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**Quarters Versus Morals: Toward a
Balance Between *Tzedek* and
Tzedakah in the Classroom**

By Michael Shulman

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion
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Michael Shulman
March 3, 2003
Cincinnati, Ohio

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Digest

Digest

Walk into any Reform Jewish supplementary school in America and you will find the collection of *tzedakah*. From the youngest children to the oldest teenagers, *tzedakah* is a value that touches every grade level. Every year, tens of thousands of dollars in pennies, nickels and quarters are collected along with countless cans of food and articles of clothing to be donated to a wide range of organizations around the world. But what lessons and values exist behind the coins? What are we teaching our children about the Jewish commandment and value of *tzedakah*? In order to successfully teach a subject we must be able to define that subject. Can our students and even our teachers elucidate the complex meaning embodied in the word *tzedakah*?

The purpose of this thesis was to create a model curriculum on *tzedakah* that will demonstrate its role in Reform Jewish education. To that end, I employed four major components that aided in the creation of this model: textual references, historical documents, educational resources and survey data.

Our Jewish tradition is rich with diverse references to *tzedakah*. Examining the sources from the Tanakh, Talmud, *Pirkei Avot*, Maimonides and the *Shulchan Arukh* give us much insight into *tzedakah* as both a mitzvah and a value. The development from the biblical and Talmudic understanding of *tzedakah* to our modern conception is significant. How do we understand these sources in our current context? Which sources are relevant? Which are not? How has concept of *tzedakah* changed from the commandment: "if there be among you a needy man, one of your brethren, within any of your gates, in your land which the Lord your God gave to you, you shall not harden your heart, nor shut your hand from your needy fellow..." (Deuteronomy 15:7) to the eight rungs of Maimonides'

ladder of *tzedakah*? How do we skillfully use our sources to convey the value of *tzedakah* to children in our supplementary schools?

The second component is an examination of the methods utilized to teach *tzedakah* in supplementary schools in America. Educational documents and articles from journals and magazines of the past 70 years paint a picture of how Jewish educators have approached the concept of *tzedakah* in their schools. What aspects of the value did they feel were most important? What methods did they try? What role did *tzedakah* as a value play in Reform religious schools in the past? How have these attitudes changed over time?

The third component is a comprehensive review and evaluation of educational materials on the subject of *tzedakah*. A diverse amount of material exists on this topic: curricula, films, fictional stories, instant lessons, websites, retreats and family programs. Through the use of current educational theories on learning, curriculum and instruction, I examine some of these materials attempting to measure appropriateness, fulfillment of stated goals, lesson clarity, student engagement and instructional variety. I was interested in exploring the place of *tzedakah* in the general curriculum of the school. Is it a core value or is it marginal? Is there a particular grade level in which the concept is particularly relevant?

The final component involves actual data from Reform supplementary schools around the United States. I surveyed selected schools based on size and instructional program in order to ascertain their approach to *tzedakah*. What materials are used? What methods of instruction are drawn on? Developmentally, when is the concept of *tzedakah* introduced? When is it reinforced? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the

tzedakah programs in these schools? The answers to these questions allowed me to further focus my model curriculum using the experiences of teachers and principals from around the nation.

Introduction

Introduction

From the very core of our faith, the Torah, one can see the important place *tzedakah* holds in Judaism. *Tzedakah* was never intended to be a choice for Jews, rather an obligation for all time and in every place. After all, the Torah asserts, "there will never cease to be poor among you." From this admission, our Jewish tradition has sought to address this timeless problem through the organization and creation of *tzedakah* institutions. In turn, these institutions have infused themselves into every aspect of Jewish faith and practice.

The root of *tzedakah* is the concept of *tzedek*, righteousness, and it is through *tzedek* that a Jew strives to model his or her behavior. *Tzedek* is the Jewish value that encompasses all the others; it is the value that rests at the core of all we do as Jews. As we seek *tzedek* in our own lives, we must never forget that all people at one time in their lives also search for *tzedek* in some form or another. We act righteously when we allow others to strive for righteousness in their own life journey.

Tzedakah is one significant way we can do this. For it is through acts of *tzedakah* that relationships are built, connections are made and the community grows stronger. *Tzedakah* reminds us that, as individuals, we are of little importance. Only when we understand that our personal strength rests in the strength of the community can we really live a life of *tzedek*. Our Jewish history reflects this knowledge. From the shtetl in Eastern Europe through the waves of immigration to the United States and Israel, we see Jews helping other Jews survive and thrive.

A story from our tradition: A non-Jew, seeking to understand the role and meaning of *tzedakah* in Judaism once asked Rabbi Akiva a curious question: "Why does

your God who loves and cares for the needy not personally provide for their support and well-being? Instead, God commands you to share from what is yours!" After pondering the question for a moment, Rabbi Akiva responded. He said: "By practicing *tzedakah*, money is turned into a means of salvation. God wants people to help other people because through this kind of behavior, the whole world becomes a community where people care about other people."

