



CHESED..

JUST DO IT!

Source Materials
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LEVITICUS (25) (1 זקריט) (כג)

וכי ימוך

אחיו ומטה ידו עמו והחזקת בו גר ותושב וחי עמו: אל תקח מאתו גֶשֶׁר ותרבית ויראת מאלהיו וחי אחיו עמו: את כסף לא תתן לו בגֶשֶׁר ובתרבית לא תתן אכלה: אני יהוה אלהיכם אשר הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים לתת לכם את ארץ פְּנֵעַן להיות לכם לאלהים: וכי ימוך אחיו עמו ונמכר לך לא תעבד בו עבד עבד:

³⁵ If your brother becomes impoverished* and his means falter in your proximity, you shall strengthen him — proselyte or resident — so that he can live with you. ³⁶ Do not take from him interest and increase; and you shall fear your God — and let your brother live with you. ³⁷ Do not give him your money for interest, and do not give your food for increase. ³⁸ I am HASHEM, your God, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, to be God unto you. ³⁹ If your brother becomes impoverished with you and is sold to you; you shall not work him with slave labor. ⁴⁰

DEUTERONOMY (15) (2 דברים) (16)

כי יהיה בקרב אביון מאחד אחיו באחד שעריה בארצה אשר יהוה אלהיו נתן לך לא תאמץ את לבבך ולא תקפץ את ידך מאחיו האביון: כי פתח תפתח את ידך לו והעבט תעביטנו ודי מחסרו אשר יחסר לו: השמר לך פן יהיה דבר עם לבבך בליעל לאמר קרבה שנת השבע שנת השמטה ורעה עינך באחיו האביון ולא תתן לו וקרא עליה אל יהוה והיה בקרב חטא: נתון תתן לו ולא יבע לבבך בתתך לו כי בגלל הדבר הזה יברכה יהוה אלהיך בכל מעשה ובכל משלח ידך: כי לא יחדל אביון מקרב הארץ על פן אנכי מצוה לאמר פתח תפתח את ידך לאחיו לעניו ולאביון בארצה:

⁷ If there shall be a destitute person among you, any of your brethren in any of your cities, in the Land that HASHEM, your God, gives you, you shall not harden your heart or close your hand against your destitute brother. ⁸ Rather, you shall open* your hand to him; you shall lend him his requirement, whatever is lacking to him. ⁹ Beware lest there be a lawless thought in your heart, saying, "The seventh year approaches, the remission year," and you will look malevolently upon your destitute brother and refuse to give him — then he may appeal against you to HASHEM, and it will be a sin upon you. ¹⁰ You shall surely give him, and let your heart not feel bad when you give him, for in return for this matter, HASHEM, your God, will bless you in all your deeds and in your every undertaking. ¹¹ For destitute people will not cease to exist within the Land; therefore I command you, saying, "You shall surely open your hand to your brother, to your poor, and to your destitute in your Land."

אִם־כִּסְּף | תִּלְוֶה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־הָעֵנִי עִמָּךְ לֹא־תִהְיֶה לוֹ בְּנִשָּׁה לֹא־
תְּשִׂימוּן עָלָיו נִשְׂאָה: אִם־חָבֵל תִּחְבֵּל שְׁלֵמַת רֵעֶךָ עַד־כִּי הַשְּׂמֶשׁ תִּשְׁבָּנוּ
לוֹ: כִּי הוּא כְּסוּתוֹ לְבִדָּה הוּא שְׂמֵלְתוֹ לְעָרֹ בַּמָּה יִשְׁכָּב וְהִידָּה כִּי־יִצְעַק
אֵלַי וְשָׁמַעְתִּי כִּי־חֲנֹן אָנִי:

²⁴ When * you lend money * to My people, to the poor person who is with you, do not act toward him as a creditor; do not lay interest upon him. ²⁵ If you take your fellow's garment as security, until sunset shall you return it to him. ²⁶ For it alone is his clothing, it is his garment for his skin — in what should he lie down? — so it will be that if he cries out to Me, I shall listen, for I am compassionate. ²⁷ You shall not revile God, and you shall not curse a leader among your people.

