

The Mitzvah of Tzedakah

The Secret to Becoming Rich

Deuteronomy 14:22

עֵשֶׂר תַעֲשֶׂה אֶת כָּל תְּבוּאֹת זֶרְעֶךָ הַיֵּצֵא הַשָּׂדֶה שָׁנָה שָׁנָה

You shall tithe all the seed crop that the field gives forth, year by year.

Deuteronomy 15:8

כִּי פָתַח תִּפְתַּח אֶת יָדְךָ לוֹ וְהֶעֱבַט תַעֲבִיטֵנוּ דִּי מַחְסְרוֹ אֲשֶׁר יֵחָסֵר לוֹ

Rather, you shall open your hand to him, and you shall lend him sufficient for his needs, which he is lacking.

Maimonides: Positive Commandment #127

The 127th *mitzvah* is that we are commanded to separate *ma'aser* from produce which grows from the ground.

The source of this commandment is G-d's statement, "[The inheritance I am giving the Levites shall consist of] the *ma'aser* of the Jewish people which they shall separate."

Maimonides: Positive Commandment #195

The 195th *mitzvah* is that we are commanded to give charity — to support and relieve the poor.

This command is expressed in the Torah in various ways: "Open your hand generously"; "Help him survive, whether he is a convert or a born Jew"; "Help your brother survive with you." These verses all have the same point — that we must provide for our poor and support them in accordance with their need.

The details of this *mitzvah* are explained in a number of places, the majority in tractates Kesubos and Baba Basra.

The Oral Tradition relates that even a poor person who himself lives from charity is also obligated in this *mitzvah* — to give even a small amount of charity to someone less fortunate than him or on the same level as himself.