When contemplating the donation of *tzedakah* we should never lose sight of the spirit of *tzedakah*—the core value behind it. Of course, practically, we need to know how much to give, when to give and when not to give. We must know who can receive *tzedakah* and who shouldn't receive it, who should collect it and how we should distribute it. But above all, we must always struggle to remember the lesson of Rabbi Akiva. The purpose of *tzedakah* is to empower each of us to reach out to all people in need; to help us address our inherent narcissism and compel us to look beyond ourselves to those around us.

Chapter 1

Selected Jewish Sources of *Tzedakah*

Selected Jewish Sources of *Tzedakah*

From Judaism's most ancient sources to its most recent ones, the subject of *tzedakah* has been delineated, discussed and debated. Throughout our history, scholars and sages have tried to highlight the importance of *tzedakah*, and have sought answers to such questions as: Who gives it? Who collects it? Who receives it? They have also debated why one should give *tzedakah* in the first place? What attitude should one have when giving it? How much should one give?

One could imagine that because of the diversity of sources from different eras and places, there exists a wide range of opinions concerning the answers to these important questions. Instead of looking at our sources chronologically, this chapter will focus on how these diverse sources answered the essential practical questions regarding *tzedakah*. Through this chapter, I hope to paint a picture of how a principal or teacher could approach the value and action of *tzedakah* in our own time in a religious school setting.

The Power of *Tzedakah*

Tanchuma, Leviticus 17a

Through the righteous-of-charity, I shall behold Your face. [Psalms 17:15]

Notice that [this verse illustrates the] immense power of *tzedakah*: For [the verse indicated that] a person who gives [as little as] a single penny to the poor is deemed worthy to behold the face of the Divine Presence. In the material world, [however,] it is customary that a matron who wishes to be received by her king must fashion a suitable crown [as a present for him.] And by presenting this crown, which she brings to adorn him, [the matron becomes worthy of] beholding the face of the king. But a person needs to give only a single penny to the poor in order to behold the face of the Divine Presence. Furthermore, why did David [the author of the Psalm,] see fit to discuss the power of *tzedakah* exclusively? [He did so deliberately] so as to demonstrate that even the wicked, who have no virtues other

than the giving of *tzedakah*, are [nonetheless] deemed worthy to behold the face of the Divine Presence.

This passage from *Tanchuma* illustrates the relationships among humans, *tzedakah* and God. It is through the action of *tzedakah* that humans become worthy of seeing the Divine Presence. One who gives even the smallest amount to a poor person fulfills this maxim from Psalms and sees God's face. In the real world, though, things do not work this way. The example cited in this text demonstrates this. If one wants to behold an earthy king she must bring something appropriate to get his attention. God, on the other hand, only requires that one make the effort to donate to a poor man to be worthy to meet God. Further, according to the verse, it is *tzedakah* alone that is the means through which we behold the face of God. Anyone, who is so moved to give even that smallest amount to a poor man becomes worthy, even one without virtues, one who is full of wickedness.

This interpretation epitomizes the force *tzedakah* carries. If approached in the proper way, *tzedakah* indeed has the ability to build relationships between God and humans. This text expresses the magnitude of the value of *tzedakah*: giving *tzedakah* brings one closer to God. Donating coins is not merely an action between two people; it directly involves an element of the Divine. When we remember this fact, we can perhaps find great meaning and value in the act of *tzedakah*.

The Significance of Tzedakah

Baba Batra 9a

The commandment of *tzedakah*, is equal to all the other commandments.

Talmud Yerushalmi Pe'ah 1:1

Tzedakah and *gemilut chasadim* are equal to the total of all the other commandments.

Mishneh Torah, Gifts for the Poor, 10:1-2

We are obligated to be more scrupulous in fulfilling the commandment of charity than any other positive commandment because charity is the sign of a righteous man, the seed of Abraham our Father, as it is said, "For I know him, that he will command his children...to do righteousness." [Genesis 18:19] The throne of Israel is established and the religion of truth is upheld only through charity, as it is said, "In righteousness shall you be established." [Isaiah 54:14] Israel is redeemed only through charity, as it is written, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment and they that return of her with righteousness." [Isaiah 1:27]

No man has ever become impoverished by giving charity and no evil or damage has ever resulted from charity, as it is said, "and the work of righteousness is peace." [Isaiah 32:17]

Whosoever displays mercy to others will be granted mercy himself, as it is said, "and God will grant you mercy, and have compassion upon you, and multiply you." [Deuteronomy 13:18]

If someone is cruel and does not show mercy, there are sufficient grounds to suspect his lineage, since cruelty is found only among the other nations, as it is said, "They are cruel and will not show mercy." [Jeremiah 50:42]

All Jews and those attached to them are like brothers, as it is said, "You are the sons to the Lord your God." [Deuteronomy 14:1] And if a brother will not show mercy to his brother, then who will have mercy on him? And to whom can the poor of Israel look for help, to those other nations who hate and persecute them?

They can look for help only to their brethren.

Whosoever refuses to give charity is called *belial*, the same term which is applied to idol worshippers.

This text from *Mishneh Torah* elaborates upon the simple statements from *Baba Batra 9a* and *Yerushalmi Pe'ah 1:1*. It answers the question: why should the observance of the mitzvah of *tzedakah* be taken more seriously than the observance of any of the other positive commandments? Through the use of a series of proof texts from the Tanakh, Maimonides shows why this is the case. First, he connects the concept of righteousness in various texts to the giving of *tzedakah*. He uses the same method to

demonstrate a similar understanding of acts of lovingkindness. Finally, Maimonides establishes that Jews must help each other through *tzedakah* because if they don't, then nobody else will. This passage concludes with a strong statement that the one who does not give *tzedakah* is likened to the one who worships idols.