יִלְוֶה (4) RASHI

Look at — הוּא מִסְתַּכֵּל בְּעַצְמָךְ כְּאִלּוּ אַתָּה הָעֵנִי — THE POOR PERSON WHO IS WITH YOU. אֶת הָעֵנִי עִמָּךְ
yourself as if you are the poor person.³

TALMUD (5) מִלּוֹ קָל (11)
BAVA BASRA (100)

The Gemara continues to discuss the merits of giving charity:
It was taught in a Baraisa: R' MEIR WAS WONT TO SAY: — THE LITIGANT⁶¹ HAS an argument TO ANSWER YOU AND TELL YOU, and it is the following: IF YOUR GOD IS truly A LOVER OF THE POOR, FOR WHAT REASON⁶² DOES HE NOT SUSTAIN THEM? Since God does not provide for them, they must have fallen into His disfavor; hence, you Jews certainly should not assist them with gifts of charity!

R' Meir provides us with the correct reply to this argument:
However, you should SAY TO HIM: — God does not cause the poor to suffer because they are wicked; rather, He impoverishes people SO THAT WE MAY BE SAVED, THROUGH giving THEM charity, FROM THE JUDGMENT OF GEHINNOM.⁶³ Thus, the poor may even be righteous individuals; they suffer poverty for our benefit!

The Gemara relates that this argument was, in fact, once advanced by a Roman general:
— And this very question the wicked Turanus Rufus⁶⁴ asked of R' Akiva: אם — If your God is a lover of the poor, — אֶלֶהֵיכֶם אוֹהֵב עֲנִיִּים הוּא — for what reason does He not sustain them?

R' Akiva offered the reply previously mentioned:
[R' Akiva] said to [Turanus Rufus]: God makes people needy in order that, through our giving them charity, we may be saved from the

judgment of Gehinnom.

Turanus Rufus took issue with this response:
[Turanus Rufus] said to [R' Akiva]: On the contrary! — This giving of charity is what actually condemns you to be punished in Gehinnom!

Turanus Rufus explained himself allegorically:
I shall illustrate this concept for you with a parable. — To what is this matter similar? — It is analogous to the case of a human king who was angry at his servant and confined [the servant] in prison — and ordered that no one feed him or give him drink. — And one man subsequently went and fed [the servant] and gave him drink in defiance of the king's order. — When the king hears about this man's actions, is he not angry at [the man]? — And you Jews are called servants of God, — as it says: *For unto Me the children of Israel are servants!*⁶⁵ Hence, by giving charity you actually violate the edict of God, your King, and so incur the judgment of Gehinnom.

R' Akiva countered with a parable of his own:
R' Akiva said to [Turanus Rufus]: I shall illustrate the situation for you with a different parable. — To what is this matter of giving charity similar? — It is analogous to the case of a human king who was angry at his son and confined [the son] in prison — and ordered that no one feed him or give him drink. — And one man subsequently went and fed [the son] and gave him drink, thereby saving his life. — When the king hears about this man's actions, does he not send [the man] a gift?⁶⁶ — And we Jews are called sons of God, — as it is written: *Sons you are to HASHEM, your God.* Thus, although imprisoned in exile, the Jewish people are still God's children,⁶⁷ and one who sustains the poor among them with gifts of charity earns God's gratitude and is thus absolved from the judgment of Gehinnom.

[שלא נתבע חוב מעני שאין לו כסף לפרע]

וְשֹׁמְרֵינוּ מִלְחַבֵּעַ הַחוּב מִן הַלוּוֶה בְּעַת שְׂדַרְעָא שְׂאִינוּ יָכוֹל לְפָרֵעַ חוּבוֹ לְפִי שְׂאִין לוֹ, שְׂנֹאֲמַר: לֹא תִהְיֶה לוֹ כְּנֹשֶׁה. וְדַע כִּי זֹאת הַמְּנִיעָה תְּכַלֵּל גַּם בֵּן שְׂלֹא לְהַלוּוֶה בְּרַבִּית לִישְׂרָאֵל.

מִשְׁרֵי הַמְּצִנָּה לְקַבֵּעַ לָנוּ מִדַּת הַחֶסֶד וְהַחֲמִלָּה, וְכִשְׂיִהִי קַבּוּעוֹת בְּנוֹ אֶז נִהְיֶה רְאִיין לְקַבֵּלַת הַטּוֹבָה וְיִשְׁלַם חֶפְץ הַשֵּׁם בְּנוֹ שְׂחַפֵּץ הַשֵּׁם לְהַטִּיב בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וּבְבָא.

