



Agudas Yisroel Anshei Kielce

ZMANIM FOR PARSHAS RE'AH

Candle Lighting: 7:59 pm

Mincha/Kabbalas Shabbos: 6:35 pm & 8:00 pm

Shacharis: 8:45 am

No Pirkei Avos Shiur this week:

Mincha (Seudas Shlishis): 7:45 pm

Maariv/Motzei Shabbos: 9:05 pm

Motzei Shabbos Rabbeinu Tam: 9:27 pm

Sunday Shacharis: 8:00 am

Charitable Belief

Parshas Re'ah

By: *Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein*

Frown, and you compromise the entire mitzvah.

We are taught to perform every mitzvah with concentration, with joy, and with no foreign agenda other than responding to Hashem's command. We realize that we often come up short of that mark. We solace ourselves with the very fundamental understanding that the performance of the mitzvah in and of itself is crucially important. When our intensity and devotion flag, we can assure ourselves that the bare mitzvah is still a precious thing, and accomplishes much of its purpose in uplifting our soul.

Tzedakah, it seems, is the exception.

The Sefer HaChinuch² includes a positive attitude in his very definition of the mitzvah: "to perform tzedakah with joy and a good feeling." A verse in our parshah warns about tzedakah accompanied by grumbling and a jaundiced eye. "Do not let your heart feel bad when you give him."³ This exhortation has halachic teeth. The Rambam⁴ writes that one who give tzedakah while displaying a disagreeable countenance loses the merit of his gift. Some go beyond that, arguing that such a display puts one in violation of a full Torah prohibition!⁵ (The Meor V'Shemesh finds in this thought a solution to a different problem – the lack of any berachah before the performance of the mitzvah of tzedakah. Since simchah is crucial to the mitzvah, and most people simply do not give with all that much enthusiasm, their mitzvah comes up short. Chazal did not mandate a berachah for a mitzvah so often performed deficiently.

Why should a joyous attitude, as important as it is, rise to the level of deal-breaker in regard to tzedakah – unlike any other mitzvah? (You will get nowhere by arguing that tzedakah is somehow exceptional, and must be performed in a near-perfect manner to "count." It is clear in our tradition that if one gives tzedakah for less than altruistic reasons, his action indeed "counts," so long as the recipient benefits from his gift. An admixture of self-interest does not erase the mitzvah, even though it detracts from the luster of the mitzvah. Why, does a less-than-joyous attitude erase the mitzvah altogether, while a less-than-perfect purpose does not?)

While we take note of this anomaly about tzedakah, we might mention another. Long ago, the navi Yeshaya told us that our national aspiration of full redemption hinges directly on tzedakah. "Tziyon will be redeemed through justice, and her returnees through tzedakah."⁶ In what sense is tzedakah also described as "the equal of all mitzvos?"⁷ Why does so much depend upon tzedakah?

All indications point to a single, elegant solution to the problems we have raised. At its core, tzedakah is about emunah. At the Mishnah in Avos⁸ expresses it, "Give Him from what is His, for you and yours are His." Rabbenu Yonah expands upon this. When you give, you part with nothing that is yours – not your self, and not your property. All belongs to Him; all that a Jew possesses belongs to Hashem; we are at most custodians of His property. We enjoy no proprietary interest in anything of this world. This realization is fundamental to the way a Jew believes. He attributes nothing to his own powers, but sees G-d as the immediate cause and proprietor of everything.

Emunah may well be the *idée fixe* animating all our mitzvos. "All your mitzvos are emunah."⁹ All mitzvos revolve around emunah; some, however, deal essentially with emunah. It is easy to see that Shabbos is primarily an expression of emunah. It is in this sense – as a pillar of emunah – that Shabbos is described as the equal of all other mitzvos. This same reasoning applies to tzedakah, and why it as well is seen as some kind of super-mitzvah.

Toldos Yaakov Yosef, further illuminates the Mishnah in Avos with a vignette about a person who was never observed to worry.

Questioned about the reason for his equanimity, he responded that he literally had nothing to worry about, because he had nothing! He possessed nothing; he related to nothing in his life as his own. He therefore had nothing of himself invested in any of items in his universe; he found nothing to worry him. Everything belonged to Hashem, Who could do all the worrying for him.