Isaiah 1:17

Learn to do good. Devote yourself to justice; aid the wronged.
Uphold the rights of the orphan; defend the cause of the widow.

Isaiah instructs us to have a concern for the disadvantaged in our society, the wronged, the orphan and the widow. It is through goodness and a devotion to justice that one acts righteously.

Sukkot 49b

Whoever practices charity and justice is as though he filled the whole world with lovingkindness. Greater is he who practices charity than all the sacrifices.

This text teaches that an act of *tzedakah* affects the world. The act of giving just a few coins makes the world, as a whole, a better place. It improves the situation of one person, but at the same time influences others to do the same. Indeed, one good deed leads to another.

Tosefta, Pe'ah 4:21

Charity and lovingkindness intercede greatly and promote peace between Israel and their Father in Heaven.

Interactions among people, the formation of relationships, and the consideration of the needs of others are all paths to God.

Talmud Yerushalmi, Berakhot 5:1

He who occupies himself with the affairs of the community is as one who studies Torah.

It is possible to view the traditions, stories and laws in the Torah as a blueprint of how to interact within a society. One who concerns himself with the operation of the community learns about those interactions in reality, instead of from just the blueprint itself.

Shabbat 139a

Jerusalem can only be redeemed through *tzedakah*.

Pirkei Avot 1:14

He used to say: If I am not for myself, who is for me? If I care only for myself, what am I? If not now, when?

Tzedakah is an Obligation

Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 7:10

He who refuses to give alms, or gives less than is proper for him, must be compelled by the court to comply, and must be flogged for disobedience until he gives as much as the court estimates he should give. The court may even seize his property in his presence and take from him what is proper for him to give. One may indeed pawn things in order to give alms, even on the eve of the Sabbath.

Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 7:5, 9:18

Even a poor man who lives entirely on alms must himself give alms to another poor man.

If a poor man contributes a *perutah* to the alms tray or to the alms fund, it should be accepted. If he does not, he may not be constrained to do so.

The donation of *tzedakah* is compulsory, enforceable by the local Jewish court.

Someone who refuses to give or gives less than his assessment is punished by the court and then compelled to give to appropriate amount. The court is also given the power to seize the person's property in order to acquire the appropriate amount from it to be donated. Why such harsh actions? *Tzedakah* is intended to be a regular behavior in a

community. One who chooses not to participate in the community by not giving *tzedakah*, in effect, separates himself from it. An individual's separation from the community threatens not only the livelihood of the individual, but also the very livelihood of the community itself.

These texts also assert the importance of following the dictates of the local court of law. If an individual opts not to play by the rules of the community, then he or she must endure the consequences.

The second text states that the requirement to give to the *tzedakah* tray or fund is for all people, regardless of their economic situation. In order to maintain his dignity, the poor man is treated like everyone else with respect to *tzedakah*; he is obligated to donate even the smallest portion of the *tzedakah* given to him to the fund or the tray. This obligation is not enforced by anyone else; it is only for the individual himself. As stated in the text, the *gabbai*, or court may not compel him to do so.

Grudge Match: Tzedakah vs. Gemilut Chasadim

Sukkah 14a

In three ways *gemilut chasadim* is greater than *tzedakah*—*tzedakah* involves money, it is for the poor and it is only for the living. *Gemilut chasadim* involves the body as well as money—it is for the poor as well as the rich; and it is for the dead as well as for the living.

This passage from the Babylonian Talmud compares and contrasts *gemilut chasadim*, acts of lovingkindness, with *tzedakah*, the donation of money. The conclusion is that *gemilut chasadim* are greater because they have a broader effect on society. Also, *gemilut chasadim* are greater because they involve the entire self.

The donation of *tzedakah* has the potential to be impersonal. When giving money to a fund or a collector, we are once removed from the recipient of the *tzedakah* funds. The money is seen as the source of the aid, not the donor. *Gemilut chasadim* are actions that originate from a person and are generally performed so the recipient can directly benefit. This text emphasizes the importance of one-on-one contact with the recipient. When one's entire self is involved directly, one can better address both the physical and psychological needs of the poor person.

Because *gemilut chasadim* involve money and the body, it is assumed that anyone can be the recipient of such acts. *Tzedakah* is intended only for those who lack money. *Gemilut chasadim*, on the other hand, are intended for anyone in a situation where they would help.

Why Should I Give?

Baba Batra 10a

Tinnius Rufus asked: "Why does your God who loves and cares for the needy not provide for their support himself? Surely he could supply their needs. Why does he command you to share from what is yours?" Akiva replied, "By practicing *tzedakah*, money is turned into a means of salvation. God, who is the father of both the rich and the poor, wants the one to help the other. Thereby, the whole world becomes a household of love."