מִדְּיֵי הַמְּצִנָּה, מֵה שְׂאֲמָרוֹ וְזָרוּנָם לְבִרְכָה: מִנֵּין לְנוֹשֶׁה בְּחִבְרוֹ מִנֵּה יוֹדֵעַ שְׂאִין לוֹ שְׂאֲסוּר לְעֹבֵר נֶגְדַּ בֵּיתוֹ, שְׂנֹאֲמַר "לֹא תִהְיֶה לוֹ כְּנֹשֶׁה". וּמֵה שְׂאֲמָרוֹ גַּם בֵּן בְּמִכְיָלָא, "לֹא תִהְיֶה לוֹ כְּנֹשֶׁה" שְׂלֹא יִרְאֶה לוֹ כְּכֹל זְמַן, וְדַבְּרִים אַחֲרֵים הַנֶּאֱמָרִים בְּעִנְיַן הַזֶּה בְּמִצְיָא וּבְמִקּוּמוֹת בְּתַלְמוּד.

וְנִהְיֶה בְּדַבְּרֵים וּנְקַבּוּת בְּכֹל מְקוֹם וּבְכֹל זְמַן. וְהַעוֹבֵר עָלֶיהָ וְתֵבַע הַלְוָאתוֹ לְחִבְרוֹ יוֹדֵעַ שְׂאִין לוֹ וְתוֹבְעוֹ כְּדִי לְצַעְרוֹ עוֹבֵר עַל לָאוּ זֶה, וְהוּא כְּעוֹבֵר עַל מִצְוֹת מְלֶךְ.

וְהַחֲמִלָּה הַזֶּה (6) SEFER
'io 'o HA'CHINUCH
(Mitzvah 67)

[NOT TO DUN A POOR MAN UNABLE TO PAY HIS DEBT]
67 that we were prohibited from demanding payment of a debt by a borrower at a time when we know that he cannot pay the debt because he does not have the means—for it is stated, *you shall not be to him as a creditor* (Exodus 22:24). And know that this prohibition also includes [an injunction] not to lend money at interest to a Jew.¹

At the root of the precept lies the purpose to firmly inculcate the qualities of kindness and compassion in us. When they will be firmly set within us, we will be ready, worthy to receive good reward, and what the Eternal Lord desires for us will be fulfilled—for it is the Lord's wish to do good [for us] in this world and the world-to-come.

Among the laws of the precept there is what our Sages of blessed memory said:² How do we know that if someone seeks to collect a *maneh*³ from his fellow and he knows the other does not have the means [to pay it], he is forbidden to pass by opposite the other's house?—for it is stated, *you shall not be to him as a creditor*. Then there is what they said, further, in the Midrash *Mechilta*: "you shall not be to him as a creditor"—[this means] that he should not appear in his sight all the time.⁴ Other points are stated about this subject in the tractate *Bava M'tzi'a* and other places in the Talmud.

It applies to both man and woman, in every place and in every time. If a person transgresses it and demands payment of his loan from his fellow knowing that he has not the means [to pay it], and yet he duns him in order to make him suffer, he violates this negative precept; and he is as a person who violates the commandment of a king.⁵

רבי סימון בשם רבי אלעזר אמר בה שיטה חרי מי הן
 שלא עשו חסד עם מי שלא היו צריכין לחסד עמוני
 ומואבי עם ישראל דכתיב (דברים כג. ה) 'על דבר אשר לא
 קדמו אתכם בלחם ובמים' וכי צריכין היו להם ישראל
 והלוא כל אותן ארבעים שנה שהיו ישראל במדבר הנה
 הפן יורד להן והבאר עולה והשליח מצוי להם וענני כבוד
 מקיפין אותם ועמוד ענן נוסע לפניהם אלא דרך ארץ
 הוא הבא מן הדרך מקדימין להם במאכל ובמשתה מה
 פרע להן הקדוש ברוך הוא מתוך כך (שם ש. ד) 'לא יבא
 עמוני ומואבי והרי דברים קל וחמר ומה אם מי שלא
 עשו חסד עם מי שאינו צריך חסד ראה מה פרע להם
 שפרעם מי שאינו עושה חסד עם מי שצריך חסד על אחת
 כמה וכמה

R. Simeon in the name of R. Eliezer suggested another line of thought in this connection. Who are they that did not show kindness to those who did not need kindness? The Ammonites and Moabites to Israel; as it is written, *Because they met you not with bread and with water* (Deut. xxiii, 5). Now did Israel need them? Is it not a fact that during all those forty years that Israel spent in the wilderness the manna fell for them, the well came up for them, the quails were provided for them, the clouds of glory encircled them and the pillar of cloud journeyed before them? Yes, but courtesy requires that if people come from a journey they should be welcomed with food and drink. How did the Holy One, blessed be He, punish them? As a result of this: *An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord* (ib. 4). Now does not this afford an inference *a minori ad majus*? If in the case of those who did not show kindness to such as did not need it, we see what retribution He paid them; how much more in the case of one who does not show kindness to such as need kindness!

