

A Taste of Torah Give and Get

By Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

Throughout history, charity has been a hallmark of the Jewish People. And while Jews of all stripes have always made giving to those less fortunate a priority, we generally view giving of our money as just that: giving. What many don't realize is that the more we give, the more we get.

That's the idea expressed by our Sages, based on a verse in this week's parsha. The Torah tells us, "Aser ti'aser", which basically translates as, "You shall surely tithe." But the words, minus the vowelization, can also be read as "Aser, Tisasher", "Tithe, become rich" which is homiletically understood by the Talmud (Ta'anis 9a) as "Tithe, so that you will become rich." Thus, the Torah, through its choice of verbiage, alludes to the fact that one who donates of his money will merit more wealth.

There are many worth, important mitzvos in the Torah - 613, to be exact - but charity is singled out as a means to achieve financial comfort. The simplest understanding of this phenomenon would be that one who utilizes his possessions properly merits prosperity.

Rabbi Shimon Shkop (1860-1939) adds a layer of depth to this approach. He explains that when G-d grants an individual money, it is not for the purpose of self-indulgence; rather, the recipient is appointed to oversee the proper use and disbursement of the funds to those who require them. To be sure, he may use the money for his own

needs, because a person needs to be able to live and function. But to hold onto the wealth unnecessarily or to fritter it away frivolously is not what G-d had in mind when He bestowed it. Thus, the idea of charity is not merely one of generously distributing one's own wealth; it is more correctly viewed as carrying out G-d's plan for the money.

If G-d sees that the individual whom He chose to carry out the task of disbursing funds is reliable, what do you think He does? He gives him more money to distribute! Thus, one who shares his prosperity with those in need will merit more wealth. "Tithe, so that you will become rich."

This idea, continues Rabbi Shkop, is true in other areas as well. The Talmud (Ta'anis 7a) states that a person learns more from his students than he does from his teachers or colleagues. An understanding of this is based on the aforementioned idea. When G-d grants someone wisdom, it is not meant merely for the recipient; G-d wants him to share the wisdom with others. If the individual successfully carries out his mission and teaches the wisdom to others, then G-d graces him with more knowledge to spread. Thus, a person merits wisdom due to his students.

Everyone has special G-d-given talents, be they brains, brawn, or money. Whatever gifts we are graced with are not meant to be utilized by the recipient alone; it is incumbent upon us to benefit others with our abilities.

It is not clear to me why old prayer books and other such works cannot be thrown away once they're no longer fit for use. I can understand why as long

Continued on back

Stories For The Soul

Barest of Necessities

By Rabbi Yehoshua Schwartz

The Kapischnitzer Rebbe, Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua Heschel (1888-1967), was renowned for his love of every Jew.

He lived in a very modest apartment. The furniture was simple and the floors were worn. Yet that was all he and his wife needed.

One day, the Rebbe's daughter said to him, "The linoleum in the dining room is old and torn. Perhaps we can replace it?"

The Rebbe responded that they had no money at present for anything but necessities.

A few minutes later, the doorbell rang. A poor man stood in the doorway asking for a donation. The Rebbe greeted the man warmly and gave him a generous sum.

The Rebbe's daughter, who had observed the entire scene, stood there baffled.

She respectfully asked her father how he was able to give the man so much money, when just minutes before he had said there was money only for necessities.

"Giving charity," replied the Rebbe, "is a necessity."

In this week's Parsha, the Torah commands us to fulfill the mitzva of assisting the poor, as the verse says, "If there shall be a destitute person among you" (*Devarim* 15:7).

The Kapischnitzer Rebbe clearly understood that every person must share what he has with others - even if he has only the bare minimum for himself.

Continued on back

Ask the Rabbi Geniza

From: Alice

Dear Rabbi,

Kollel Happenings

DERECH HASHEM

Join Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher for a philosophical series on "Derech Hashem", a sefer by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto. Discover and delve into the vital understanding of Hashem's world. The women's class will resume on Monday, August 27th, 7:45 p.m., at EDOS. For info, email info@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.



A DEEPER LOOK AT THE PARSHA

Join Rabbi Shachne Sommers as he discusses a number of difficulties encountered in the weekly Torah portion, and develops a comprehensive approach to resolve the issues, simultaneously conveying a deeper understanding of the material being discussed. The class will resume on Tuesday, August 21st, 8 p.m. at Aish.



TRUST THY FATHER

Join Rabbi Shachne Sommers for "Trust Thy Father", a series based on Chovos Ha'Levavos/Duties of the Heart. Discover and delve into vital Jewish concept of Bitachon. The classes will resume on Tuesday, August 21st, from 7:55-8:25 a.m., at Aish. For info, email info@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

Interpersonal Issues

Safeguarding a Lost Item

The Torah requires one who finds a lost object is responsible to safeguard it until the owner claims it. This responsibility renders the finder accountable for the item as well. This

responsibility begins the moment the finder picks up the item.

Adapted with permission from "The Halachos of Other People's Money" by Rabbi Pinchas Bodner (Feldheim Publishers)

Ask the Rabbi

Continued from front

as they're being used they should be treated with respect given their purpose, but once that's no longer the case what's the problem with throwing them away?

Dear Alice,

What makes prayer books and other such books of Torah learning sacred is not just their purpose, namely for prayer or for learning, but also, and perhaps more importantly, it is their content.

Prayer books have not only many, many verses from the Tanach that are interwoven throughout the prayers, as well as entire sections which are passages from the Torah itself like the "Shema". They also have many of the various names of G-d Himself. This makes the prayer book sacred even after it's no longer used.

The same thing applies for books on Torah subjects. Usually they have verses, often they have G-d's names. And even if they don't have either, the ideas expressed therein are ideas of holiness and it is not appropriate to throw away such ideas even after the book is no longer usable.

Also, in both cases, while the text may not be usable in its entirety, it still has sections with verses, G-d's names or Torah ideas that are intact, and those sections maintain their sanctity such that they may not be thrown away.

So what is done with such out-of-use texts? Known by some as "Sheimas", which is an Ashkenazi pronunciation of the Hebrew word "Shemos" meaning

"Names", they are put in what's called in Hebrew "geniza" which means "in hiding". This may be in a closet, a special storage room, or even buried underground.

In times of old, they were often stored in special vaults in the synagogue, thanks to which many old and sacred works have been recovered, which has been of great religious and academic importance. A notable example of this is the famous Cairo Geniza. In modern times, most "sheimas" or "geniza" are buried, either in special sites, or even interred in graves with families' permission. This later option spares valuable resources for the living while creating a mitzvah which envelopes the deceased in a type of spiritual shroud.

I heard a story once of a person visiting a foreign country who had a bill of the local currency fly out of her hand because of the wind. In chasing after the note she stepped on the bill to keep it from getting away. This was observed by a policeman who summarily issued her a fine for placing her shoe on the visage of the country's king that is on the currency.

If nations take so seriously the picture of mundane kings on money, all the more so we must take seriously the Names and Knowledge of the King of Kings in our holy books.

Reprinted with permission of Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem, www.ohr.edu

The Torah Weekly is made possible through a generous grant from the Harry H. Beren Foundation of Lakewood, NJ, in memory of Harry H. Beren, z"l.

Denver Community Kollel: 1516 Xavier Street, Denver, CO 80204 Tel: 303-820-2855 Fax: 303-820-2806

Email: info@denverkollel.org Web: www.denverkollel.org

To receive Torah Weekly by email, send an email to torah-subscribe@denverkollel.org