This story begins with a seemingly valid question from a non-Jew. Tinnius Rufus asks Rabbi Akiva why a supposedly omnipotent God doesn't help the poor instead commanding humans to do so. Akiva responds saying that *tzedakah* is really not about the needs of people. *Tzedakah* is the means by which relationships among people are created. Practicing *tzedakah* increases contact and communication among people. God

does not help the poor because people have to learn how to interact with their neighbors.

As a result, the benefits of humans helping humans are felt all throughout the world.

Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 10:16

He who provides maintenance for his grown sons and daughters—who he is not obliged to maintain—in order that the sons might study Torah, and that the daughters might learn to follow the right path and not expose themselves to contempt, and likewise he who provides maintenance for his father and mother, is accounted as performing an act of charity. Indeed, it is an outstanding act of charity, since one's relative has precedence over other people. Whosoever serves food and drink to poor men and orphans at his table, will, when he calls to God, receive an answer and delight in it.

This text illustrates the frequently cited dictum: money is power. Used for good, the money we donate as *tzedakah* has the power to enable others to do things, including observing mitzvot, they otherwise wouldn't be able to do. Helping someone study Torah or to get married and honoring one's parents are some of the central mitzvot in Judaism. Even more merit comes to the one who allows his relatives to perform these essential Jewish tenets. The results of donations such as these not only benefit the recipients but the donor as well. When he dies and comes face-to-face with God, he will gain knowledge and will be happy for eternity.

Baba Batra 9b

Rabbi Isaac also said: He who gives a small coin to a poor man obtains six blessings, and he who addresses to him words of comfort obtains eleven blessings.

Giving a small amount of money to a poor man grants the donor six blessings. Offering him words of comfort grants the donor eleven blessings. Why the difference? Money helps a person with their physical needs, they can use the coins to buy food, clothes or anything else they need. But words of comfort, on the other hand, help a

person with their psychological needs. Words are representative of the fostering of a one-on-one relationship between the donor and the recipient. Words exchanged offer the poor man the dignity and respect all humans deserve. It takes no time to throw a few coins at a poor person—one can almost do it with no thought at all. In contrast, words require that extra step—words require forethought. Similarly, the donation of money is one-sided, while words invite an exchange and perhaps a conversation.

Psalms 106:3

Happy are those who act justly, who do right at all times.

This verse from Psalms can be understood as a challenge. If you want to know whether this statement is true—try it and see for yourself!

Pirkei Avot 2:8

The more Torah, the more life; the more study, the more wisdom; the more counsel, the more understanding; the more *tzedakah*, the more peace.

Tzedakah promotes peace in a community and ultimately in the world by creating connections and strengthening relationships among people.

Micah 6:8

He has told you what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God.

Judaism is more a way of life than simply a faith. This verse from the prophet Micah calls on us to do something. In order to promote goodness, peace and righteousness we must take action. It is not studying, believing or contemplating that matter. Rather, it is doing, loving and walking.

It's Not Your Stuff Anyway!

Leviticus 25:8-11; 23-24

You shall count off seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the period of seven weeks of years gives you a total of forty-nine years. Then you shall sound the horn loud; in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, the Day of Atonement, you shall have the horn sounded throughout your land and you shall hallow the fiftieth year. You shall proclaim release throughout the land for all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, each of you shall return to his holding and each of you shall return to his family. That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you. But the land must not be sold beyond reclaim, for the land is Mine; you are but strangers resident with Me. Throughout the land that you hold, you must provide for the redemption of the land.

Pirkei Avot 3:7

Rabbi Elazar of Bertotha said: Give to God of one's own, for you and yours are God's. The same thought was expressed by David, who said: "For all things come from You, and we have given You only what is Yours."

Birkat HaMazon

Blessed be our God from whose [bounty] we have eaten and as a result of whose goodness we live.

This selection of sources from Torah, *Pirkei Avot* and liturgy highlight a particular rationale for the commandment of *tzedakah* and the actual giving of *tzedakah* itself.

These texts remind us that, in fact, we don't own our possessions—we don't even own ourselves. Instead, we simply make use of them throughout our lives. In a sense, we help God manage all that it is on this earth. Ultimately, everything we see, we eat and we are, belongs to God. *Tzedakah*, therefore, is a way for humans to redistribute what belongs to God, to all who need it. Since we don't own the money, food, etc. that is in our possession in the first place, giving *tzedakah* should be easy because we are simply reallocating what belongs to God to the people who need it most. The commandment to

give *tzedakah* is a way for humans to remember that everything we have is a gift from God. To give *tzedakah* is a means by which we can demonstrate our faith in this theology and to thank God for all that we have.

Giving and Not Taking

Leviticus 25: 35-36

If your brother, being in straits, comes under your authority, and you hold him as though a resident alien, let him live by your side. Do not exact from him advance or accrued interest, but fear your God. Let him live by your side as your brother. Do not lend him money at advance interest, or give him your food at accrued interest. I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, to be your God.

These verses from Leviticus represent one of the primary sources of our tradition of *tzedakah*. We are commanded to help our fellow Jews when they are in need. But we are not to take advantage of their situation by giving them what they need and making money from it. This stipulation applies to either money or food. The final portion of these two verses reminds us that God brought the Israelites out of Egypt in order to give the land of Canaan to them. In a way, God did not desire to make a profit with these gifts. The Israelites were in straits and were in need of *tzedakah*. Seeing this, God gave them freedom without asking for advance interest of any kind.

