

The Kedushas Levi writes, "On Rosh Chodesh Elul, Hashem reveals to the Jewish

people that He is G-d...and that He leads the world."

How does one know whether a rusty metal is just a cover of rust, or whether the rust is through and through? One places a magnet on it. If the magnet attaches, that's a sign there's good metal underneath.

This is used as an analogy for Elul:

People become rusty in their avodas Hashem. They've lost their hislahavus. But Elul should be like a magnet, pulling them to Hashem and to improvement. If they remain unmoved, that's a sign they have become thoroughly rusty.

Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensky wouldn't accept visitors during Elul. He devoted this month entirely for Torah, tefillah, and *teshuvah*.

8. In parenthesis, the Vilna Gaon adds an additional three days that are יְמֵי צַעַר, painful days, for the *yetzer hara*: "The fast days of the 17th of Tamuz, 9th of Av, and Asarah b'Teves."

One wealthy person, however, was desperate. His son became insane and desperately needed a salvation. As he was wealthy, he believed he could do things others aren't permitted to do, and he decided he would bring his son to the Rebbe even in Elul.

While traveling, they met up with a pauper. The boy said, "Give this man a generous donation." The father was startled. This was the first sound sentence the boy spoke in a long time. Since he was so pleased with his son's improvement, he gave a half-gold coin to the pauper.

The pauper asked them, "Where are you headed"?

The father told him that they were going to the Rebbe Elimelech of Lizensk because his son became insane.

The pauper replied, "But your son is healed! Why should you bother the tzaddik? You know the Rebbe doesn't want visitors in Elul."

But the father decided that since he already traveled so far, he would continue.

When he came to Lizensk, he gave the Rebbe twelve gold coins. The Rebbe said, "Am I greater than Eliyahu Hanavi? You only gave Eliyahu HaNavi a half-gold coin, and you give me twelve gold coins?"

That's when the father understood that the pauper he met was Eliyahu Hanavi.

Reb Yisrael Avraham Tchernostrau zt'l (the son of Rebbe Zusha of Honipoli zt'l) told this story, and added, "Notice how precious Rebbe Elimelech's Elul was to Hashem. They sent Eliyahu Hanavi to heal the wealthy man's son, to prevent them from disturbing Rebbe Elimelech's service in Elul."

The Or HaMeir's sister was making a wedding, and she very much wanted that her brother, the Or HaMeir should attend. The problem was the

wedding would be in Elul, and the Or HaMeir generally didn't travel in Elul. He resolved he would begin the journey, and if Heaven doesn't want him to go, he would receive a hint from

Heaven to return.

Still at the beginning of his journey, he saw a gentile beating an old man. The Or HaMeir was startled by this scene and asked the gentile what this was all about. The gentile replied, "It's the sowing season now. If we don't plant our crops this month we lose the entire year. There will be nothing to harvest. This old man is my father. He promised he would take care of my young son, as

I work on the fields. But my father is always sleeping, and I have to take care of my young son. That's why I beat him. We simply cannot lose out on this month. If we do, we will suffer the entire year."

The Or HaMeir understood that Hashem was sending him a message, and he returned home. Because if you miss this month, the results can be felt the entire year.

There was a businessman who would often seek business counsel from the Sfas Emes. Once, the Rebbe told him, "Now it's Elul. The wisest investment, which earns the greatest dividends — **spiritually and materially** — is to invest in this month.

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