



## THE FOUNDATION THAT'S CHESSED

### ONLY ONE PILLAR STILL REMAINS

וירא אליו ה' באלני ממרא והוא ישב פתח האהל כחם היום (רש"י ד"ה פתח האהל: לְאֹת אֵם יֵשׁ עֹבֵר וְנָשׁב וְיִכְנְסוּם בְּבֵיתוֹ)

We all know that the world stands on three foundational pillars, on Torah, *avodah* and *gemilus chassadim*. The Vilna Gaon has a commentary on *Shir Hashirim* (6:4), and on the *passuk* where Klal Yisrael is described as *יפה את רעיתי*, *My beloved you are beautiful*, like *Tirzah*, lovely as *Yerushalayim*. The Vilna Gaon explains what specifically this *passuk* is referring to.<sup>1</sup>

The Vilna Gaon says: על ג' דברים העולם עומד על התורה ועל העבודה ועל גמילות חסדים, but once we went into *galus*, we lost the *koach haTorah*, like it says in *Eichah* (2:9), *מלכה ושריה בגוים אין תורה*, *her King and her leaders are in exile, there is no Torah*. Despite the fact that today we're learning Torah. *Baruch Hashem* we could hold *gemaras*, but we have to know that the Torah that we learn today is nothing compared to Torah of yesteryear, during the time of the *Beis Hamikdash*. He also says *ולא עבודה*, we don't have *avodah* now. We say at the conclusion of every *tefillah*, ותן חלקינו, בתורתך ושם נעבדך, we say that we want to have the *Beis Hamikdash* be rebuilt and we should be *zocheh* to our *chelek* in the Torah and over there we should serve You. Once the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, two out of the three pillars were gone. Maybe not gone completely. We have some vestiges of *avodah* - we have *tefilah*. We have some vestiges of Torah. But the Vilna Gaon says *ולא גמילות חסדים*, the only thing we really have left is *gemilus chassadim*. And like *Chazal* say, *כשחרב בית המקדש*, when the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, *בכו*, they cried, *ואמרו*, and they said, *חס ושלוש שאין לנו תקומה*, we have nothing to stand on, *ועוד נשתייר לנו*, we still have left, *דבר אחד*, one thing, *והוא גמילות חסדים*, and that is *gemilus chassadim*, as it says *עולם חסד יבנה*, the world will be built on *chessed*. *Chessed* alone has the *koach*. Even though still in all, *chessed* is a powerful *zach*.

### THE MALCHEI YISRAEL WERE SAVED BY THEIR CHESSED

The Vilna Gaon continues and says, the *malchei Yisrael*, the Jewish kings, even though some of them were *reshaim*, they had one unique trick. This is a good piece of information. He says some of the *malchei Yisrael* you read about in the *navi* were *ovdei avodah zarah*. They chased *tzaddikim*. They killed *tzaddikim*. They did awful things! How did they make it? He says: *מלכי חסד היו*, they were *melachim* who did *chessed*, like it says: *כי מלכי בית ישראל כי מלכי חסד הם* (Malachim 20:31). It says that about *Izevel*, the *marsha'as*, that evil *Izevel*! Do you know what she was famous for? She would go to *chasunos* and she would dance for *kallos*! That evil witch. She was known as a witch. But she did *chessed* - she would go to *chasunos* and dance for *kallos*! *Izevel* did that!

So the Vilna Gaon says that's what *Shir Hashirim* means, *יפה את רעיתי*, *My beloved you are yafeh*. It means even though now you're not in Eretz Yisrael and you don't have all the three factors, still in all, *את יפה עלי כתרצה*, you're beautiful to Me like *Tirzah*. What is *Tirzah*? *Tirzah* was one of the cities in Eretz Yisrael that the *malchei Yisrael* lived in until the times of *Achav*, like it says in *Sefer Melachim*, and they all were *malchei chessed*. *נאומה*, you're beautiful, *כירושלים*. That means to say you're beautiful like *Yerushalayim* the *עבודת המקום*, where the *makom* of *avodah* was. *אימה כנדגלות*, you're like the *degalmi* of the *midbar* when they were *mekabel* the Torah.