These verses also demonstrate the potential difficulty in helping others through *tzedakah*. We are instructed not to monetarily gain from helping someone out, but, in a way, that is not practical. The interest from a loan can perhaps be seen as a payment back for potential hardships experienced due to the lending of the loan. Because of these commandments, the motivation to give *tzedakah* must come from somewhere else aside

personal gain. Helping others in need is not about making money; indeed, it is not about the giver at all. Instead, these verses assert the primary concern for the one in need.

Attitude is Everything

The following texts help us understand how best to approach the donation of *tzedakah*. They seek to provide us with a paradigm on the best way to give while taking into consideration the needs of the recipient. In general, these texts underscore the importance of relationships among people in a community. One should be open to sharing what he or she has with others.

Pirkei Avot, Chapter 5:10

There are four characters among men: He who says: "what is mine is mine, and what is yours is yours" is the average type, though some day this is a Sodom-type; he who says: "What is mine is yours, and what is yours is mine" is ignorant; he who says: "What is mine is yours, and what is yours is yours" is godly; he who says: "what is yours is mine, and what is mine is mine" is wicked.

The first man is average because he asks nothing of himself and nothing of others. His attitude is that everyone should worry about himself. He doesn't believe in creating bonds with his family, neighbors or friends. The second man is ignorant because he doesn't believe in any type of boundary between people. He is so brash as to say that what belongs to someone else, belongs to him. The godly man desires to give from what he has and asks for nothing in return. The wicked man wants it all, what belongs to him and what belongs to others. The attitude we learn from this text is that one should be giving of him or herself, without requiring anything as payment or reward.

Pirkei Avot 5:13

There are four dispositions toward charity. He who desires to give but who would rather that others did not give – he begrudges the good of others, he who desires that others give but is unwilling to give himself – he begrudges his own good; he who gives and is desirous that others give also – he is a saintly man; he who refuses to give and does not wish other to give, he is a wicked person.

Each of these attitudes toward *tzedakah* involves not just the individual giving but also his general attitude towards others who give. The first man gives *tzedakah* but believes that others should not—he should be the only one. Perhaps he is the type of man that wants to be the center of attention, and wants a reward for giving. The second man wants others to give but doesn't believe that he himself should give. This is a selfish man, who is inconsistent between his beliefs and his practice. The saintly man gives and wants others to give and the wicked man is the one who does not give and wants the same for everyone else.

The ideal demonstrated in this text is a person who gives and wants others to give too. He does not want the spotlight alone, and he is unfailing in his beliefs and actions. He has faith that *tzedakah* can help people and therefore believes that all should donate.

Nachman of Bratzlav

He who gives charity with a smile is truly a wholehearted man.

Giving *tzedakah* is a mitzvah in every sense of the term. But to give with a smile, with a pleasant demeanor is even better. While the money addresses the physical needs of the poor man, a simple smile addresses his psychological needs.

Mishneh Torah , Gifts to the Poor, 10

There are eight degrees of charity, one higher than the other.

- The highest degree, exceeded by none, is that of the person who assists a poor Jew by providing him with a gift or a loan or by

accepting him into a business partnership or by helping him find employment, in a word, by putting him where he can dispense with other people's aid. With reference to such aid it is said, "You shall strengthen him, be he a stranger or a settler, he shall love with you," [Leviticus 25:35] which means strengthen him in such a manner that his falling into want is prevented.

According to Maimonides, the ideal situation for giving *tzedakah* is for that donation in the form of a gift, loan or job is the last one the recipient will ever need. He is propped up and put into a situation where he will never again fall into poverty. This is considered the highest degree because it solves the problem in a way that addresses both the physical and psychological needs of the recipient.

- A step below this stands the one who gives alms to the needy in such a manner that the giver knows not to whom he gives and the recipient knows not from whom it is that he takes. Such exemplifies performing the meritorious act for its own sake. An illustration would be the Hall of Secrecy in the ancient sanctuary where the righteous would place their gift clandestinely and where poor people of high lineage would come and secretly help themselves to succor. The rank next to this is of him who drops money in the charity box. One should not drop money in the charity box unless one is sure that the person in charge is trustworthy, wise and competent to handle the funds properly, as was Rabbi Hananya ben Teradyon.

The second level from the top is giving *tzedakah* in such a way that neither the donor nor the recipient knows one another. When the Temple stood, inside existed the Hall of Secrecy, a place that provided the circumstances to accomplish anonymous giving and receiving successfully. The equivalent of this in Maimonides' time was the charity box where donors placed their money and then distributed by the trustworthy *gabbai*. Similar to the previous step, the needs of the recipient are met through this level. The difference is that the person's economic problems are not solved.

- One step lower is that in which the giver knows to whom he gives but the poor person knows not from whom he receives. Examples of this were the great sages who would go forth and throw coins covertly into poor people's doorways. This method becomes fitting and exalted, should it happen that those in charge of the charity fund do not conduct its affairs properly.

When total anonymity is impossible, it is better for the donor to remain unknown than the recipient. Presumably, a donor doesn't give much thought to his donation after it is made. On the other hand, for the recipient, the donation is of great value. When the donor remains unknown, the recipient avoids feeling indebted to a particular person thus potentially creating an awkward situation.

