



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת and חדוותא דזעיר אנפין collections of  
maamarim

given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Seuda Shlishis and Melave Malka

### *Melave Malka Parshas Vayeitzei 5762*

In tonight's portion of *Tana D'vei Eliyahu*, Eliyahu Hanavi relates the following lesson:

“Once I was sitting in the *Beis Midrash Hagadol* in Yerushalayim, and a *talmid* came to ask me a question in the manner that a son would ask his father. He asked, ‘Why did the early generations live so much longer than all of the following generations?’ I told him, ‘my son, they lived for so many years so that they would be able to do *gemilus chasadim* - acts of loving kindness with each other’” (ט"ז:א) תנא דבי אליהו

The *midah* of *gemilus chesed* also appears in our *Parsha*, revealing a new facet of *gemilus chasadim*.

The birth of Yosef to Rachel Imeinu is introduced with the *pasuk*:

וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹקִים אֶת רָחֵל וַיִּשְׁמַע אֵלֶיהָ אֱלֹקִים וַיִּפְתַּח אֶת רִחְמָהּ. (בראשית ל:ב)

And Hashem remembered Rachel and He listened to her and opened her womb.

Rashi explains;

“Hashem remembered that she gave the “password” to her sister, and that she was troubled by the thought that she may end up with Eisav. For it was possible that Yaakov would have divorced her if she didn’t have children. Eisav himself thought of this when he heard that Rachel was childless, as the *paytan* wrote (קרובות דר"ה שחרית) צבה האדמון כבט שלא חלה, צבה (קרובות דר"ה שחרית) - לקחתה ונתבהלה, when the red one saw that she did not become pregnant, he thought to take her for himself and she was frightened.”



[1]

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Rav Eliyahu Mizrachi elaborates on Rashi's commentary.

"This means that when Eisav saw that Yaakov didn't *daven* on Rachel's behalf, he desired to take her as his wife, and she became frightened."

The *Gemara* in *Maseches Megilla* (י"ג:) tells us that when night came, Rachel said, "now my sister will be shamed", and gave her the password.

With that decision she sacrificed even more than a lifetime as the wife of the *tzadik*. She also placed herself in great danger. For as a result of giving the password to her sister, Yaakov Avinu had children from Leah. This is why he didn't *daven* for Rachel to have children. As Rashi explains  
הֲתַחַת אֱלֹקִים אֲנֹכִי אֲשֶׁר־מָנַע מִמֶּנִּי פְּרִי־בֶטֶן (בראשית ל:ב) – Am I in the place of Hashem who withheld children from you?

"אשר מנע ממך - You said that I should do what my father did. I am not like my father. My father had no children, but I do have children. Hashem withheld children from you and not from me"

Since Rachel had no children, it was possible that Yaakov would divorce her and she would end up as Eisav's wife. By revealing the password to Leah, she performed an act of *chesed* with true self-sacrifice. That *chesed* shattered *midas hadin* and enabled Rachel to have children.

In *Maseches Kesuvos* (ס"ב:), the *Gemara* tells the story of Rav Rechumey who would learn Torah from Rava in the city of Mechoza. He was accustomed to return home every Erev Yom Kippur. One Erev Yom Kippur, he became engrossed in his learning. Meanwhile, his wife was saying "He is coming now! He is coming now!" When he didn't arrive, his wife was upset and a tear fell from her eye. He was sitting in an attic. The roof fell in, crushing him, and he died.

Rav Chaim Shumelevitz zt"l, asked, " Rav Rechumey's wife yearned for him to return home. She certainly must have suffered greatly when he died. If so, how did she benefit from the *midas hadin* striking him dead



[2]

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because of her tear? She certainly would have preferred that he remain alive!

Rav Chaim explained that it is similar to what occurs if someone was pushed into a fire. He had no desire to fall into the fire. He was forced into the fire by circumstances beyond his control, with no means of escape. Nonetheless, he will suffer terrible burns. Fire burns all who come into contact with it whether they wanted to or not.

The same is true for *midas hadin*. When someone causes pain to his friend, or especially to his wife, their *tzaar* awakens *midas hadin*. Therefore, when a tear fell from his wife's eye, the ceiling fell on Rav Rechumey even though she certainly had no intention or desire that he should be killed.