The Gaon now says a few words that are *mamash* unbelievable. *Al yedei* the *chessed* that Klal Yisrael has, it is *יש בדך*, it's as if there is in you, *כל שלושת הדברים*, all three things. You should know this is *aza pelah* that the Gaon writes such a thing, that with the *chessed* that we have in *galus*, it's *ke'eilu* we have all the three things! After we lost the *amudei Torah*, the pillars of Torah, and the pillars of *tefilah*, we exist on the *middah* of *gemilus chassidim*. And even the *reshaim*, the distant ones, they're *gomlei chassadim*, they do *chessed*. *Bezechus* that *chessed*, that's going to be their redeeming feature and way to achieve mercy.

<sup>1</sup> וז"ל שם: על ג' דברים העולם עומד על התורה ועל העבודה ועל גמילות חסדים. ואחר שגילינו מארצנו ונתרחקנו מעל אדמתנו, שהוא ביהמ"ק, אין לנו לא תורה, כמו שנאמר (איכה ב ט) 'מלכה ושריה בגוים אין תורה', ולא עבודה, ולכן אנו אומרים אחר התפילה שהיא במקום עבודה: 'שיבנה ביהמ"ק במהרה בימינו' ותהיה עבודה עצמה 'ותן חלקנו בתורתך', ולא נשתייר כי אם גמילות חסדים, כמו שאמר רז"ל כשחרב בית המקדש בכו ואמרו ח"ו שאין לנו תקומה כי אין לנו לא תורה ולא עבודה, אמר רבי יוחנן בן זכאי ועוד נשתייר לנו דבר אחד והוא גמילות חסדים כמו שנאמר (תהלים פט ג) 'עולם חסד יבנה' וכו'. ומלכי ישראל אף על פי שמהו היו רשעים, מכל מקום מלכי חסד היו, כמ"ש 'כי מלכי ישראל מלכי חסד המה', וכמ"ש רבותינו ז"ל על איזבל המרשעת שהיתה מרקדת לפני הכלה. וז"ש יפה את רעיתי. אף על פי שאתה אינך בארץ ישראל ואין לך כל השלשה דברים, מכל מקום את יפה עלי כתרצה. שהמה מלכי חסד. נאומה כירושלים. ששם מקום עבודה. אימה כנדגלות. כדגלי מדבר שקבלו את התורה, ואת חשוב ויפה לפני כאלו יש בדך כל השלשה דברים כמקום וכו'.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu considers it for us *ke'eilu* we have all the *gimmel amudim*, Torah and *avodah*. Unbelievable!

People want to know: how are we going to live through this turbulent time? We're getting close to Moshiach *tzeiten*, and people want to know how we're going to live. How are we going to do it? If you call some hotlines, they will tell you that from now until Chanukah, the world is going to turn over. There's going to be hunger. There's going to be this. There's going to be that. It's going to be *geferlich*. So what's the *eitzah*?

### BE SPARED FROM CHEVLEI MASHIACH!

So the *emes* is, it's not the first time people are saying this. In the time of the Chafetz Chaim, during World War I, it looked very bleak. The world looked like it was coming to an end. During World War II, it definitely looked like it was coming to an end. They came to the Chafetz Chaim and asked, "Rebbi, what should we do?" He said, "If all the *gedolim* in the world, all the giants, would come together in a big *asifah* and put their heads together - what would they answer?" He said, "I'm going to tell you what Rabbi Elazar Hagadol said, and no one's going to come up with a better *eitzah*. The *gemara* (Sanhedrin 98b) says: Rabbi Elazar says, מָה יַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם, what shall a person do and be spared *chevlei Moshiach*? You know what he says? יַעֲסוּק בַּתּוֹרָה וּבְגִמְלוֹת חֲסִידִים." *Gemilus chassidim* is the hallmark of Klal Yisrael.

