



## *Parshas Re'eh 2019, the Jewish of charity*

Our Parsha continues Moshe's final address to the Jewish people. He informs the nation that depending on their action, they can receive blessings or curses. The blessings will come if they obey G-d's commandments. However, suppose they defy G-d's laws, they will feel the depth of His anger C"V.

Moshe then repeats many laws and commandments, the laws of Maser Sheni, the laws of Shmita, a list of Kosher birds, fish and mammals, and various laws about the holidays of Pesach and Sukkos.

A question comes to mind: One of the commandments that are repeated in this Parsha is the Mitzvah of charity. The Pasuk says (15:7) that you must help a person who is less fortunate than you, and cautions us, "*Do not harden your heart*" and "*Do not recoil your hand.*" Why does the Pasuk need to give two different expressions to convey the same idea?

Furthermore, we also have the commandment of Maser Sheni. That after you give approximately 12% of your produce to the Kohanim and Leviim, you must take an additional 10% of your crop and eat it within the walls of Yerushalayim. If that is not logistically possible, you may exchange the produce for money and spend the money on food in Yerushalayim. What is the message behind Maser Sheni if it seemingly does not go to the poor, Kohanim or G-d, how does that benefit G-d or the Jewish people?!

The Abarbanel explains that the expression "*Do not harden your heart*" is teaching the Jewish people not to be cold and indifferent to the agony of a fellow Jew. Rather be empathetic and compassionate towards the pain of the less fortunate and help them out in whichever way you can.

Regarding the expression *"Do not recoil your hand,"* he explains when you help a fellow Jew, it should not be forced out of you, instead be done with an open heart. Giving charity should not leave *"a bitter taste in your mouth,"* but rather be given with joy and pleasure.

Not because you will be rewarded for doing so, but, because you realize that G-d is one who has given you all that you own, and now he is giving you an opportunity to share his blessings with the world.

The same concept goes for Maser Sheni. Although the Maser seemingly does not benefit the poor or G-d, by the very fact that you must eat it in Yerushalayim, it teaches us that whatever we have is from G-d alone. That all of our successes must not be attributed to our own doings, but rather, to the blessings of G-d. As our Rabbis say, *"Give to Him from that which is His, for you and yours are actually His."*

Moshe is teaching the Jewish nation, that when they enter the land of Israel and become prosperous, they must not turn their backs on the less fortunate. And when they give charity, they must do so with compassion and an open heart. Because what they have is all from G-d, and he is giving them an opportunity to show him gratitude for their abundance by sharing their hearts and blessings with those in need.

In our daily life, we must understand that we need to be kind and compassionate towards one another, even if someone is not deserving of such kindness. All of our successes are a blessing from G-d and an opportunity to share his grace with the world.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe gave a talk on this Parsha in 1988. He explains that this Parsha is read before or, in our case, on the actual day of Rosh Chodesh Elul. Therefore, it is understandable that there is an intrinsic connection between charity and the month of Elul and Teshuva. Consequently, one should increase their giving of charity this month to be inscribed and sealed in the Book of life on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

***"Only by giving are you able to receive more than you already have."***

*Have a meaningful Shabbos*  
*Rabbi Sholom Yemini*