

ACTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS  
צדקה  
TZEDAKAH

Through acts of righteousness we reach out to the world and help to make it a better place.

Because it is a *mitzvah*, a holy act, *tzedakah* is about our relationship to Jewish tradition and to others. It is *not* about wealth; it is about responsibility.

How does each of these texts contribute to your understanding of *tzedakah*?

- Even a poor person who receives *tzedakah* must give from what he receives.

*Babylonian Talmud, Gittin 7b*

- In all of history, we have neither heard of nor seen a Jewish community without an organized *tzedakah* fund.

*Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Gifts to the Poor 9:3*

- Regarding the amount to give- If your capacity is such that you can give an amount sufficient to meet the needs of the poor, you should give that much. If your capacity is not sufficient to meet all the needs of the poor, you should give as much as you are capable of. How much should you give? Up to 20% of your assets is the best way to fulfill the *mitzvah*. Ten percent is average. Less than that is stingy.

*Tur, Yoreh De'ah 249:1*

- If he has just enough oil for all eight days [of Chanukah] and his friend has none, it is better that each night he light one candle and he gives oil to his friend.

*Mishnah Berurah 671:6*

- Rabbi Tanchum, though he needed only one portion of meat for himself, would buy two; one bunch of vegetables, he would buy two, one for the poor and one for himself.

*Kohelet Rabbah 7:30*