### TRAINING TO STRENGTHEN THE 'CHESSED MUSCLE'

Now, to become a *gomel chessed*, you have to either be born Avraham Avinu - and even Avraham Avinu had to work on it very strongly - or you have to develop the middah in yourself. You have to remember the words of the Chafetz Chaim: He writes in *sefer Shemiras Halashon*, that people should be *margil* (accustom) themselves, and train themselves to be *tovim*, to be from the good ones and not from the bad ones. You're only going to become a *ba'al chessed* if you work on it nonstop. It's an *avodah*.

As we read the *parshiyos* of Avraham Avinu and we hear what Avraham Avinu stood for, you have to know that there's nothing better than training oneself to do *chessed*. Every single one of us should be *mekabel* that every day we'll do *chessed*. We are going to do *chessed* three times a day. Once in the morning, once in the afternoon and once in the evening. You have to know, when a person is *mekabel* to do acts of *chessed*, he creates a tremendous *zechus* for himself, a mind boggling *zechus*. Every one of us has that ability.

Today, we're surrounded with so many opportunities to do *chessed*. Today, a *bachur* called me up - a *bachur* who learned here - and he said, "I want to tell you Rebbi, I didn't forget your teachings about *chessed*." I said, "Yeah, how?" He told me that one of the *chashuve talmidei chachamim* in his *yeshivah* is a *lomed Torah mitoch hadechak*. He's making a wedding, and he doesn't have any money. It's the second wedding he's making this year, and he's still in hock from the previous wedding. So, in the *yeshivah*, they decided they're going to reach out to the people in the *yeshivah* to see if they could accept upon themselves to raise money. So this *bachur* told me, "Rebbi, what do you think I did? I was *mekabel* to raise money for him." I said, "Why?" "Because I heard from you over and over about the importance of doing *chessed*. I just want to know, did I do the right thing?" I said, "Absolutely." "Tonight, there's going to be a parlor meeting" he said. I said, "Get working. You should make a lot of money. I'm going to be your first donor." He said, "You, Rebbi?" I said, "Why not? You don't want to include me in the *chessed*? He's a *lomed Torah mitoch hadechak*" I'm giving the first \$500." I told him, "Now go tell people that. Tell them to double it. That's what you tell them. *Im yertzeh Hashem* they'll be *zocheh*."

You have to *mekabel* to do *chessed*, I'm telling you, three times a day. That's how you're *margil* yourself to be *min hatovim*. It's not hard. If it's on your mind, Hashem will give you opportunities.

### HOW THE CHAZON ISH BROKE HIS MINHAG

There was a tremendous Yid in Eretz Yisrael, he was a giant of a Yid. Physically, he was also a very tall man. His name was Rav Shabsi Yudelevitch (1924-1996). He looked like a lion. He had a beard like a lion. He roared like a lion. When I just think of him, he was the essence of life. And he was funny. *Mamash*, it was a pleasure when he came to America.

He once said over a *ma'aseh* that he went to visit the Chazon Ish, and he came with a group of children that were very far from Yiddishkeit. They didn't come from homes of Torah and *yeshivos*. He was *mekarev* them, and he wanted to bring them to the Chazon Ish. They were Sefardim. Each one went before the Chazon Ish and gave him *shalom*. Some of them bent down to kiss the Chazon Ish's hand. The Chazon Ish was uncomfortable with that; he wasn't used to it. In the *litvishe* world, they didn't do the kissing thing. And he pulled his hand back and he said, "It's not accepted by us to kiss the hands of *rabbanim*." He said it nicely. Rav Shabsi bent down, and he said, "Rebbi, *dos is gemilus chessed*." The Chazon Ish heard that, and immediately he put his hand right in front of everybody and gave his hand to whoever wanted to kiss it.

Rav Shabsi said that he was *mamash* amazed how the Chazon Ish was willing to break his whole *minhag* immediately after hearing that it was *gemilus chessed*! He was able to break his *minhag*, although he held that not kissing hands was the right thing to do.

Be *meitiv*. Do *tovos*. A person has to understand that today we don't have the *Beis Hamikdash*, but we do have the opportunity to do *chessed*. And if you have the opportunity and you don't use it, that's *geferlich*. If you don't develop yourself as a *ba'al chessed*, you could be sure that you have nothing to stand on.

