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## ***Necessary Repairs***

A number of years ago in Israel, two *yeshiva* students decided to take a trip to the north in order to visit a number of the gravesites of the righteous that are situated in the Tsfat area. It was a nice day, and they were able to get hold of a decent car, so they decided to drive.

Things were going smoothly until they noticed that their thermostat was running a bit higher than it should. Fearing that the car would overheat, they pulled over on the side of the road to see what was wrong.

Neither one of these students was well-versed in auto-mechanics, so they attempted to wave down anyone who could help them. A number of motorists pulled over and attempted to solve their problem, to no avail. Apparently, they would need the services of a qualified mechanic. In other words they were stuck.

Suddenly, a car pulled up and out came a man adorned with beard, *peyot* and black *kippah*, and dressed in full chasidic garb. He asked, "What seems to be the problem?"

"Our car is overheating, and we have no idea what is wrong," they replied.

"Let me see what I can do," he man said.

He promptly removed his long frock robe and lay down on the ground beneath the car, searching for the trouble spot. After a few minutes, he emerged and said, "I see the problem. Your fan belt tore and must be replaced."

"What should we do?" the *yeshiva* boys asked.

"Not to worry," the man answered, as he returned to his car and brought out a giant tool chest with car repair tools. He then opened his trunk and took out a brand new fan belt. After completing the repair, he packed up his car and was prepared to leave.

"How much do we owe you?" the boys asked.

"Nothing," he replied. "I did it as a kindness. I enjoy helping people out."

"Well, we cannot force you to take money for the time that you invested, but what about the part? That is an expensive part - why should you pay for it?"

"It's not a problem. I must do this my way," he replied. "Let me tell you my story and you will understand why.

"I grew up in a totally secular environment, shunning the religious way of life. I was a highly successful car mechanic with a thriving business. Since I knew cars inside-out, I would diagnose a problem which the owner had no clue existed, or I would charge inflated prices for the repairs that I performed.

"One day, I decided to abandon my life of pursuit of money and pleasure. Seeking meaning and purpose, I decided to return to my true Jewish roots. I prepared myself to live a life completely committed to Torah and *mitzvah* observance.

"As I advanced in commitment, one thing kept gnawing at me. During my years as a mechanic I had been running a lucrative business, but not in a very honest way. I was cheating my customers with exorbitant prices, often for work that was unnecessary. How could my *teshuva* ('return') become complete until I repaired all of the petty and often not-so-petty theft?

"I went to my Rebbe, who was guiding me on my journey of return to Torah and asked his advice. He told me that since there was no way of identifying my victims, my *teshuva* would have to be of a general, all-encompassing nature. He advised that I should offer my expertise to whomever was in need, free of charge.

"So this is what I do. Twice a week, I cruise the highways, looking for people in trouble. I carry with me a complete set of tools and many vital parts. Whenever I notice someone in need, I offer my services. This is my *teshuva*. Today, you have enabled me to draw one step closer to the One above.

**Thank you!"**

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Source: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from *Peninim on the Torah*, as printed in the *Jersey Shore Torah Bulletin* and circulated in *Shabbos Stories for the Parsha*.

Connection: Years ago he was a lone "Chasidic car-repair angel." Now there is an organization with branches throughout Israel called *YEDIDIM*, with a central dispatcher who will send the nearest volunteer to help anyone in distress on the roads who calls and asks for aid, *free of charge*. On the day that I had to decide which story to use for my e-mail story list, I had to make use of Yedidim's services. I called the number and *three* minutes later someone arrived!