- A step lower is that in which the poor person knows from whom he is taking but the giver knows not to whom he is giving. Examples of this were the great sages who would tie their coins in their scarves which they would fling over their shoulders so that the poor might help themselves without suffering shame.

If the recipient must be known, then it is best for the donor to be unknown. This situation nonetheless, maintains some level of dignity for the poor person involved.

- The next degree lower is that of him who, with his own hand, bestows a gift before the poor person asks.

When anonymity is impossible, the best circumstances for the donation of *tzedakah* is for the donor to anticipate the needs of the poor person and give before he is asked. This situation reflects the importance of being aware of the needs of those around us. Many times, it takes a great deal of strength and courage for someone to ask for help. Empathy can help protect the self-respect of the recipient.

- The next degree lower is that of him who gives only after the poor person asks.
- The next degree lower is that of him who gives less than is fitting but gives with a gracious mien.
- The next degree lower is that of him who gives morosely. Whosoever gives charity to a poor man ill-manneredly and with downcast looks has lost all the merit of his action even though he should give him a thousand gold pieces. He should give with good grace and with joy and should sympathize with him in his plight, as it is said, "Did I not weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the poor?" [Job 30:25] He should speak to him words of consolation and sympathy, as it is said, "and I gladdened the heart of the widow." [Job 29:13]

The last three levels are most concerned with the donor's attitude—whether or not he is giving kindly or resentfully. In fact, it is better to speak words of consolation and sympathy to him than giving him a thousand gold pieces in a disrespectful manner.

Nine Degrees of Benevolence, Al-Nakawa

- A trivial gift to a beggar who goes from house to house
- Communal shelter for transients
- The dowering of indigent brides
- Equipping indigent grooms with household appurtenances and with clothes
- Assisting, in a suitable manner, a poor person of worthy lineage
- Assisting, in accordance with prior standards of living, a poor person who has seen better days
- Assistance, in the guise of a loan, for a poor person who is sensitive about accepting alms
- Dignified assistance to a necessitous scholar by means of business of patronage
- Assistance adapted to the recipients individual needs

Al-Nakawa, was a 14th C. scholar from Muslim Spain. In this text, he summarizes the chief forms of *tzedakah* detailed in the Talmud. They are specific examples of ways in which a person can offer help to someone in need. Unlike the Maimonides' eight degrees of *tzedakah*, al-Nakawa's list of the nine degrees of benevolence is not hierarchal. The

scholar also compiled a list of the five degrees of benevolence that considers both the mental attitude of the donor and the recipient. This one, similar to Maimonides' list, is in order from the least desirable situation to the most desirable situation. This list is especially concerned with public and private domains.

Five Degrees of Benevolence, Al-Nakawa

- Giving or pledging publicly and ostentatiously and, in certain instance, failing to pay the pledged sum
- Giving or pledging in public not only with ostentatious intent but also with devout intent
- Giving with devout intent and, in such wise, that none but the giver and the recipient know of the transaction.
- Giving in such wise that the giver and the recipient are unknown to one another.
- Aiding the poor person by means of a business partnership of a loan.

Pesachim 8b

He who says: "I'm giving this *se'la* to charity in order for my son to live or to have a share in the world to come," he is fully a righteous person.

Rashi's Commentary on Pesachim 8b

He is a righteous person in this matter, and we do not say that he did the mitzvah not for its own sake, for he fulfilled his creator's commandment to give *tzedakah* even though he intended it for his own benefit or for his children's welfare.

Tzedakah given with ulterior motives in mind, is still, nevertheless, *tzedakah*. God simply required one to give *tzedakah*, why he gives is beside the point.

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Hagigah 5a

When Rabbi Yanai saw a person giving a *zuz* to a poor man in public, he said: "It would have been better had you not given it to him now, than having given it to him and embarrassing him."

Sefer HaChinuch 66

To lend a poor man as one can afford, according to what he needs in order to bring him relief and ease his anguish from him. This religious duty of giving loans is a stronger and greater obligation than the mitzvah of giving charity: For if someone's poverty has become revealed and known among people, and he has come out into the open and ask of them, his distress and suffering is not as great as that of a person who has not yet been reduced to this ignominy and who fears to enter this state; and if he will have the small help of a loan, so that he can find a little relief, perhaps he will never need to come asking; then, when God will mercifully grant him financial ease, he will pay his creditors and live from the rest.

Therefore, our complete, perfect Torah adjured us about this, to support a destitute person with a loan before he will be reduced to begging. For it is stated, "if (*im*) you lend money to My people," [Exodus 22:24] and our sages of blessed memory said in the Midrash *Mechilta*: Every word '*im*' in the Torah denotes something voluntary, except in three cases where they denote something obligatory, and this is one of them. And they prove the matter because it is written elsewhere, in an expression of commandment, "and you shall surely lend him enough," [Deuteronomy 15:8]

The root reason for the precept is that God wishes for His created humans to be educated and accustomed in the quality of lovingkindness and compassion, since it is a noble quality.

