

Zera Shimshon

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Chapter LVI: Ruth

Essay 13. The best type of charity

פסוק "ויאמר לקוזרים ה' עמכם". קשה למה דוקא אמר לקוזרים זה הלשון של "ה' עמכם".

There is a verse: **“Presently Boaz arrived from Bethlehem. He greeted the reapers, ‘The L-rd is with you!’”**¹ A question is why did he especially say to the reapers this language of **“The L-rd is with you”**?

ונראה לתרץ דרך רמז, דבמסכת סוכה אמרינו שהצדקה נקראת זריעה והגמילות חסדים נקראת קצירה, דכתיב "זרעו לכם לצדקה קצרו לפי חסד". ואין הצדקה משתלמת אלא לפי גמילות חסדים שבה. והנותן צדקה בסתר ובעת צורך העני ובלי שיתבייש העני, שיהיה נוטלה ואינו יודע ממי נוטלה, זה נקרא גמילות חסדים ונקרא קצירה.

This appears to be solved by way of an allusion, that in tractate Sukkah, it is said that charity is called sowing and doing acts of kindness is called reaping.

Rabbi Elazar said: Acts of kindness are greater than charity, as it is stated: **“Sow to yourselves according to charity, and reap according to kindness”** (Hosea 10:12). [That is,] if a person sows, [it is] uncertain [whether] he [will] eat or [whether] he [will] not eat [since much can go wrong before the seed becomes food]. [However, if] a person reaps, he certainly eats. **The reward for charity is paid from Heaven only in accordance with the acts of kindness therein.**

- Sukkah 49b

That is, if someone gives charity publicly, so that he knows who the recipient is, and the recipient knows who the giver is, this is still laudable, but it is considered sowing. A higher level is attained by **the one who gives charity in secret and at the time of need of the poor person. He does it without embarrassing the poor person—that it should be given and that he shouldn't know from whom it was given—this is called doing acts of kindness and is called reaping.**

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¹ Ruth 2:4.

וּכְתָבוּ הַמְפָרְשִׁים שֶׁהַנּוֹתֵן צְדָקָה מֵיַחַד הָאוֹתִיּוֹת שֶׁל הַשֵּׁם הַנִּיזָה בְּרוּךְ הוּא, שֶׁיֵּד הַעֲשִׂיר הַנּוֹתֵן וְיָד הַעֲנִי הַמְקַבֵּל הֵם שְׁתֵּי הַה[א]י, וְהַזֵּרוּעַ שֶׁל הַעֲשִׂיר שְׁפוּשֵׁט כְּדֵי לִיתֵן הַצְּדָקָה לַעֲנִי הוּא הַנָּא"ו, וְהַפְּרוּטָה שֶׁנּוֹתֵן הוּא הַי"ד. אֲמַנָּם כֹּל זֶה הוּא בְּמֵי שְׁנוֹתֵן הַצְּדָקָה מֵיָדוֹ לְיָדוֹ שֶׁל עֲנִי וְזֶה נִקְרָא זְרִיעָה וְלֹא קִצִּירָה.

The commentators wrote that one who gives charity unifies the letters of the Name of G-d *havaya*, i.e., the Tetragrammaton, may He be blessed. That is, the wealthy hand that gives and the hand of the poor person that receives they are representative of the two letter *he*'s, and the arm of the wealthy man that is stretched out in order to give charity to the poor person is the *vav*, and the coin that he gives is the *yod*.²

Indeed, all this applies even for one who gives charity directly from his hand to the hand of a poor person, though we have said that this is called sowing and not reaping.

