

## Chapter Four

## Giving Anyone Who Asked

### The Merit of Finding Genuinely Poor People

Hundreds and thousands of genuinely needy Torah scholars were supported by Reb Shmuel.

How did he merit that HaKadosh Baruch Hu directed him to so many worthy people to give money to? It was in the merit of the unique practice that he had, as instructed by the Imrei Chaim.

Reb Shmuel related to Reb Nachum Appel of Neve Achiezer:

*I am now returning from the Rebbe. I asked him to give me addresses of worthy poor people, because I want to distribute twenty thousand liras to tzedakah (the price of an average apartment in those days).*

*“No!” the Rebbe declared. “It is better to distribute twenty thousand liras amongst many poor people, as long as a single penny will get to the hands of one worthy poor man!”*

Of course, one needs to perform the mitzvah of *tzedakah* only with worthy people, as *Chazal* say (*Maseches Bava Kama* 16), “Rava said, What does the *passuk* in *Yirmiyahu* (18) mean? ‘*Yihiyu muchshalim lefanecha, b’eis apcha asah bahem*, and let them be made to stumble before You; at the time of Your anger do it to them.’ *Yirmiyahu* said to Hashem, ‘*Ribbono shel Olam*, even when they perform *tzedakah*, make them stumble to give to people who are not worthy so that they should not receive a reward for them.”

In order to merit to find worthy people to give to, one needs special

*zechusim* — and that is a gift from Hashem. A person who does like Reb Shmuel did — distributing *tzedakah* to those who he perceived as truly needy, and not withholding *tzedakah* to investigate excessively — merits the *zechus* that Hashem will send him genuinely needy and worthy people to give to.

## Give without Being Discriminating

The Imrei Chaim often expounded on this subject in his *divrei Torah* at the *tish* on Friday night. He would cite the disciples of the holy Baal Shem Tov who said: “When you look too much for a worthy poor man because you want to give *tzedakah* specifically to him, know that Above you will also be treated in a discerning fashion and they will weigh if you are truly worthy enough of being given this money.”

The Rebbe would then add:

There was a person who used to give financial support to Harav Zusha of Anipoli, and in this merit he became very wealthy. One day, when he came to the home of the Rebbe, he was told that Rav Zusha was not there.

“Where is he?” the man asked.

“He has traveled to his Rebbe, the holy Maggid of Mezritch,” they said.

The man thought to himself, “When I supported Rav Zusha, I became very wealthy; if I support his Rebbe, the Maggid, then I will probably become doubly as wealthy!”

He immediately traveled to the Maggid and began to give him money, suspending his support of Rav Zusha. Not long thereafter, the man lost all his money. Distraught, he went to the Maggid and



The Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz in Switzerland



*Tziyun* of the Maggid of Mezritch

asked him why had he fallen so far. Replied the *tzaddik*, “As long as you didn’t make any calculations, and honestly and sincerely supported Reb Zusha, then you received the merit from Above without being examined as to whether you are truly deserving of wealth. But when you thought you were smart and decided what was more worthwhile for you, then Above they

also started following you closely and making all kinds of calculations, and it was decided to stop granting you wealth.”

## Love for Every Jew

Reb Nachum Appel shared:

Indeed, Reb Shmuel excelled tremendously in this *middah* — he did not differentiate between people and gave money to every Jew with great love.

He never made calculations. He hoped that among his donations, some of the money was reaching the hands of worthy poor people. His reward for this was that he merited to support the worthiest poor people, Torah scholars, *ovdei Hashem*, the sons of holy people and very dignified, yet genuinely needy, families.

## The Wallet Is Ready...

Rav Avraham Chaim Vizel, a *mashgiach* in Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, related:

Reb Shmuel had compassion for every single person, and he showed each one empathy and kindness. He did not see it an affront to his dignity to be surrounded by dozens of *tzedakah* collectors wherever

he went. It was a normal sight to see people surrounding him like a wall and stretching out their hands; he, in turn, opened his heart and his pockets to them with compassion and generosity.

