



### Charity, after Pesach too

14 Iyar, 5747-1987

“And when you reap the harvest of your land...”

A well-known question: why does the Torah juxtapose the laws concerning the festivals with the requirement to give *tzedakah* from the harvest — to give to the poor the “corners of the field,” any dropped sheaves, etc.?

The commentators explain that there is a message here. Just as on Yom Tov, “God’s Festivals,” we are obliged to bring joy to the Levi, the needy, the widow and the stranger — to “rejoice on God’s Festival” — so, too, we are told: even after Pesach has concluded, as well as the fifty days of *Sefiras HaOmer* leading to Shavuot — we must not think that the obligation to give to “the widow, the Levi, and the stranger” has also ended.

The verse immediately qualifies the discussion of the festival and informs us that “when you reap the harvest of your land,” you must continue your efforts to bring joy and gifts to the poor.

Beyond this explanation there must be a lesson, as well, enriching our approach to the world.

We observe clearly that as Pesach approaches, people begin their preparations “thirty days in advance” and become quite involved with giving *tzedakah*, as the Alter Rebbe writes in the *Shulchan Aruch*.

His discussion focuses on the time of the Temple, when thirty days of preparation were required to review the laws pertaining to the sacrifices and the animals to be brought, as he discusses in the *Shulchan Aruch*. And he immediately follows that with the matter of distributing funds for Pesach, *matzos* and *tzedakah* a month preceding the festival, according to Jewish custom.

But once the festival season has passed, we are cautioned and reminded anew: although it may seem that you have donated so generously for Pesach — enough to sustain the needy long after Pesach; and it may not only seem so, but actually be the case — you must know that after Pesach and its “seven weeks” have ended, you must now begin once more to give *tzedakah* with enthusiasm.

Since “you have reaped the harvest of your land” — God has blessed your land and given you abundant sustenance — you must remember to practice “righteousness and justice.” As we find with Avraham: “justice” first, then “righteousness.” The Alter Rebbe explained



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Avraham's actions: first he made an account of how much he deserved — "justice" — and then he performed "righteousness," *tzedakah*, with a far greater sum than had he not made his accounting.

So, too, is the Torah teaching us, Avraham's descendants: exercise "justice," and donate the remainder to *tzedakah* — "righteousness."

And the donors' names should be publicized: when a Jew distributes *tzedakah* only privately, others may observe him and "learn" not to support causes, believing mistakenly that they are inappropriate for people of stature!

Especially if one is religious and has a full beard, and God has blessed him with wealth and distinction — though his prominence is higher among businessmen than among Torah scholars — nevertheless, he should give, and do so openly. In other matters, where "one does not know what is in another's heart," modesty is acceptable. But this is not so with *tzedakah*, which affects many others around him.

Although one may be "complete" in some areas — as mentioned, he may have a full beard — that only highlights the problem. For when it comes to a collection for *tzedakah*, he is not to be found. When it comes to publishing texts to spread Judaism, he is absent. Then, when his wife questions his actions, he cries, "Modesty!"

What is gained by such modesty?

Give openly; there will be enough left over to give privately, as well.

But his conduct reveals his real wish. When he wants to, he gives. When they call him up for the Torah reading, he expects the prestigious portion; in *shul* he sits alongside the cherished eastern wall, as befits his high status.

But when it comes to *tzedakah*, his name is missing.

Likewise with spreading the wellsprings of Judaism, as my father-in-law, the Rebbe, fervently advocated: it is the imperative of our times that everyone spreads Torah's wellsprings. Become involved, have your name printed.

You don't want the publicity? So omit your last name. No one needs it. But your donation must be there!

"No," he says, "it's too much publicity, someone might figure out who I am!"

This is the point: the requirement to "walk modestly before God" is right and proper — it is a commandment; and, as that verse continues, greater even than a sacrifice. But this is not so with "modesty" that prevents another from participating in printing holy books or pamphlets, or purchasing and distributing them. As the Talmud states: "Their righteousness endures



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forever': [this verse applies to] one who writes holy books and lends them to others," and certainly, if he prints and donates them.

This, too, is included in the directive, "And when you reap the harvest of your land..."