Leviticus Rabbah 34:17

"The restorer of paths to dwell in" [Isaiah 58:12] R. Judah, the son of R. Simon, said, the poor man sits and complains, "Why am I different than he, he lives in his house and I live here; he sleeps in a bed and I sleep on the ground." If you stand up and give him *tzedakah*, I consider it as if you made peace between him and me, as it is written, "or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me." [Isaiah 27:5]

Leviticus Rabbah 34

And if you extend your soul to the hungry...

R. Levi said: If you do not have money to give him, console him with words. Tell him: My heart goes out to you that I don't have anything to give you.

Talmud Yerushalmi, Pe'ah 8:8

"Blessed is he who considers the poor" [Psalms 41:2]

Look carefully into the situation in order to determine how best to help him. R. Yonah once saw that a wealthy man who lost his wealth was

too embarrassed to accept charity. Whereupon he visited him and told him, "Since I heard that you've just received a large inheritance from overseas, take this object in the meantime. When things will be better, you'll pay me back." When the man took the object, R. Yonah told him that he gave it as a gift.

Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 8:15

A woman takes precedence over a man as far as feeding and clothing and redemption from captivity are concerned, because it is customary for a man to go begging from door to door, but not for a woman, as her sense of shame is greater.

As mentioned before, *tzedakah* is not only concerned with the physical needs of the poor person, but equally with his psychological needs. These texts demonstrate the various ways we can try to maintain the dignity of the poor when giving *tzedakah*. The first way involves where *tzedakah* is given. Donation of *tzedakah* in the private realm is far superior to donation in public. Giving in public can bring shame upon the poor person by bringing intimate, private details out into the open. Nobody wants to have their personal business exposed for everyone to see. For the same reason, the giving of a loan is preferable to the donation of *tzedakah* because the reason for the loan does not become public knowledge. A loan is also preferable because the recipient therefore does not need to keep asking for money week after week. The constant need to ask for more *tzedakah* produces a risk that more and more people will find out about the person's situation. The anguish caused by this constant risk of exposure is another reason why discretion is a must when giving *tzedakah*. We must give special consideration to a poor woman. Maimonides instructs us that her shame is greater if she were reduced to begging from door-to-door.

One of the worst things someone can do when dealing with a poor person is to ignore him. Even if we don't have any money on hand, if we encounter a poor person, we are instructed to offer words.

Sometimes we need to get creative when giving *tzedakah* in order to preserve the recipient's dignity. It is important to consider the poor person's situation and perhaps invent a story that will protect the person's self-respect. In *Yerushalmi Pe'ah* 8:8, Rabbi Yonah takes to heart the verse from Psalms, "Blessed is he who considers the poor." The giving of *tzedakah* is not to be taken lightly. It is wrapped up in complex emotions of fear, embarrassment and disgrace. To add more pain to a poor person is often times seen as worse than not giving *tzedakah* to him in the first place.

It's Not Easy Giving Tzedakah

Sifrei Deuteronomy 117

"You shall not harden your heart" – refers to a person who becomes stressed when considering whether or not to give; "You shall not shut your hand" – refers to a person who extends his hand and pulls it back.

This commentary on Deuteronomy 15:7-8 illustrates the gravity of giving *tzedakah*—many times it is not an easy to decide to give. *Sifrei* seeks to explain what possible reason a person would have to harden their heart or shut their hand to a person in need. The decision to give *tzedakah* is a difficult one; it is not simply donating money to a fund. Instead, it involves emotions—in the heart and through contact—hand to hand. For these reasons, giving of one's self is many times a difficult action to take. What does it mean when the Torah speaks of hardening one's heart? This is a person who doesn't know whether or not to give; a person who is in the throes of deciding not how much to

give, or who to give it to, but whether to give in the first place. Hardening one's heart seems to connote one who becomes sick deciding whether to help out someone or one who does not invest his or her whole heart into the action of giving *tzedakah*. Similarly, one who shuts his or her hand connotes one who perhaps fears the human contact generally associated with the giving of *tzedakah*.

Arba Turim

Charity demands the utmost care and diligence, for it may save a life.

What Tzedakah Does: For The Giver

Proverbs 21:21

He who strives to do good and kind deeds attains life, success, and honor.

Baba Batra 9b

Everyone who regularly practices *tzedakah* will have wise and wealthy children.

As seen in previous texts, *tzedakah* is overwhelmingly intended for the recipient. As a result, our texts are mainly concerned with the material and psychological needs of the recipient. But these texts are the occasional examples that discuss a concern for the giver. Perhaps to encourage people to give *tzedakah*, these texts inform us the good that comes from the action. Do these passages suggest an automatic reward for the donation of *tzedakah*? Perhaps. But if we again look at *tzedakah* as a means of building stronger relationships within a community, then we can understand these passages in a slightly different manner. The more *tzedakah* is practiced, the greater the potential for success and honor in one's life. Similarly, when children see their parents giving to others, they will have the potential to learn from that model and lead rich and positive lives.

Midrash Proverbs 11: 21

R. Yohanah said: An illustration: A person visited a prostitute and paid her. As he was leaving her house, he encountered a poor man who asked him for charity. He gave it to him and left. The man then said, "If God didn't want to forgive my sins, he would not have sent the poor man to me to give *tzedakah*; so the sin that I just committed has been forgiven." God said to him, "Wicked man, do not think this way, but draw insight from Solomon's wisdom, who said, "Hand to hand will not cleanse evil."

