**Rav Soloveitchik on the Redemption of Tzedakah**

1. **רמב"ם הלכות מתנות עניים פרק י**

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| (1) **We are obligated to be careful with regard to the mitzvah of charity to a greater extent than all [other] positive commandments, because charity is an identifying mark for a righteous person, a descendant of Abraham, our patriarch**, as [Genesis 18:19] states: "I have known him, because he commands his children... to perform charity." The throne of Israel will not be established, nor will the true faith stand except through charity, as [Isaiah 54:14] states: "You shall be established through righteousness." And Israel will be redeemed solely through charity, as it states: "Zion will be redeemed through judgment and those who return to her through charity." | (א) **חַיָּבִין אָנוּ לְהִזָּהֵר בְּמִצְוַת צְדָקָה יוֹתֵר מִכָּל מִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה. שֶׁהַצְּדָקָה סִימָן לַצַּדִּיק זֶרַע אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ** שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (בראשית יח יט) "כִּי יְדַעְתִּיו לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יְצַוֶּה אֶת בָּנָיו" (בראשית יח יט) "לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה". וְאֵין כִּסֵּא יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתְכּוֹנֵן וְדַת הָאֱמֶת עוֹמֶדֶת אֶלָּא בִּצְדָקָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (ישעיה נד יד) "בִּצְדָקָה תִּכּוֹנָנִי". וְאֵין יִשְׂרָאֵל נִגְאָלִין אֶלָּא בִּצְדָקָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (ישעיה א כז) "צִיּוֹן בְּמִשְׁפָּט תִּפָּדֶה וְשָׁבֶיהָ בִּצְדָקָה":  |
| (2) A person will never become impoverished from giving charity. No harm nor damage will ever be caused because of charity, as it states: "And the deed of charity is peace." Everyone who is merciful evokes mercy from others, as [Deuteronomy 13:18] states: "And He shall grant you mercy and shower mercy upon you and multiply you." **Whenever a person is cruel and does not show mercy, his lineage is suspect, for cruelty is found only among the gentiles**, as [Jeremiah 50:42] states: "They are cruel and will not show mercy." **The entire Jewish people and all those who attach themselves to them are as brothers, as [Deuteronomy 14:1] states: "You are children unto God your Lord." And if a brother will not show mercy to a brother, who will show mercy to them? To whom do the poor of Israel lift up their eyes? To the gentiles who hate them and pursue them? Behold their eyes are pointed to their brethren alone.** | (ב) לְעוֹלָם אֵין אָדָם מַעֲנִי מִן הַצְּדָקָה וְאֵין דָּבָר רַע וְלֹא הֶזֵּק נִגְלָל בִּשְׁבִיל הַצְּדָקָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (ישעיה לב יז) "וְהָיָה מַעֲשֵׂה הַצְּדָקָה שָׁלוֹם." כָּל הַמְרַחֵם מְרַחֲמִין עָלָיו שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (דברים יג יח) "וְנָתַן לְךָ רַחֲמִים וְרִחַמְךָ וְהִרְבֶּךָ". **וְכָל מִי שֶׁהוּא אַכְזָרִי וְאֵינוֹ מְרַחֵם יֵשׁ לָחוּשׁ לְיַחֲסוֹ. שֶׁאֵין הָאַכְזָרִיּוּת מְצוּיָה אֶלָּא** **בְּעַכּוּ"ם** שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (ירמיה נ מב) "אַכְזָרִי הֵמָּה וְלֹא יְרַחֵמוּ". **וְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַנִּלְוֶה עֲלֵיהֶם כְּאַחִים הֵם שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (דברים יד א) "בָּנִים אַתֶּם לַה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם" וְאִם לֹא יְרַחֵם הָאָח עַל הָאָח מִי יְרַחֵם עָלָיו. וּלְמִי עֲנִיֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל נוֹשְׂאִין עֵינֵיהֶן. הֲלְעַכּוּ"ם שֶׁשּׂוֹנְאִין אוֹתָן וְרוֹדְפִים אַחֲרֵיהֶן. הָא אֵין עֵינֵיהֶן תְּלוּיוֹת אֶלָּא לַאֲחֵיהֶן:** |
| (3) **Anyone who turns his eyes away from [giving] charity is described as being "rebellious" like someone who worships false divinities** is described as "rebellious, as [Deuteronomy 13:14] states with regard to the worship of false divinities: "Rebellious men went out." And with regard to a person who turns his eyes away from [giving] charity, [*ibid.* 15:9] states: "Be careful, lest a rebellious thought arise in your heart." Such a person is also called "wicked," as [Proverbs 12:10] states: "The mercies of the wicked are cruel." And he is called a sinner, as [Deuteronomy, *loc. cit.*,] states: "And he shall cry out against you to God and you will be deemed as sinning." The Holy One, blessed be He, is close to the outcry of the poor, as it is written "You hear the outcry of the poor." Therefore one must be careful with regard to their outcry, for a covenant has been established with them, as [Exodus 22:26] states: "When he will cry out to Me, I will listen, for I am compassionate." | Soloveitchik, Rabbi Joseph Dov | Jewish Women's Archive(ג) **כָּל הַמַּעֲלִים עֵינָיו מִן הַצְּדָקָה הֲרֵי זֶה נִקְרָא בְּלִיַּעַל כְּמוֹ שֶׁנִּקְרָא עוֹבֵד עַכּוּ"ם בְּלִיַּעַל**. וּבְעַכּוּ"ם הוּא אוֹמֵר (דברים יג יד) "יָצְאוּ אֲנָשִׁים בְּנֵי בְלִיַּעַל" וּבְמַעֲלִים עֵינָיו מִן הַצְּדָקָה הוּא אוֹמֵר (דברים טו ט) "הִשָּׁמֶר לְךָ פֶּן יִהְיֶה דָבָר עִם לְבָבְךָ בְלִיַּעַל". וְנִקְרָא רָשָׁע שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (משלי יב י) "וְרַחֲמֵי רְשָׁעִים אַכְזָרִי". וְנִקְרָא חוֹטֵא שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (דברים טו ט) "וְקָרָא עָלֶיךָ אֶל ה' וְהָיָה בְךָ חֵטְא". וְהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא קָרוֹב לְשַׁוְעַת עֲנִיִּים שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר שַׁוְעַת עֲנִיִּים אַתָּה תִשְׁמַע. לְפִיכָךְ צָרִיךְ לְהִזָּהֵר בְּצַעֲקָתָם שֶׁהֲרֵי בְּרִית כְּרוּתָה לָהֶם שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (שמות כב כו) "וְהָיָה כִּי יִצְעַק אֵלַי וְשָׁמַעְתִּי כִּי חַנּוּן אָנִי":  |

