

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Re'ah

27 Menachem Av, 5784 – August 31, 2024

Compiled from the works of
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An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi Parshas Re'ah

Likkutei Sichos Volume 34, Pages 82 – 88

Rashi in His Own Words

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

רש"י ד"ה פתח תפתח: אפילו כמה פעמים:

דברים ט"ו, י': נתון נתון לו ולא ירע לבבך בתתה לו כי בגלל | הדבר הזה יברכה ה' אלקיך בכל מעשך 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 everything 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, usually called 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 lacks." Rashi defines "You shall surely open" as "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, and the main point is the quantity one gives because the idea is to support him. Therefore, Rashi says, "even a

1. Our Parshah, Devorim 15:8.

2. Ibid, ibid. 15:10.

hundred times."

Rashi's Explanation

In this week's Torah portion, Re'ah, the Torah discusses the Mitzvoh of Tzedokoh, usually translated as "charity³." We are told, "Rather, you shall surely open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his needs, which he lacks." 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, the Lord, your G-d, will bless you in all your work and everything you do." Here, as well, the Torah uses a seemingly repetitious expression in the same manner, "give, you shall give - נתון תתן." Likewise, we have translated the seemingly redundant phrase here 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 is evident because of the repetitive verb. Hence, why should there be a difference in how he explains each of them?

We could explain this according to Peshat. Each of these repetitious verbs adds 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 limit our giving too many times. Instead, one must provide 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") primarily discusses the Mitzvoh of giving Tzedokoh. This contrasts with the second verse ("You shall surely give"), which mainly deals with lending money. The reason is that the verse "You shall surely give" immediately follows the verse⁴ "Beware, that there not be in your heart an unfaithful thought, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release has approached⁵' etc." At that point, the Torah immediately

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. Our Parshah, Devorim 15:9.

5. 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.

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tells us that rather than "begrudge your needy brother," "you shall surely give him." This teaches us that "you shall surely give" means lending him money.

Consequently, 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 that 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 provide him with enough to make him wealthy. However, restoring him to his previous status is his responsibility. One must restore him to his prior status, even by supplying him with a horse to ride and a slave to run before him⁶. If we are to provide him with all of his needs to restore 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 apply to the Mitzvoh 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 talk about potentially large amounts, which one may need to give more than several times.

The Explanation

We need to understand the difference between both verses. This is why Rashi changes his explanation from "several times" to "even a hundred times." This can be understood from the difference between the words Rashi cites from each verse. As we have said numerous times, Rashi is precise with the words he includes in the heading of the verse he is explaining. In the first verse, Rashi cites the words "you shall surely open." In the second verse, Rashi mentions, "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 "You shall surely open" continues the verse immediately preceding it⁷. "If there will be a needy person ... you shall not harden *your heart*, and you shall not close *your hand* from your needy

6. 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.

7. Our Parshah, Devorim 15:7.

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brother." Conversely, as we previously said, the verse "you shall surely give" follows the Torah's words not to "be grudge your needy brother and not give him."

From this, we can understand that "You shall surely open" is more concerned with opening the heart and the hand of the one giving, and "You shall surely give" emphasizes 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 the verse "You shall surely open," the point is that the *quality* of the giving is 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, I must not be satisfied with giving once. I must give many times, and each time, I must provide with an open heart and open hands.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

We can get a more in-depth insight into why Rashi first writes "even several times" and then writes even a hundred times. However, first, we must understand another comment that Rashi makes here⁸. "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 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 not give. The person is suffering; there is a battle going on within him. His Divine soul tells him to give, and his animal soul tells him not to. 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, a genuine part of Hashem above. This is the source of *genuinely* free choice.

He "surely opens" his heart and hands even a hundred times. Although one hundred symbolizes that which is limitless, still in all, it is a finite number. Chassidic philosophy explains that one hundred represents 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 is limited because it is a part of creation.

8. Ibid.

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However, "surely giving," which Rashi says must be done 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. 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 Tzedokoh⁹.

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

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

To dedicate a week, a month, or a year to the Rashi of the Week, [click here](#).

You can find us on the web at www.RebbeTeachesRashi.org.

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

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THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE**

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the Soldiers of Tzivos Hashem **Chaim, Aiden Oded, and Zacharya Matan** שׂיחׂוֹי Morris
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to their family and a Torah light to their community

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in health, happiness, Torah, and mitzvot

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