We say: "Torah, *avodah* and *gemilus chassadim*." Somebody once told me. "I learn Torah. That's what I do." I told him, "How could you learn Torah? You don't have a *Beis Hamikdash*." He said, "What?!" I told him, "It says in *Eichah*: מלכה ושריה בגוים אין תורה. Are you bigger than the Vilna Gaon? You're not bigger than the Vilna Gaon. What do you know? Are you bigger than the Chafetz Chaim?" Do you know the *chessed* the Chafetz Chaim did? Amazing *chessed*. The Chafetz Chaim was a *masmid nifla*. He was learning like you can't imagine. But his son said he wouldn't leave the *shul* on Friday night until everybody had a place to eat. He had to know that everybody had a place to eat, that all the guests had a place. That's his business?! Tell it to the *gabbai* of the *shul*: "Just like you clean the *shul*, do me a favor and make sure everybody has a place to eat." No. It was the Chafetz Chaim himself who did that.

### THE EFFECT OF CHESSED BRIDGES GENERATIONS

And the far-reaching *koach* of a *ma'aseh tov* of the Chafetz Chaim shows that *chessed* can have an effect years later. The Ponovezher Rav related that he once came to America to collect for his *yeshivah*. He looked in the phonebook for Jewish-sounding names, and then he would call them on the phone and say, "*Shalom aleichem*." If they didn't know what he was talking about, they hung the phone up. If they said, "*Aleichem shalom*," he knew they were the right guy. So one guy said, "*Aleichem shalom*." The person he called lived in a far-away place, a strange place. So the Ponovezher Rav said, "*Ich vill ich kummen bazuchen*." "*Nein nein Rebbei, nein nein*." "No, I'm coming. Just tell me what time to come." "You can't come." "No! I'm coming. I'm in town. I'm coming to your house." And he came to him.

The Ponovezher Rav walks into the house. The man told him on the phone that he had to come late at night. So he came really late. He walks into the house, and he sees crosses all around the house! Crosses! "I'm in the wrong house," he said. "What's the *pshat*? *Du bist a Yid*?" He said, "*Ich bin a Yid*." I am a Jew. The Ponovezher Rav said, "So what's this all about?" He said, "I work for the Catholic diocese. I'm a big *shvitzer* in their thing." He said, "Tell me, did you *shmad up*? (*i.e. convert*) Did you go over to the other side?" He said, "No, *dos nisht*. No, that I didn't do." He said, "Why not?"

The man said, "Why not? I'll tell you why. When I was a little boy, I didn't have a father and a mother. I was living with my relatives. They decided at some point they had enough of me. They wanted to unload me. They gave me a suitcase and they put me on a train. They sent me to the other side of Russia, to the Chafetz Chaim in Radin. They gave me a ticket - a one-way ticket to go to the Chafetz Chaim." He said, "At that point I had no *shaychus* to a *yeshivah*. I wasn't cut out for *yeshivah*. I was young. It just wasn't for me.

"When I came to Radin, it was the beginning of the *zeman*. I asked somebody, 'Where does the Chafetz Chaim live?' He pointed his house out to me. I walked into his house, and I saw a lot of adult bochurim. They were crowding around in the house. It was the first day of the *zeman*. They went to meet the Chafetz Chaim, to say *shalom aleichem*. I was very, very tired. I didn't feel like I fit in. So I sat down. I put my suitcase down on the floor. I sat on it and leaned against the wall, and I fell asleep. The next thing I know, I'm being woken up. Somebody is taking me by my arm and saying, 'Kum kum, come, come, come with me.' And he's laying me down in a bed, taking off my shoes, and he put a cover over me. I fell back asleep. In the middle of the night I wake up. I look around and get my bearings, and see an old man sitting by the table with a candle, and he's learning *gemara*. Most people had lamps in those days, not candles, but he was using a candle. And he was in his shirtsleeves. I realized that he had covered me with his *kapote*, with his coat, so he was sitting in his shirtsleeves. I was sleeping in his bed. He had taken off my shoes, untied my shoes. He took my shoes and put them next to the bed." Then I found out it was the Chafetz Chaim! Now, that day, there were *bachurim* all over the place. The Chafetz Chaim could have told the *bachurim*, "Take this little kid, set him up with a room. He needs a place." It would have been taken care of. But the Chafetz Chaim stayed up the whole night. For a man of that age to give up his night is not easy and to take care for me personally.