Now that we have discovered the drastic repercussions of hurting someone's feelings, we can gauge the positive power of *gemilus chasadim*. Chazal taught us that מידה טובה מרובה - The positive attribute is always five-hundred times more powerful than the negative one. Therefore, when someone treats another with lovingkindness, he is automatically and powerfully encompassed by the *midah* of *chesed* which will help and support him.

The *midah* of *gemilus chasadim* even protects the *baal chesed* from descending into the depths of sin and wickedness. I saw an example of this in a book that described the life of Jews in communist Russia. The evil government recruited Jewish spies and infiltrated them into the community so that they could inform on those who were keeping *mitzvos* or learning Torah. The unfortunate victims were then executed or deported to Siberia.

The author wrote that his community heard about a Jew in Kyiv who was an expert at identifying these undercover agents. They sent the author to find the man and learn his techniques for discovering informers.



[3]

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After much time and effort, he managed to find the Jew. The man provided him with a general rule that could be very helpful.

“Pay no attention to the person’s appearance, and ignore even his Torah knowledge or apparent spiritual accomplishments. Sometimes the informer appears to be a respected Rabbi. Focus on the way he treats others. If his nature and essence lead him to treat people badly and hurt them, he is certainly capable of turning his fellow Jews over to the communist oppressors. However, if his nature and essence are good, he won’t be capable of such treachery.

The author wrote that for nearly twenty years, that litmus test saved him time and time again. This story demonstrates how the attributes of goodness and lovingkindness can prevent a person from sinning, even in the most adverse circumstances.

*Gemilus chesed* can even help someone who has sinned repeatedly, return to the path of righteousness. This idea appears in the *Noam Elimelech* (וישב ד"ה או יאמר)

“David Hamelech said, אַךְ טוֹב וְחֶסֶד יִרְדְּפוּנִי כָּל יְמֵי חַיִּי - Only good and kindness will pursue me all the days of my life. The verb יִרְדְּפוּנִי is difficult to understand. It is usually used to describe a situation when someone is running away and others are pursuing him.

However, the explanation is that there are people whose deeds are corrupt. However, because they have some good *midah* as part of their nature, i.e. that he has a good heart and does good for others, this enables them to return to the good.

This is why David Hamelech uses the word אַךְ which is a term of limitation. He says, ‘The little bit of *tov* and *chesed* which is in me, will pursue me all the days of my life, and cause me to return and dwell in the house of Hashem. - וְשִׁבְתִּי בְּבֵית ה' לְאֻרֶךְ יָמִים.”



[4]

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David Hamelech treated even his enemies and those who hated him with *chesed*. As it says in the Midrash (קהלת רבה ז:ד)

“What would David Hamelech do? He would be *gomel chesed* to all. He would say, ‘whether a killer or a victim, whether a pursuer or one who is pursued, I treat him with *chesed* as I would a *tzadik*.”

We must also remember and learn from the goodness and *chesed* of my grandfather zy”a, who was like a *kli* that overflowed with blessing from Hashem. Taxi drivers who drove him regularly always related how he would implore them to pick up more and more people so that they too could ride.

Someone told me that at one point, he was looking for a shul in Bayit Vegan where he would be able to hold a learning group for children in the evening. He asked my grandfather if his shul was available at that time. My grandfather apologized profusely and explained that a *kollel* learned in his shul during those hours.

Two days later, my grandfather showed up at the man’s house and presented him with a list of shuls in Bayit Vegan that were available and willing to host the learning group. My grandfather’s drive to do *chesed* was so great that he went from shul to shul in order to create that list. This small vignette illustrates the love of *gemilus chasadim* that he internalized and expressed in every way possible.

We have learned from our *parsha* and from the words of Eliyahu Hanavi that the *midah* of *tov* and *gemilus chasadim* has the power to cancel decrees of *midas hadin*, protect a person from negative *midos*, and even enable him to do *teshuva* after he has sinned. Now, each of us has to adopt this *midah* and devote ourselves to *gemilus chesed* despite the physical or financial toll it may take. This doesn’t mean that we need to travel and seek out people in need. Everyone can perform *gemilus chasadim* in their own home. This can be accomplished with a kind word,



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a smile, or by showing someone that you care about them and are interested in how they are doing.

The more a person adopts the *midah* of *lev tov* - a good heart, the more it will become second nature, protecting him from wrongdoing, and guiding him back to the path of goodness.



[6]

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