1:15 Pirkei Avos 8:10 ברייתא אגו (16:א)

[טו] שמאי אומר: עשה תורתך קבע, אמר מעט ועשה הרבה, והוי מקבל את כל האדם בסבר פנים יפות.

[15] *Shammai says: Make your Torah study a fixed practice; say little and do much; and receive everyone with a cheerful face.*

4 אגו ברייתא (17:א)

ד והוי מקבל את כל האדם בסבר פנים יפות כיצד מלמד שאם נתן אדם לחבירו כל מתנות טובות שבעולם ופניו (זעומות) [כבושים] בארץ מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו לא נתן לו כלום אבל המקבל את חבירו בסבר פנים יפות אפי' לא נתן לו כלום מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו נתן לו כל מתנות טובות שבעולם:

(6) Talmud Bava Basra 9b

And R' Yitzchak also said: Anyone who gives even a *perutah* [a small copper coin] to a pauper is blessed with six Heavenly blessings. And one who comforts [a pauper] with words is blessed with eleven Heavenly blessings.^[40]

(11) SHULCHAN ARUCH

ג. יכל המרחם על העניים הקב"ה מרחם עליו:
 הנה [ד] ויתן כבודו אל לנו אכיל מנהג כל מה פרישותו מהקניא וכח שאל מנהג שבת'ס יאמר שיהיה כך הוא יאמר שיהיה מייס [ד] גם יאן אל לנו כי כח נגלה כחור נעלה וסוף כבודו הוא לו נו או ק כנו ליהי מזה זו וכל ספרים על אברים מרחמין עליו (מלשון סוד):

(67b) Talmud Kesubos (12)

The Rabbis taught in a Baraisa: "Open up your hands, etc. [and provide for] THE EXTENT OF HIS NEEDS. This teaches that YOU ARE COMMANDED REGARDING [A PAUPER] TO SUPPORT HIM, i.e. to provide him with his basic needs, BUT YOU ARE NOT COMMANDED TO MAKE HIM RICH. The verse continues: WHATEVER IS LACKING TO HIM. EVEN if he is lacking a HORSE TO RIDE UPON AND A SERVANT TO RUN BEFORE HIM, you must provide these for him. THEY SAID ABOUT HILLEL THE ELDER THAT HE ONCE TOOK FOR A PAUPER FROM AN ARISTOCRATIC FAMILY AN ARISTOCRATIC FAMILY HORSE TO RIDE UPON AND A SERVANT TO RUN BEFORE HIM. ON ONE OCCASION [HILLEL] COULD NOT FIND A SERVANT TO RUN BEFORE [THE PAUPER], SO [HILLEL] himself RAN BEFORE HIM FOR THREE MILIN.^[19]

(13) RAMBAM

ג. לפי מה שחסר העני אתה מצווה ליתן לו. אם אין לו כסות מכסין אותו. אין לו כלי בית קונין לו כלי בית. אין לו אשה משיאין לו אשה ואם היתה אשה משיאין אותה לאיש. אפילו היה דרכו של זה העני לרכוב על הסוס ועבד רץ לפניו והעני וירד מנכסיו קונין לו סוס לרכוב עליו ועבד לרוץ לפניו. שני די מחסורו אשר יחסר לו. ומצווה אתה להשלים חסרונו ואין אתה מצווה לעשרו:

