

Zera Shimshon

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Chapter XLVII: Re'eh (Deut. 11:26–16:17)

Essay 7. The reward and blessings of giving charitably based on the recipient's need

"נָתַתָּן תַּתֵּן לוֹ וְלֹא-יִרְעַע לְבָבְךָ" וְכוּ'.

Regarding giving charity to an impoverished Jew, the Torah says: **“Give! You shall surely give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved** in giving to him, for because of this, the L-rd your G-d will bless you in all your efforts and in all your undertakings” (Deut. 15:10).

יש לדקדק הכפּל שֶׁל "נָתַתָּן תַּתֵּן", וְעוֹד לָמָּה חָזַר לֵאמֹר "בְּתַתֶּנּוּ לוֹ" וְהִנֵּה דֵי לֵאמֹר "נָתַתָּן תַּתֵּן לוֹ וְלֹא-יִרְעַע לְבָבְךָ . . . כִּי בְגִלְלֵי הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה" וְכוּ' וְעוֹד, שְׂאֵם יִרְעַע לְבָבוֹ, לֹא יִרְצֶה לִיתֵּן לוֹ כֵּלָּל, וְהַפְתּוּב אֹמֵר "וְלֹא-יִרְעַע לְבָבְךָ בְּתַתֶּנּוּ לוֹ" וְנִקְאָ וְעוֹד מֵהוּ "כִּי בְגִלְלֵי הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה" דְּ"זֶה" מִשְׁמַע שְׂבָא לְמַעַט דְּבָר אַחֲרָ?

Question 1: **We need to scrutinize the doubling of the term “Give! You shall give to him”** [נָתַתָּן תַּתֵּן] [*naton titen*].¹

Question 2: **Also, why did the verse return to say “in giving to him,” for it would have been sufficient to have omitted the words and to say, “Give! You shall give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved . . . , for because of this** the L-rd your G-d will bless you in all your efforts and in all your undertakings.”

Question 3: **Also, if his heart will be grieved,** we would expect that **he wouldn't want to give [the impoverished person] anything, but Scripture says specifically, “your heart shall not be grieved in giving to him.”** The words “in giving to him” implies that he is definitely giving him something, so with regard to what should his heart not be grieved? Is it then with regard to the quantity that he gives?

Question 4: **Also, why does it say, “for because of this,” as “this” means excluding something else?**

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¹ The term “נָתַתָּן תַּתֵּן” uses two words with the same root for “to give.” Doubling frequently occurs in the Torah for emphasis, and thus the term is typically translated as “you shall surely give.”

וְגַם לומר שְׁנֵי מִינֵי חַיִּיבוּת לַעֲשׂוֹת הַצְּדָקָה. יֵשׁ חַיִּיבוּת שֶׁכָּל אִישׁ וְאִישׁ מְחַיִּיבוּ לִיתֵן כִּפֵּי הַשְּׂגָת יָדוֹ, דְּמִי שֶׁנָּתַן לוֹ הַקַּב"ה נְכֻסִים מְרֻבִּים חַיִּיבוּ לִיתֵן הַרְבֵּה, וְדֵמִי שֶׁנָּתַן לוֹ מְעַט חַיִּיבוּ לִיתֵן מְעַט. וְגַם חַיִּיבוּ אַחֵר, שֶׁאִם הַנְּתִינָה לִפֵּי עֲרֵף הַנְּכֻסִים לֹא תִסְפִּיק לְצוּרָה הַעֲנִיִּים, לִפֵּי שֶׁהֵם מְרֻבִּים אוֹ שֶׁלֹּא יִזְהַ עֲנֵי יִצְטָרֵף הַרְבֵּה כְּגוֹן לְפָדוּתוֹ מִבֵּית הַשְּׂבִי אוֹ לְהוֹצִיא מִבֵּית הָאֲסוּרִים, אִזְ צָרִיף שֶׁכָּל אָדָם יִתֵּן יוֹתֵר מִהֵרָאוּי לוֹ לִיתֵן. נִמְצָא שֶׁהַמִּין שֶׁל חַיִּיבוּ הֵרָאוּשׁוֹן הוּא חַיִּיבוּ הַקְּרָחִי כְּדֵי שֶׁלֹּא לְהִיּוֹת כִּפְּוֵי טוֹבָה, וְהַחַיִּיבוּ הַשְּׂנֵי הוּא רְצוּנֵי וְהוּא חַיִּיבוּ לִפֵּי הַצְּרָף.

