

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Re'ah

25 Menachem Av, 5780 – August 15, 2020

Compiled from the works of
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The Lubavitcher Rebbe

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**An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi
Parshas Re'ah**

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Rashi in His Own Words

דברים ט"ו, ח': כי פתח תפתח את ידך לו והעבט תעביטנו די מחסרו אשר יחסר לו:

רש"י ד"ה פתח תפתח: אפילו כמה פעמים:

דברים ט"ו, י': נתון נתון לו ולא ירע לבבך בתתך לו כי בגלל | הדבר הזה יברכה ה' אלקיך בכל מעשיך ובכל משלח ידך:

רש"י ד"ה נתון נתון לו: אפילו מאה פעמים:

Devorim 15:8: Rather, you shall surely open your hand to him, and you shall lend him sufficient for his needs, which he is lacking.

Rashi Heading - You shall surely open: Even many times.

Devorim 15:10: You shall surely give him, and your heart shall not be upset when you give to him. Because of this thing (because you are giving to him), the Lord, your G-d, will bless you in all your work and in everything that you do.

Rashi Heading - You shall surely give him: Even a hundred times.

Synopsis

In this week's Torah portion, Re'ah, Hashem commands us to perform the Mitzvah of Tzedokoh, which is usually translated as charity. The Torah tells us,¹ "You shall surely open (literally 'Open, you shall open') your hand to him, and you shall lend him sufficient for his needs, which he is lacking." Rashi defines "You shall surely open" as meaning "even many times." Shortly after that, the Torah says,² "You shall surely give (literally 'Give you shall give') him, and your heart shall not be upset when you give to him." This Rashi explains as meaning "even a hundred times." Why does Rashi explain, "you shall surely open" to say "even many times," and "you shall surely give" to mean "even a hundred times?"

The reason is that when the Torah says, "You shall surely open your hand," it is referring (primarily) to giving Tzedokoh. He must open his heart. The main point here is the quality of his giving. Once is not enough; we learn this from the double expression of opening. Instead he must give as many times as needed. Each time must be with an open heart.

This is in contrast to "You shall surely give." Here the Torah emphasizes the recipient of the Tzedokoh. The main point is the quantity which one gives because the idea is to support him. Therefore, Rashi says, "even

1. Our Parshah, Devorim 15:8.
2. Our Parshah, Devorim 15:10.

a hundred times."

Rashi's Explanation

In this week's Torah portion, Re'ah, the Torah discusses the Mitzvah of Tzedokoh, which is usually translated as "charity"³. We are told that "Rather, you shall surely open your hand to him, and you shall lend him sufficient for his needs, which he is lacking." We have translated the seemingly repetitious expression in the original Hebrew, "open, you shall open - פתוח תפתח," as "you shall surely open." Just two verses further, the Torah makes a similar statement. It says, "You shall surely give him, and your heart shall not be upset when you give to him. Because of this thing, (because you are giving to him), the Lord, your G-d, will bless you in all your work and in everything that you do." Here as well, the Torah uses a seemingly repetitious expression in the same manner, "give, you shall give - נתון תתן." Likewise, here, we have translated the seemingly redundant phrase as "you shall surely give."

From the first of the two verses, Rashi cites the words "You shall surely open - (Open you shall open)" and explains that it means that one must open his hands "even many times." On the other hand, Rashi cites the words "You shall surely give him (Give you shall give him)" from the second verse, and explains them to mean "even a hundred times."

Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

Why does Rashi explain, "You shall surely open" differently ("even many times") than "You shall surely give him" ("even a hundred times")? The reason for the similar explanation of both is obvious because of the repetitive verb. Hence the question, why should there be a difference in the way he explains each of them?

We could explain this simply, i.e., according to Peshat. Each of these repetitious verbs comes to add something to the Mitzvah of giving. The first teaches us that we must continue to provide even many times; once does not suffice. The Torah uses the additional "double verb" shortly after that to teach us that we may not also limit our giving too many times. Rather one must give even a hundred times.

However, it is difficult to explain it in this manner. According to Peshat, we must say that the first verse ("You shall surely open your hand") is primarily⁴ discussing the Mitzvah of giving Tzedokoh. This is in contrast to the second verse ("You shall surely give"), which is mainly dealing with lending money. The reason

3. The English word "charity" refers to helping a needy person, despite the fact that I am under no obligation to do so. "Tzedokoh," on the other hand, means righteousness, i.e. doing the right thing.

4. There is a reason that we are careful to write that each verse refers "primarily" to either giving or lending money. In actuality, both verses actually do teach us both things. The proof is, that the verse which begins "You shall surely open your hand," ends with the words "you shall lend him sufficient for his needs, which he is lacking." Yet we said that this verse is discussing giving money, as opposed to giving a loan. Rashi answers this question by explaining that if one's fellow not accept the money as a charitable gift, one is to lend it to him.

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is because the verse "You shall surely give," immediately follows the verse⁵ "Beware, that there not be in your heart an unfaithful thought, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release has approached⁶,' and you will resent your needy brother and not give him, and he will cry out to the Lord against you, and it will be a sin to you." At that point, the Torah immediately tells us that rather than "begrudge your needy brother," "you shall surely give him." This teaches us, that "you shall surely give" refers to lending him money.

Consequently, we know that the earlier verse "you shall surely open your hand" refers primarily to Tzedokoh. In other words, we cannot say that the verses form a progression; the first verse teaches us to give many times, and the second verse adds that one must provide even one hundred times. That is untenable because each verse comes to teach us something different.

