



From the desk of
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Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

OHR

Parashat Re'eh

HAMELECH

The Tremendous *Segula* that Saves One from Suffering and Assures Health and Success

Our *parasha* states (*Devarim* 15:7-11) "If there shall be a poor person amongst you, any of your brothers in any of your cities, in your Land that Hashem, your G-d, gives you, you shall not harden your heart or close your hand against your poor brother. Rather, you shall open your hand to him you shall lend him [what he] needs - whatever he is lacking. Beware, lest there be a wayward thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year approaches, the *shemita* year,' and you will look unfavorably upon your poor brother and refuse to give him; then he may appeal against you to Hashem, and it will be a sin upon you. For poor 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 poor in your Land.'" In *Parashat Behar* (25:35) it states, "When your brother becomes impoverished, you shall give him a hand and strengthen him..." "Furthermore, in the *Vayikra Rabba Parashat Behar* (34a) it says, "When your friend becomes impoverished' ... "What is said about this person? 'Fortunate is the one who gives thought (*maskil*) to the poor person. On an evil day, Hashem will save him'" (*Tehillim* 41:1).

Questions

1. Why does the Torah write, "If there shall be a poor person amongst you (*be'cha*)"? The Torah could have simply written, "If there shall be a poor person." The word "*becha*" seems unnecessary.
2. Why does the Torah say that if someone doesn't give charity "it will be a sin?" Isn't it very challenging to give away hard-earned money?
3. What does the *Midrash* mean when it connects the *pasuk* in *Vayikra* to the *pasuk* in *Tehillim*?

Perspective on Charity Collectors

Most people think charity collectors are a nuisance. They disturb a person when he prays or when he learns, at work and at *simachot*. They are especially bothersome when they knock on his door at home and disturb his peace and quiet. However, this perspective comes from a person thinking that he is the one who is doing the collector a favor. Therefore, he is amazed - what a *chutzpa* it is to disturb me at this time?! However, our holy Torah teaches us a different perspective. A person must contemplate why the circumstances are such, that he is in a favorable position while the collector is forced to beg for money. His good fortune is not due to his wisdom or his ability, as Shlomo Hamelech has already said, "Not to the wise man comes bread ... a wise man shouldn't take pride in his



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wisdom... and a talented man in his ability." Rather his good fortune comes from Hashem's decree, and the situation, *chas ve'shalom*, could be reversed. Since this is the case, a person should thank Hashem that he is in a position where he can help and need not be helped. What is the proper way of showing Hashem gratitude? He should use the money that Hashem has given him to act mercifully, and he should help Hashem's creations by giving charity and doing kindness with joy. Moreover, he should understand that the person who turns to him and asks for money is really doing *him* a favor. If a person would know what misfortunes are decreed upon him, he would pray that Hashem would give him this merit to save himself. Hashem, in His great mercy, prepares the cure before the illness and sends a person the merit of charity, and gives the person a chance to save himself from the evil that awaits him in the future, *chas ve'shalom*. As Shlomo Hamelech has said, "*Gomel nafsho ish chessed*, "one who does kindness with his friend, [in reality] does himself a kindness."

Charity Assures Life

The *Gemara* in *Masechet Shabbat* (156b) says that charity saves one from death. It does not save from just a cruel death, but from death itself. This teaches us that Hashem has planted a tremendous *segula* in the world – charity – which has the power to save us from death. The

Maharsha explains that the *Gemara* is telling us that not only somebody who is supposed to die a cruel death will be saved in the merit of his charity and die a regular death, but even one who is supposed to die will be saved completely. He will not have to die at all in the merit of his charity.

The Reward for *Tzedaka* is Long Life

The *Gemara* in *Baba Batra* (11a) relates how the following occurred to Binyamin *Ha'tzaddik*: Binyamin *Ha'tzaddik* was in charge of distributing a charity fund. One time a woman and her children came to him during a time of famine and told him, "Support me." He told her that there was no money left in the charity fund. She told him, "If you don't feed us, a woman and her seven children will die." He got up and provided for her from his own private funds. Soon thereafter, Binyamin *Ha'tzaddik* fell ill and was on death's doorstep. However, the ministering angels said in front of Hashem, "Master of the World, You said that whoever sustains one Jewish soul is as if he sustained the whole entire world. Binyamin, who sustained a woman and her seven children should die at such a young age?!" [It is taught] that 21 one years were added on to Binyamin *Ha'tzaddik's* life.

The Angel of *Tzedaka* Annuls All Decrees From Upon Him

The *Midrash Zuta* (*Shir HaShirim* (Bober) *parasha aleph*) adds that everyone who gives charity, even



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though he sins and an angel should have power [to punish him], the merit of his charity precedes the angel and does not allow the angel to have any power over the person. Moreover, the charity appeases for the person and says [to the angel], "I precede you and my authority precedes yours."

Hashem's Name is Sanctified by Giving *Tzedaka*

In *Baba Batra* 10b it states that Shlomo HaMelech was asked how far reaching the power of *tzedaka* is. He answered that they should see what his father David had said in *Tehillim* (112:9), "He distributes to the poor, his righteousness endures forever; his pride will be exalted with honor." It continues that even the Name of Hashem is sanctified only with *tzedaka*, as the *pasuk* states (*Yeshaya* 5:16), "And the Holy G-d is sanctified with *tzedaka*." Additionally, in the merit of *tzedaka*, the redemption is brought closer. This is as the *pasuk* states, "So said Hashem, 'Observe justice and perform *tzedaka*, for My salvation is soon to come and My *tzedaka* is soon to be revealed.'" And the *pasuk* in *Yeshaya* states (1:27) "Tzion will be redeemed with justice and its captives with *tzedaka*."

The Redemption and Building of Yerushalayim Will be in the Merit of *Tzedaka*

This is especially prevalent now, in the *Ikvet* *De'Meshicha*, the time before the arrival of the

Mashiach, when we are all eagerly waiting for the redemption and the rebuilding of *Yerushalayim*. The Gemara states (*Sanhedrin* 98a), "Says Ulah: Yerushalayim will be redeemed only in the merit of *tzedaka*. This is as the *pasuk* states, 'Tzion will be redeemed with justice and its captives with *tzedaka*.'"

Words of Mussar

We have learned that every *tzedaka* or act of kindness that one does with his fellow, is actually to his benefit. For by doing so, he merits protection from all illnesses, harsh-decrees, and the evil eye. He will merit living many years, and it is even a special *segula* for success in business. Who would know about such a wonderful *segula* – donating a few coins and meriting a salvation for his entire family – and not do it happily? Instead of going to all sorts of places looking for *segulot* and spending much money in the process, let him fulfill the oft-mentioned dictum of our Sages. Every day we recite in *shacharit*, "*Zoreia tzedakot matzmiach yeshuot*, He plants *tzedakot* and salvations blossom." However, man lacks faith, and he therefore does not fully believe that his actions have a direct effect on his life. He is therefore bothered by *tzedaka* collectors who bother him and try to get as much money as they can.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Mordechai Malka