I always thought about that *ma'aseh*. He said, "I stayed in Europe for a little while. I wasn't *matzliach*. Then I came to America, and here I was *matzliach*. I went to school, and then I got a job working for the diocese. They wanted to make me a big *shvitzer*, top of the place. The problem was I was Jewish. In order to get that job, I had to *shmad up*. I had to go over. I said, 'Give me some time to think about it. I need to think about it.' I remembered this *ma'aseh*, this *chessed* that the Chafetz Chaim did for me. I said, a Nation that has people like that, I don't want to forsake. I'm not ready to give it up." He said, "I had no *shaychus* to that *yeshivah*. I didn't belong there. But the love and care were unsurpassed." One *ma'aseh chessed* still had an effect 50 years later! The man said, "Yes, I have these *narishkeit* in my house. I've got to put it on for show. But I know where I belong. I know where I am." One *ma'aseh chessed*, Rabbosai. Look what it did! *Chessed* can be so far-reaching.

### GRAB CHESSED OPPORTUNITIES AND GRAB LIFE

You don't realize how a person could do certain *chassadim* with people and it can make an everlasting impression. You

must seize the opportunity. Three times a day do a *chessed*. The idea of three times is to think: “I want to do *chessed*.” You can do *chessed* with your spouse too. You can do *chessed* with your childcare. You can do *chessed* with your fellow man. Anybody who goes to *shul* has numerous opportunities to do *chessed*. You hear about opportunities. You see opportunities. You encounter opportunities. You are *margil* yourself, you train yourself to be *min hatovim*. Then you want to know what *zechus* you’re going to have? Anybody who’s going to be *min hatovim* is going to have the *zechus* of *kiyum*. That’s going to be his *zechus* to exist.

We all need tremendous *chessed* from Hashem. We desperately need *chessed* from Hashem, Rabbosai. We tend to take things for granted. You’re all sitting here, a room full of young people, and all thinking you’re embracing life. I’m trying to make it easier for you. I’m trying to pave the way for you. I’m trying to teach you and transmit to you: what does it take to give yourself the merit to be *neskayem*? To be around and stand on two solid feet, what does it take?

And even in the face of *tzaros*, if a person faces *tzaros* and he does it with a suitcase of *chessed* behind him or a rucksack of *chessed* over his back, you know how much easier it’s going to be to face that *tzarah*? You realize how Hashem will pay you back? For every act of *chessed* that Avraham Avinu did, Hashem paid him back and his children back - for every single detail. *Chap arein*. Be wise. Don’t be otherwise. I’m telling you. When you say in *shemoneh esrei*, *Elokeinu v’Elokei avoseinu*, you say *Elokei Avraham*. Say, “Hashem I want to follow in Avraham’s footsteps.” It’s the only footsteps that are available for us to follow in, to the Nth degree. *Chessed* we have the ability to do.

### A SHORTCUT IN CHESSED IS MA’ASEH SATAN

I once heard an amazing thing from my *rebbe* (HaRav Meir Halevi Soloveichik). I didn’t understand it when I heard it, but later on Hashem gave me understanding. He said there was a point in time when somebody came up with the idea of establishing Jewish federations. It sounded like a very nice idea. They’re going to try to rope in people of means or people who are up and coming, and they’re going to provide for Jewish needs. They’re going to do *chessed*, *bekitzer*. When it was established, one of the reasons was that if you needed to collect *tzedakah*, you shouldn’t knock on houses. *Shnorrers* shouldn’t come to knock on people’s houses. Instead, they should go to the federation. You present a request. They look at it, and they give you what they decide.