The *Toldos Yaakov Yosef* also cites Sefer Chasidim to explicate a puzzling phrase in Tehilim.¹⁰ "Chesed is Yours, Hashem, because You reward a person according to his deeds." It would seem that justice, not chesed, should be His for rewarding each person as He promised. The pasuk points out to us, however, that the element of chesed is even more pronounced than din when we are rewarded for our choices. We must keep in mind that when we bind tefillin upon ourselves in the morning, it is HKBH who gave us the tefillin; it is HKBH who gave us the arm upon which to place the tefillin; it is HKBH who gave us the thought process and the will to put on the tefillin. How can we claim any reward for what is entirely His doing?

Indeed, Hashem's chesed is underscored by His generosity with us in rewarding us for our deeds as if they were entirely of our own doing. *Tzedakah-as-emunah* solves our original problems. Giving dejectedly and with regret does not merely detract from the quality of tzedakah, as it would from any other mitzvah. It is an essential contradiction to the emunah that all comes from Him, and there is nothing to be dejected about in parting with money that one does not really own. (Giving for an ulterior motive does detract from the quality of tzedakah, but in fact does not negate it.) "Were a person to give all the treasure of his house in love, they would scorn him."¹¹ Why scorn a person's sacrifice of all that he owns in his love for Hashem? What better gift could there be? The Sabba Kadisha pointed to the culprit – the words "his house." A person who believes that he gives up what truly belongs to him should indeed be met with scorn and derision. Geulah depends on the opposite attitude. "Yisrael is redeemed only through tzedakah."¹² When our understanding of tzedakah reaches completion, when we comprehend with perfect clarity that all is His, we are perforce no longer in galus. This realization is the redemption of Israel, in regard to both individual and community. The permutation of the Divine Name associated with Elul¹³ is found in the concluding letters of the words of "*u- tzedakah tihyeh lanu k i(nishmor la'asos es kol ha-mitzvah hazos.)*"¹⁴ Ramban¹⁵ sees this as commentary to the phrase in the verse immediately preceding it, where mitzvos are described as existing "for our good, all the days."

The tzedakah, he explains, lies in the fact that we are duty bound to observe the mitzvos simply because Hashem asks it of us. Any reward He gives us is purely tzedakah. Why then, asks the Ohr HaChaim, does the phrase read, "and it will be tzedakah for us," rather than "He does tzedakah for us?" Our approach provides an answer. In describing the inner logic of the entire system of mitzvos, the Torah stipulates that all of our mitzvah observance should be like the mitzvah of tzedakah! The core realization behind tzedakah is Hashem's absolute ownership of everything, including ourselves. We should bring that same realization to their performance of all mitzvos, recognizing that we are beholden to Him for the very ability to respond to His will. The allusion to Elul in the first letters of the words *ani le-dodi ve-dodi li* is well known. Perhaps we can now deepen our appreciation of it. The avodah of the month of Elul lies primarily in our ability to negate ourselves to His Being. The phrase might better be rendered *ani le- dodi* – when I succeed in seeing myself and everything important to me as owing completely and absolutely to my Beloved – then *dodi li* – then my Beloved is close to me, rewarding me for my actions, even though I do not really deserve to be rewarded for what He has every right to demand of me without compensation. Or, when the quality of our emunah infuses the way we give tzedakah, HKBH charitably shows that He believes in us.

<p>This week's Kiddush is sponsored by: Mr. and Mrs. Moishe Korolneck in honor of Hillel Weinberger for all his years of service to the Shul, including setting up Suedah Shlishis.</p>
<p>Sruli & Lindy Wolff as a Hod'ah to Hashem for a healthy recovery.</p>
<p>The kids' program will take place downstairs beginning at 9:30 am.</p>
<p>Seudas Shlishis is sponsored by: Berel Fuerst and the Shul</p>
<p>The guest speaker for seudas shlishis is Hillel Lichtenstien.</p>
<p>The cholim list is being updated for Chodesh Menachem Av. If you would like to submit a name to the cholim list please email gabbai@agudahsouth.com or contact one of the gabbaim.</p>

Upcoming Weekday Schedule for Parshas Shoftim

<p>Shacharis Sunday: 8:00 am Monday & Thursday: 7:00 & 7:55 Tuesday & Wednesday (Rosh Chodosh) 6:50 & 7:50 Friday: 7:00 & 8:00</p>	<p>Mincha 7:55 pm Maariv 8:15 pm</p>
--	---

To sponsor Kiddush/Seudas Shlishis contact Baruch Klein (kiddush@agudahsouth.com.)
 To sign for the bulletin, submit announcements, add names to the cholim list or yearzeit calendar go to www.agudahsouth.com/mailling-lists, email mailings@agudahsouth.com or speak to one of the gabbaim.