It can be said that there are two types of obligation to give charity. There is the obligation incumbent upon each man, who is obligated to give according to his means, that one to whom the Holy One, Blessed be He, has given much property is obligated to give much, and one to whom He has given little is obligated to give a little. There is a different type of obligation: that if what one gives according to the value of his properties is not enough for the needs of the poor, either because they are many, or because one poor person needs much, for example to redeem him from captivity or to bring him out of prison, then it is necessary for every man to give more than it is otherwise proper for him to give. It's found that the first type of obligation is a necessary obligation in order that he not be ungrateful, and the second obligation is voluntary and is an obligation according to the need.

וּלְפִי זֶה כְּנִגְדַּת הַחַיִּיבוּ הֵרָאוּשׁוֹן אָמַר הַפְּתוּב "נָתַן" כְּלוֹמֵר כָּל אֶחָד מְחַיִּיבוּ לִיתֵן לִפֵּי מַה שֶׁנָּתַן לוֹ הַמְּקוֹם, וְכִנְגְדַּת הַחַיִּיבוּ הַשְּׂנֵי אָמַר "תִּתֵּן לוֹ", לוֹ דְּנֻקָּא לִפֵּי "מִחֲסָרוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִחְסַר לוֹ". וְכִנְגְדַּת זֶה הַחַיִּיבוּ הַשְּׂנֵי אָמַר הַפְּתוּב "וְלֹא־יִרְעַ לְכַבֵּד בְּתַתָּהּ לוֹ", אֵינִי רוֹצֵה שֶׁיִּרְעַ לְכַבֵּד בְּשִׂאֲתָהּ צָרִיף לִיתֵן צוּרָה הַעֲנִי יוֹתֵר מִמַּה שֶׁהִיָּה מוּטָל עָלֶיךָ לִיתֵן לִפֵּי עֲרֵף מְמוּנָה, "כִּי בְּגִלְלֵ הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה יִבְרָכָה" וְכוּ', שֶׁכְּשִׂאֲתָה נוֹתֵן לִפֵּי עֲרֵף מְמוּנָה אֵין אַתָּה יְכוֹל לְהִיּוֹת מְצַפֶּה לְתַשְׁלוּם גְּמוּל אוֹ לְתַקְנֵת פָּרַס שֶׁהִרִי כָּה חוֹבְתָה לַעֲשׂוֹת וְנִקְרָא כְּמוֹ פְּרִיעַת חוֹב.

Answer 1: According to this, corresponding to the first obligation, Scripture says, "Give!" [נָתַן] as if to say, "every one is obligated to give according to what the Omnipresent has given to him," and corresponding to the second obligation, [Scripture] says, "You shall give to him" [תִּתֵּן לוֹ], "to him" specifically, according to "his need in whatever he lacks" (Deut. 15:8).

Answers 2 and 3: Corresponding to this second obligation, Scripture says, "your heart shall not be grieved in giving to him," i.e., "I don't want your heart to be grieved when you need to give money for the need of the poor [person] that is more than what was imposed upon you to give according to the value of your money." "For because of this, the L-rd your G-d will bless you in all your efforts and in all your undertakings," that when you give according to the value of your money, you are not able to look for a great reward or hope for a prize, for it is your obligation to act thus, and it is like repayment of a debt.

אמנם כשאתה צריך ליתן יותר מחובתך וכפי צורך העני, אז אתה יכול להיות מצפה לתקנת פרס, ולכן אמר, "כי בגלל הדבר הזה" ונקא דהניבו החייב השני של "תמן לו" . . . יברכה ה' אלהיך".

Answer 4: **Although when you need to give more than your obligation and according to the need of the poor [person], then you can expect a reward of a prize, and therefore [Scripture] said, "for because of this,"** which we said means excluding something else, "this" refers **specifically the second obligation of "give to him . . . the L-rd your G-d will bless you in all your efforts and in all your undertakings."**

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