When the Beis Halevi - my *rebbe*’s great-grandfather, Rav Yoshe Ber Soloveichik, heard about this, he was furious. He said, “*Zeh ma’aseh Satan*, this is the work of the Satan.” The work of the Satan?! This is the work of *chessed*! So he said, “The Satan knows *az Torah is nisht dah*. We don’t have Torah anymore. The Satan knows that we don’t have *avodah*. The last thing that remains is *gemilus chessed*, doing a *chessed*, and now he wants to take that away from us also. He want that every Yid shouldn’t be involved in *chessed* personally. They’re going to ‘centralize’ the *chessed*. It’s going to be ‘institutionalized,’ and a Yid himself shouldn’t know what it means to have to open his door for someone needy and to share what he has with someone else. That’s what they’re taking away.” How the Beis Halevi looked at that *chessed* - it’s unreal.

### MASSIVE CHESSED OF THE BEIS HALEVI

The Beis Halevi knew what *chessed* was. I think about the Beis Halevi’s *chessed* and every time I go nuts thinking about it. I just don’t have words. Would I ever do such a thing? The Beis Halevi lost his first wife, and his kids were grown already. He was a famous *rav*. He was a world famous *rav*. And then he heard about the plight of a very simple widow. She was not a *rebbetzin*. She was not the wife of a *rosh yeshivah*, not the wife of a *rav*, not the wife of anybody, a nobody’s wife. But she was left with eight kids to raise, and she had no one to support her. In those days there were no government programs. There was no nothing. And she came to the Beis Halevi, “I need help.” The Beis Halevi said, “We’re going to help you.” “No, I need someone to take care of my family. I can’t raise my family.” Her kids were no easy kids. You know what the Beis Halevi said? “I’ll marry you. You’ll become my wife, and then I’ll take care of you.” *I pashut* can’t be *masig* it!

I knew Yid who was a *talmid* of the Brisker Rav. This Yid was once traveling in Europe, and he bumped into somebody and they started talking. The guy was a *pruste mentsch*. He was not exactly a high-class fellow. The guy said, “Who are you?” So the *talmid* said, “I learn by the Brisker Rav.” He said, “Who, Velvele?!” “No, no, the Brisker Rav.” “That’s Velvele.” So the *talmid* said, “You don’t call him Velvele. He’s the Brisker Rav.” He said, “What do you mean? He’s my family.” “Your what?! You’re a son of Rav Soloveitchik?!” He said, “No, I am not the son of Rav Chaim Soloveichik. My father is the Beis Halevi.” “What?!” The guy finally explained: “I come from the Beis Halevi. He raised us. He married my mother. I’m one of the kids.” The *talmid* said, “Oh boy.” So the guy said, “One second, I want to send him a present. I want to send him a gift.” He was older than Velvele, much older than the Brisker Rav, because the Beis Halevi was a generation before. He went and bought a bottle of wine, and he gave it to the *talmid*. He said, “Bring this to Velvele. Tell him it’s from me.”

The *talmid* was traveling back, and he crossed the border. The guards came to check the bottle and see if it had any contraband in it. They took the bottle of wine, and they held it up to the light to look at it. The *talmid* of the Brisker Rav was now sure the Brisker Rav would never touch this wine again. It was touched by a *goy*. He took it, and he threw it in the garbage. When he came back to Brisk, he told the Brisker Rav the story. He wasn’t sure if the Brisker Rav would acknowledge the story. He said, “Oh, of course I know him. He’s from the children the Beis Halevi took in during the later

years of his life and raised them. So why did you throw the bottle away? Wasn't it sealed?" He said, "Yeah, it was sealed." "You didn't have to throw it away. It's not *yayin nesech*. There's nothing wrong with it. As long as it's sealed there's nothing wrong with it." The talmid said, "I'm sorry." The Brisker Rav said, "It's okay."

But to take in these kids? Do you know what kind of *chessed* that was? I can't get over that *chessed!*

### MASSIVE CHESSED OF THE CHAFETZ CHAIM

The Chafetz Chaim himself did a *chessed* like that. He was 17 years old, and his mother remarried. His father was a *talmid chacham*, a *talmid* from Volozhin. His father died, and his mother got remarried to somebody else, not a *grosse tzaddik*. This guy had a daughter who was 26 years old, and no one wanted to marry her. There was nothing special to marry her for and she couldn't find a *shidduch*.

