

# צְדָקָה

## Tzedakah

“Tzedakah” actually means “to do what is right”. Now why do you suppose we call it “tzedakah” when we help people who have less than we do? Well, the answer is obvious! Because



it’s the right thing to do! What is more, helping people who have real needs is a way of showing that we really appreciate how much HaShem has given to us. In these two lessons we’re going to learn about the Jewish way of “tzedakah”—of giving something we have to those in need.

Our Teacher, Yeshua, taught us this: when we see someone who is in need and we help that person, it is just as though we were helping Him (Mt. 25:40). Think of that! Saving your money in the Tzedakah box and giving it to someone in need is the same as giving it to Yeshua.

Sometimes we think that the only way to get the things we want is to keep all of our money for ourselves, and that if we give any of it away, we’ll not be able to have the things we want. Here’s what one Rebbe said about this:

*A rabbi once noticed that many of the people in his village were keeping their money to themselves instead of giving tzedakah to the poor. He called everyone together and said this: How much money a person has is like a turning wheel, he said. “He who sits at the top of the wheel and laughs is a fool, for should the wheel turn, he may find himself lower than those he was laughing at. And he who lies at the bottom of the wheel and moans about how little he has is also a fool. Indeed, the very fact that he is now at the wheel’s lowest point means that on its very next movement, his fortunes will improve. Both those at the top of the wheel and those at its lowest point should understand that having money is nothing but a spinning wheel—one day you can have it, and the next it can be all taken away. But a single act of charity—of tzedakah toward one’s neighbor will endure forever!*

Here’s some words of Yeshua to hide away in your heart!

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)