I had the privilege of sitting next to Reb Shmuel in shul for many years and witnessing his love for *chessed*. As soon as he arrived for *Shacharis*, even before he put on his *tallis* and *tefillin*, he would take out his wallet so that it would be ready for him to give *tzedakah*.

Each day, the collectors were overjoyed when he arrived to daven at the Chisda Shul in Bnei Brak. They waited for him in anticipation and were very grateful for his largesse. Sometimes, the collectors came back for “doubles,” which he handed over generously and with a smile.

## Weddings for the Poor

Reb Amram Levi, a financial advisor at the Bourse, related:

I was invited to Reb Shmuel’s son’s wedding at the Wagschal Halls. For whatever reason, I came early and decided to wait in the air-conditioned hall until the *simchah* began.

To my surprise, I found a hall full of people who were in the middle of eating a *seudah*. I was bewildered as I realized that the diners were actually *tzedakah* collectors and poor people.

“I must have made a mistake,” I mumbled.

Someone saw my surprise and asked, “Who are you looking for?”

“The Daskal wedding,” I replied.



Reb Shmuel

“There’s Reb Shmuel, at the other side of the hall,” he offered.

I could not understand what was going on! “Reb Shmuel, what is this?” I asked.

“This is a *seudas aniyim*, a meal for the poor,” he replied matter-of-factly. “I asked the owner of the hall to prepare three hundred portions to be ready at 4:30 in the afternoon. I then called the poor of the city to come and rejoice with me, and then I’ll give each of them some *tzedakah*. The hall can be prepared for the rest of the wedding while we’re at the *chuppah*, which will take place in the court of the Vizhnitzer Rebbe.”

### ***Tzedakah* for All**

Reb Shmuel’s son, Reb Yitzchak Beirach, related:

I was at a family *simchah* and amid the tumult and loud music, I noticed a poor Jew approaching. He had found out that I was Reb Shmuel Daskal’s son. To my surprise, the man burst into emotional weeping. In a choked voice, he shared some of his memories and then said, “*Zechuso yagen aleinu*. I will never forget what your father did for me. He literally saved my life...”

This Jew was one of thousands who owed my father their life.

“When Reb Shmuel had money,” Reb Chaim Leib Stein, one of the elder *chassidim* of Vizhnitz, explained, “then everyone had money.”

### **Because You Were Here Already, You Deserve to Get Again**

Reb Shmuel didn’t only give every individual who asked — he also gave every time the individual returned for more.

Reb Yosef Katz of Yerushalayim was present when this story happened. He related:

A man had asked Reb Shmuel for *tzedakah*. After a short time, he decided to ask again, hoping that Reb Shmuel would not remember that he had already given him. *He’s surely forgotten already*, the man thought.

But Reb Shmuel surprised him. “Because you’ve already been here,” he said with a smile, “you deserve to get again!”

### Deceptively Needy

Often, people would make false requests of Reb Shmuel and he was aware of it.

“I have given a lot of *tzedakah* to people who I knew were deceiving me,” he related to Reb Chaim Welcher of Kiryat Vizhnitz. “And I don’t regret it. When a person asks for *tzedakah*, he is usually needy, even if he is lying.”

In his greatness, he would pretend to not know anything...

### Following the Rebbe’s Guidance

Reb Shmuel’s son, Reb Yitzchak Beirach, shared: As per the instructions of the Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz, my father would distribute *tzedakah* freely, no questions asked. Often we were stunned at the tremendous sums he distributed to anyone who simply asked.

One sentence from the Rebbe was enough for him to comply, with the unquestioning *emunas chachamim* he displayed all his life. Due to this practice, he merited to give truly needy people and to support them for many years.

I am aware of many families that would have never appealed for help. Yet, it was ordained from Hashem that my father find out about their plight and he was able to support them discreetly.