One day the Chafetz Chaim comes home for Yom Tov and he sees his mother is crying. He says "Mama, *vus iz*, why are you crying?" She wouldn't say. "Are things not going well in the marriage? What's going on? Mommy, you have to tell me." Finally, his mother said, "I'll tell you. My husband is insisting that you marry so-and-so, his old daughter. You're 17 years old. That's not for you. You're going to be a *talmid chacham*. You're going to be a *tzaddik*." You know what he said? "If that's what he wants, so I'll marry her." And the Chafetz Chaim proceeded to marry this girl. I can't get over that! He proceeded to marry this girl to make his mother's marriage better and easier. I mean can you imagine doing that *chessed?! I can't*. That's all we have today - *chessed*; the potential for *chessed* is everywhere and its effect is endless.

### RAV ISSER ZALMAN MELTZER'S TICKET TO OLAM HABA

I'm going to end off with one more story. There was a very famous *rosh yeshivah*, named Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer. Rav Isser Zalman was a great *tzaddik*, besides being a great *rosh yeshivah*. He wrote *sefarim*, *Even Haezel*, a whole series of *sefarim* on the Rambam. He was known to be a special person, an outstanding *talmid chacham*, a *talmid* from Volozhin. He was a *talmid* of Rav Chaim Halevi Soloveitchik. He was a *rosh yeshivah* in Kletzk. He was a *rosh yeshivah* in Eretz Yisrael in Eitz Chaim. A lot of people would come to him because they needed letters of recommendation in order to go collecting. They would come to the *rav*, the *rav* would talk to them and then write a letter. The *rosh yeshivah* used to personally write people letters everyday. Finally, somebody said, "What are you doing this for?! It's such a waste of time! What the other *rabbanim* do is they have printouts, they have form letters. Every city has form letters. They fill in the guy's name and they fill in some details. Do that and it will take you no time!" He didn't say anything.

Finally Baila Hinda, his very famous *rebbetzin*, said to him, "Rav Isser Zalman, why don't you do that *taka?*" Listen to what he answered. He said, "Baila Hinda *ver veis*, who knows what I'm going to get *olam haba* for. I'm not so certain that I'm going to get *olam haba* for my *Even Haezel*. I'm not so certain I'm going to get *olam haba* for teaching so many *talmidim* Torah. Maybe the *chessed* that I do with these people is my ticket to *olam haba*. I don't want to make it easier. I want to do it *mehadrin*. I want to do it the best possible way." *Dos is chessed Rabosai. Chap arein*. Seize the opportunity.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

After the Churban Beis Hamikdash, the only one of the three pillars on which the world stands that's still intact, is *gemilas chassadim*, according to the Villa Gaon. Becoming a *ba'al chessed* is an *avodah* that needs a tremendous effort and a mindset - to always look for the *chessed* opportunities. Every one of us has follow in the footsteps of Avraham Avinu and be *mekabel* to do daily acts of *chessed*, because our lives, our *kiyum*, and our eternity depend on it. This coming week, I will keep my eyes and ears open for small *chessed* opportunities, such as to help around the house with my spouse and children, my shul, my yeshiva, etc. I will also daven to Hashem to provide me with daily *chessed* opportunities. Recalling the story of the Chofetz Chaim and Friday night guests - if I see a new face in my shul after davening on Shabbos night - I will ask them if they have a place to eat, and if not, I will happily invite them to my house. And even if I hear week after week, "Thank you, I already have a place to eat for tonight," I will not despair, because surely - in the merit of my efforts to accustom myself to work on *chessed* - Hashem will give me more opportunities, and in the future, I will "graduate" to more salient *chessed* opportunities, IY"H.

IN HONOR OF HASHEM'S GREAT  
KINDNESS AND BOUNDLESS BROCHO  
THE RECHANIK FAMILY