ז שמנה מעלות יש בצדקה זו למעלה מזו. מעלה גדולה שאין למעלה ממנה זה המחזיק בידי ישראל שמך ונותן לו מתנה או הלואה או עושה עמו שותפות או ממציא לו מלאכה כדי לחזק את ידו עד שלא יצטרך לבריות ולא ישאל. ועל זה נאמר והחזקת בו גר ותושב וחי עמך כלומר החזק בו שלא יפול ויצטרך: ח פחות מזה הנותן צדקה לעניים ולא ידע למי נתן ולא ידע העני ממי לקח. שהרי זו מצוה לשמה. כגון לשכת חשיים שהיתה במקדש שהיו הצדיקים נותנים בה בחשאי והעניים בני טובים מתפרנסין ממנה בחשאי וקרוב לזה הנותן לתוך קופה של צדקה. ולא יתן אדם לתוך קופה של צדקה אלא אם כן יודע שהממונה נאמן וחכם ויודע לנהוג בה כשורה כחנניה בן תרדיון: ט פחות מזה שידע הנותן למי יתן ולא ידע העני ממי לקח. כגון גדולי החכמים שהיו הולכין בסתר ומשליכין המעות בפתחי העניים. וכזה ראוי לעשות ומעלה טובה היא אם אין הממונין בצדקה נוהגין כשורה: י פחות מזה שידע העני ממי נטל ולא ידע הנותן. כגון גדולי החכמים שהיו צוררים המעות בסדיניהן ומפשילין לאחוריהן ובאין העניים ונוטלין כדי שלא יהיה להן בושה: יא פחות מזה שיתן לעני בידו קודם שישאל יב פחות מזה שיתן לו אחר שישאל יג פחות מזה שיתן לו פחות מן הראוי

בסבר פנים יפות יד פחות מזה שיתן לו בעצב טו גדולי החכמים היו נותנים פרוטה לעני קודם כל תפלה ואחר כך מתפללין שני אני בצדק אחזה פניך:

(86) SUKKA (15) סוכה (15)

בשלשה דברים – The Rabbis taught in a Baraisa: תנו רבנן
גדולה גמילות חסדים יותר מן הצדקה – ACTS OF KINDNESS ARE
GREATER THAN CHARITY REGARDING THREE MATTERS: צדקה
בממונו – (1) CHARITY IS performed only WITH ONE'S PROPERTY,

– whereas ACTS OF KINDNESS
ARE performed BOTH IN PERSON AND WITH HIS PROPERTY,^[36]
גמילות חסדים – (2) CHARITY IS given only TO THE POOR, צדקה לעניים
– whereas ACTS OF KINDNESS ARE
performed BOTH WITH THE POOR AND WITH THE RICH. צדקה
לחיים – (3) CHARITY IS performed only WITH THE LIVING, גמילות
חסדים – whereas ACTS OF KINDNESS ARE
performed BOTH WITH THE LIVING AND WITH THE DECEASED.^[37]

(16) 1810

אין צדקה משתלמת אלא – And R' Elazar said: וְאָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר
– Charity is rewarded only according to the
kindness with which it is performed,^[34] שְׂזָאָמַר „זָרְעוּ לָכֶם
– as it says: *Sow for yourselves charity
and reap according to kindness.*^[35]

MICHA (6:8) (מִיכָה) מִיכָה (ו' ח')

עָמִי מִה־עָשִׂיתִי לָךְ וּמִה הִלַּאתִיךָ עֲנֵה
 בִּי כִי הֵעֵלְתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּמִבֵּית עַבְדִּים פְּדִיתִיךָ וְאֶשְׁלַח
 לְפָנֶיךָ אֶת־מֹשֶׁה אֶהְרֹן וּמִרְיָם: עָמִי זָכַר־נָא מִה־יַעַץ בָּלַק מֶלֶךְ
 מוֹאָב וּמִה־עָנָה אֹתוֹ בִּלְעָם בֶּן־בְּעֹר מִן־הַשְּׁטִיִּם עַד־הַגִּלְגָּל לְמַעַן
 דַּעַת צְדָקוֹת יְהוָה: בְּמַה אֶקְדָּם יְהוָה אֲבַף לְאֱלֹהֵי מְרוֹם הָאֲקָדָמֶנּוּ
 בְּעוֹלוֹת בַּעֲגָלִים בְּגֵי שָׁנָה: הִירְצָה יְהוָה בְּאֵלֶיךָ אֵילִים בְּרַבְבוֹת
 גִּחְלֵי־שָׁמֶן הֲאֵתָן בְּכוֹרֵי פִשְׁעֵי פְרִי בִטְנֵי חַטָּאת נַפְשִׁי: הֲגִיד לָךְ אֲדָם
 מִה־טוֹב וּמִה־יְהוָה דוֹרֵשׁ מִמֶּךָ כִּי אִם־עֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט וְאַהֲבַת חֶסֶד
 וְהִצַּנֵּעַ לִבְת עִם־אֱלֹהֶיךָ: 8

³ My people, what [wrong] did I do to you and how did I tire you? Testify against Me! ⁴ For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage; and I sent Moses, Aaron and Miriam before you. ⁵ My people, hear, now, what Balak, king of Moab, schemed, * and what Balaam son of Beor answered him, [and all the events] from Shittim to Gilgal* — in order to recognize the righteous acts of HASHEM. ⁶ [You ask,] With what shall I approach HASHEM, humble myself before God on high? Shall I approach Him with burnt-offerings, or with calves in their first year? ⁷ Will HASHEM be appeased by thousands of rams or with tens of thousands of streams of oil? * Shall I give over my firstborn [to atone for] my transgression, or the fruit of my belly [for] the sin of my soul? ⁸ He has told you, O man, what is good! * What does HASHEM require of you but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?