We may be able to explain this based on the simple difference between the two verses. The verse which begins with "you shall surely open your hand" to your fellow ends by telling us that we must give him "sufficient for his needs which he is lacking." This does not imply an obligation to give him enough to make him wealthy. However, it does mean a responsibility to restore him to his previous status. This is true even to the extent of supplying him with a horse upon which to ride, and a slave to run before him⁷ if that was his status before becoming impoverished. If we are to supply him with all of his needs to the extent of restoring him to his previous condition, it would rarely be necessary to give him more than a few times. There would certainly be no need to restore him to his extreme wealth one hundred times. However, the verse "you shall surely give," which includes even a small amount, makes it likely that one would need to give him even one hundred times.

However, this answer is also untenable, since, as previously stated, both verses do apply to the Mitzvah of Tzedokoh. As the Torah said in the first verse, all Tzedokoh must be given in a manner that is "sufficient for his needs, which he is lacking." This means that both verses are talking about potentially large amounts, which one may need to give more than several times.

The Explanation

We need to understand the precise difference between both verses. This is what causes Rashi to change his explanation from "several times," to "even a hundred times." This can be understood from the difference between the words which Rashi cites from each verse. As we have said numerous times, Rashi is precise with the words which he includes in the heading of the verse he is explaining. In the first verse, Rashi cites the

5. Our Parshah, Devorim 15:9.

6. The Torah commands us to divide the years into seven-year cycles. The seventh year, which is also called the Sabbatical Year, is significant in many ways. For our purposes, its significance is that it cancels all debts. The Torah is warning the Jewish people not to refrain from lending money because of the approaching Sabbatical Year.

7. These are Rashi's comments on our verse, our Parshah, Devorim 15:8, which he quotes from the Talmud, Kesuvos 67, b and the Midrash.

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words "you shall surely open." In the second verse, Rashi cites the words "you shall surely give *to him*." This is so even though Rashi's lesson is derived only from the words "you shall surely give," meaning from the seeming redundancy of the verb "to give." Why does Rashi add the words "to him?"

The explanation is that the verse "You shall surely open" is a continuation of the verse immediately preceding it⁸, "If there will be among you a needy person ... you shall not harden *your heart*, and you shall not close *your hand* from your needy brother." Conversely, the verse "you shall surely give," as we previously said, follows the Torah's words not to "begrudge your needy brother and not give him."

From this, we can understand that the verse "You shall surely open" is more concerned with opening the heart and the hand of the one who gives. "You shall surely give" is emphasizing the recipient rather than the donor. Therefore, only when it says "you shall surely give," does Rashi include the word(s) "to him," meaning the poor person, in his heading.

In verse "you shall surely open," the point is the quality of the giving more than the quantity. What counts is the opening of one's heart. Therefore, Rashi says, "even many times." He does not limit it to a specific number of times. However, in verse, "you shall surely give," the emphasis is on the recipient. From his perspective, quantity takes precedence over quality. The point is for the poor person to be able to sustain himself. Therefore, Rashi explains that one must give "even a hundred times." Nevertheless, even where the focus is on the quality of the giving, nevertheless, I must not be satisfied with giving once. I must give many times, and each time must be with an open heart and open hands.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

We can get more in-depth insight as to why Rashi first writes "even several times," and then writes even a hundred times. However, first, we must understand another comment which Rashi makes here⁹. "Some people suffer (as they consider) whether or not they should give. Therefore, the Torah writes "you shall not harden (your heart)." Some people stretch out their hand (to give), but then close it; it, therefore, says: "nor close your hand." The wording seems to be unusual. Why doesn't Rashi just say that "some people suffer when they consider giving?" Why the lengthy wording, "whether they should give, or they should not give?" Likewise, he could have said that "some people close their hands," or the like, rather than "stretch out their hand, but then close it."

The explanation is that Rashi is discussing an extremely high level of Tzedokoh. He is speaking of Tzedokoh, which stems from pure free choice. That is the meaning of "whether they should give, or they should not give. The person is suffering; there is a battle going on within him. His Divine soul tells him to

8. Our Parshah, Devorim 15:7.

9. Ibid.

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give, and his animal soul tells him not to give. He chooses to give; he gives in a manner of "surely opening" from within the depths of his G-dly soul. He touches the source of his soul, which is a genuine part of Hashem above. This is the source of *genuine* free choice.

He "surely opens" his heart and his hands, even a hundred times. Although one hundred symbolizes that which is limitless, still in all, it is a finite number. In Chassidic philosophy, it is explained that one hundred symbolizes the completeness of creation; the infinite G-d creates the world through His ten attributes. Each of these ten includes all of the others. It is the perfection of nature. Yet it limited because it is a part of creation.

However, "surely giving," which Rashi says is many times, is a greater level than giving a hundred times. The word "many" does not specify a number; it includes everything, large and small alike. His choice to give Tzedokoh, reaches the highest levels, transcending the universe.

In the merit of Tzedokoh, we should all merit being inscribed and sealed in the book of the righteous. May we merit the redemption through our righteous Moshiach, in keeping with the saying of our Sages that "the redemption will come about in the merit of Tzedokoh"¹⁰.

(Adapted from talks given on Shabbos Parshas Re'ah 5743)

I hope that you gained as much by reading this as I did by translating and adapting it.

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10. Rambam, at the beginning of Chapter 10 of the "Laws of Gifts to the Needy"

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