אֲמַנָּם מִי שֶׁקוֹצֵר דְּהֵיִינוּ שְׂאִינוּ נּוֹתֵן הַצְּדָקָה לְיָד הַעֲנִי מִמֶּשׁ אֶלָּא נּוֹתֵנָה לְיַד הַגִּבְיָא, הוּא גּוֹרֵם שְׁתֵּי פְעָמִים יַיְחוד אוֹתִיּוֹת הַשֵּׁם, שְׁמִתְחַלֵּה נּוֹתֵנָה לְיַד הַגִּבְיָא וְאַחַר כֵּן הַגִּבְיָא נּוֹתֵנָה לַעֲנִי, וְעַל כֵּן הַצְּדָקָה צָרִיף לוֹמֵר שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ שְׂכָר כְּפוּל שְׁגוֹרֵם יַיְחוד לַמַּעֲלָה וְלַמַּטָּה, שֶׁהָרִי מִשְׁתַּלְמָת הַצְּדָקָה בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה כְּפִי גְמִילוֹת חֲסָדִים שְׂבָה. וּמִשּׁוֹם הֵכִי אָמַר לְקוֹצְרִים דְּהֵיִינוּ לַנּוֹתֵנִי צְדָקָה בְּסִתְר, "ה' עִמָּכֶם", שֶׁהוֹאִיל שְׂאֵתֶם גּוֹרְמִים יַיְחוד ה' אֵתֶם גּוֹרְמִים שֶׁהַקב"ה יִשְׁפִיעַ לָכֶם טוֹבָה, כְּדָאֲמַרִּינוּ "קִצְרוּ לַפִּי־חֲסֵד" שֶׁכְּשֵׁיִשׁ גְּמִילוֹת חֲסָדִים בְּצְדָקָה מִשְׁתַּלֵּם שְׂכָרֶם, וְכִשְׁיֵשׁ שְׁפַע בְּעוֹלָם עַל כֵּן הַצְּדָקָה שֶׁיֵּשׁ יַיְחוד לַמַּעֲלָה וְלַמַּטָּה, וְזֶהוּ "ה' עִמָּכֶם", יִהְיֶה יַיְחוד ה' עִמָּכֶם שְׂבָא לָכֶם הַשְּׁפַע.

Indeed, one who reaps, which is that he doesn't give charity directly to the hand of the poor person, rather he gives it to the hand of the charity manager, he causes the unification of the letters of the Name twice. First, he gives it to the hand of the charity manager, and afterward, the charity manager gives it to the poor person. You must necessarily say that he has a doubled reward, in that he causes a unification above and below, that the charity is paid in this world according to the acts of kindness therein.

Because of this, [Boaz] said to the reapers, that is, to those who give charity in secret, "The L-rd is with you," that since you are causing the unification of the Name of G-d twice, above and below, you are causing the Holy One, Blessed be He, to affect you with goodness. This is as it is said, "reap according to kindness," that when one does acts of kindness in charity, their reward is paid.

When there is plenty in the world, there is necessarily a unification above and below, and this is the meaning of "The L-rd is with you," that there is a unification of the Name with you, that the bounty will come to you.

² Menachem Recanati (1223-90), *Ta'ame ha-Mitzvot* (Constantinople, 1543–1544; Basel, 1581), parashat Re'eh.

ועוד יש לומר דאמרינן בותנה ואיבו יודע למי בותנה, מקבלה ואיבו יודע ממי מקבלה, והיינו דנקא שבותנה ליד גבאי. וכשנותן ליד גבאי הרי שם שתי ידות, דהיינו ג' הנותן ונד הגבאי, והפרוטה והזרוע ויש הייחוד, וזהו "ה' עמכם", כלומר ביניכם אתם עושים הייחוד, אף על פי שאין כאן העני שמקבל.

It can also be said that it is said:

Which type of charity] delivers from an unnatural death? **One gives without knowing to whom he gave it, [and] one takes it without knowing from whom he took it. . . . This is done specifically by giving to the hand of the charity manager.**

- Bava Batra 10a-b

When he gives to the hand of the charity manager, there are two hands, viz, the hand of the giver and the hand of the charity manager, and the coin is present, and the outstretched arm of the giver is present, and then there is unification. This is another meaning of "The L-rd is with you," as if to say that between you who are giving charity in secret and the charity manager, you are creating a unification of the Name of G-d. This is true even though the poor person who will be receiving the charity is not here at this time.

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