חֶסֶד חֶסֶד (ח) AHAVAS CHESED

כַּמָּה יֵשׁ לּוֹ לְאָדָם לְהִתְדַבֵּק תָּמִיד בַּמֶּדֶת
 הַחֶסֶד וּבְדַבְרֵי בִקְרָא [מִיכָה ו' ח']
 הֲגִיד לָךְ אֲדָם מִה טוֹב וּמִה ד' דוֹרֵשׁ מִמֶּךָ כ"א
 עֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט וְאַהֲבַת חֶסֶד וְגו' וּלְכַאוֹרָה הִיָּה
 לּוֹ לְהַכְתוּב לֵאמֹר כ"א עֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט וְחֶסֶד אוֹ
 אֲהוּב מִשְׁפָּט וְחֶסֶד וְגַם מֵאֵי לְשׁוֹן הֲגִיד לָךְ
 אֲדָם וְגו' דְּמִשְׁמַע דְּבַא הַכְּתוּב לְגַלוֹת דְּבַר
 שְׁלֵא יִרַע הָאָדָם מֵעַצְמוֹ

How greatly should one cling to the virtue of *chesed*! The extent of the required attachment is defined in the verse (Micah 6.8): "It has been told to you, O man, what is good and what God requires of you: Only to act justly and to love *chesed* (kindness)..." At first sight, it would seem that it should have been sufficient for Scripture either to read: "to act with justice and kindness" or else "to love justice and kindness." Moreover, by using the expression, "It has been told to you..." Scripture must have intended to convey an idea which man would be unable to discover on his own.

Now we may proceed to understand the verse, "It has been told to you . . ." quoted above. When a person devotes all his energy to the acquisition of property, and takes no care that his gains be free of the taint of robbery, forceful expropriation, dishonest dealing and the like, he may delude himself into believing that, at least for the present, he is doing himself good by his exertions, and that the reckoning will only come at the end, in the world above. The prophet, therefore, enlightened us by saying: "It has been told to you, O man, what is good." He intended to convey that, contrary to the common belief that it is good for man to amass wealth, what is really to his monetary advantage is to act justly — to scrutinize all his transactions so as to ensure that his profits were acquired through means approved by Torah law. In this way, he will make certain that his possessions remain with him. This is what Scripture means by "only to do justice."

Next the prophet adds, "to love *chesed*." He intends to convey that no one should deem it sufficient to ensure that his possessions are free from the taint of dishonesty, and believe that they will, therefore, remain with him, and that good will be bestowed on him on this account. He is also to dispense kindness and charity proportionate to his means. Otherwise, God forbid, his wealth might gradually be reduced, as is related in *Kethuvoth* 66b concerning Nakdimon ben Gurion. (See *ibid*.)

As for the choice of words, "to act justly and *love chesed*," rather than "to act with justice and *chesed*," the prophet has thereby drawn our attention to a new and important lesson, to an area where almost everyone is at fault. Indeed, we all perform acts of kindness. But we are kind only under pressure. When a person in distress, needing our favor, turns to us once, and again a second time, we find it difficult to avoid him, so we extend help to him. Even then we act not at all willingly or kind-heartedly. So the prophet exhorts us: "What does God require of you: only to *love* kindness. You should not think that by your occasional acts of kindness you have discharged your duty completely." Instead, one must possess a *love* for this mitzvah.

Obviously a great difference lies between what a person does because of pressure and what he does out of love. We see how we, ourselves, act towards our children, in pursuit of food and clothing, in marriage, and in all that is motivated by love. Here every person ranges far beyond his duty. A father seeks to bring benefit to his son, even when the latter has not asked for it. He is happy and in good spirits when he does so. So in this case, if a person really loves this trait of *chesed*, he will search for the ways and means to do good to his fellow man, and he will act generously.