The text demonstrates that giving *tzedakah* is not intended to benefit the giver. The person who sinned by paying for a prostitute thought he had the opportunity to repent for that sin by giving money to a poor man he saw after his encounter. In this *midrash*, God responds to the sinner citing Solomon, who said that giving a handout does not cleanse one of his sins. According to Maimonides, handing a few coins to a poor man is one of the lowest forms of *tzedakah*. Face-to-face donation, especially, with ulterior motives doesn't reflect the spirit in which *tzedakah* should be given. Not only is this particular manner of *tzedakah* not desirable, but *tzedakah*, in general, is not a legitimate form of repentance in the first place. We learn elsewhere that repentance is a complex, multi-step process that involves much more than *tzedakah* alone. Cleansing evil requires a serious commitment—more than handing coins to a poor man outside of a brothel.

What Tzedakah Does: For the Recipient

Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 251:3

Sustaining oneself is every person's priority. No one is obligated to give charity until his economic needs are fulfilled. Then, he shall provide for his father and mother if they be poor, and afterward for his children. Children precede brothers, and they precede other relatives, relatives precede neighbors, neighbors precede townspeople, and his own townspeople precede the inhabitants of another city. The same order of priorities obtains if they are held captive and he is required to redeem them.

There is much need in the world, and today is no different from the past. With countless people, causes and organizations vying for our money, where should our donations go? What should our priorities be? This passage from the *Shulchan Aruch* addresses these questions through a hierarchy of receivers of *tzedakah*. The overall emphasis of this text is on those closest to the individual. One might say that just as "all politics is local," so too all *tzedakah* donation should be local as well. First and foremost, one must take care of herself. The text asserts that no one is obligated to give *tzedakah* until that person is in a stable enough position economically to do so. This reflects the text that says one should not give *tzedakah* if it threatens his well-being. Of course, this is understandable in the context of *tzedakah*, if a person is economically stable then they are in a better position to help others than if they weren't.

The following is a summary of the hierarchy presented in this passage:

- Self
- Parents
- Children
- Brothers (siblings)
- Relatives
- Neighbors
- Townspeople
- Inhabitants of other cities

It is interesting to note that one's parents take precedence over one's children, no doubt reflecting the central Jewish value of honoring one's father and mother. The ultimate question this text poses for us today is whether or not this is still relevant. In the global community in which we live today, where our neighbors may be unknown to us, and the inhabitants of other cities are just a call or click away; does this hierarchy still apply? Perhaps, this text is useful as it reminds us the importance of relationships in our own communities. Whether we realize it or not, those who live closest to us, affect us most. Therefore, this text can ground us with the knowledge that we have a strong responsibility to those we come into contact with every day. Again, we see the value of building and strengthening relationships as a vital part of the value of *tzedakah*.

Looks Can Be Deceiving. . .

Ketubot 67b

Mar 'Ukba had a poor man in his neighborhood to whom he regularly sent four hundred *zuz* on the Eve of every Day of Atonement. On one occasion he sent them through his son who came back and said to him, "He does not need." "What have you seen?" his father asked. "I saw that they were spraying old wine before him" "Is he so delicate?" his father said, and, doubling the amount, he sent it back to him.

Ketubot 67b-68a

R. Hanina had a poor man to whom he regularly sent four *zuz* on the Eve of every Sabbath. One day he sent that sum through his wife who came back and told him that the man was in no need of it. "What did you see?" "I heard that he was asked, 'On what will you dine, on silver cloths or on the gold ones?'" It is in view of such cases that R. Hanina remarked, that R. Eleazar said, "Come let us be grateful to the rogues for were it not for them we would have been sinning every day, for it is said in Scripture, "And he cry unto the Lord against you, and it be sin unto you."

These two texts from the Talmud remind us that when it comes to the donation of *tzedakah*, looks can be deceiving. It is a fact that we can never fully understand the feelings and situation of another person; what we see is only circumstantial of that person's reality. The poor man in each of these stories appeared as though he wasn't. These stories instruct us not to judge a person based on what is heard or what is seen in only one instant. It is not for us to say, "She does not need." Instead, we are to believe a person who states that he is poor or is in need.

A poor person is not content with his situation. One might imagine that he would do anything to improve his situation or at least make it appear better. As a result, the donor of *tzedakah* should not base that donation on that potential appearance. We cannot only donate *tzedakah* to a stereotype of poverty—in reality that stereotype does not exist.

Reluctant Receivers of Tzedakah

Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 7:9

If a poor man refuses to accept alms, one should get around him by making him accept them as a present or a loan.

Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 10:19

On the other hand, whosoever is in need of alms and cannot survive unless he accepts them, such as a person who is of advanced age, or ill, or afflicted with sore trials, but is too proud and refuses to accept them, this is the same as a shedder of blood and is held to account for his own soul, and by suffering he gains nothing but sin and guilt.

Mishnah Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 10:19

Whosoever is in need of alms but denies himself, postpones the hour, and lives a life of want in order not to be a burden upon the public, will not die of old age until he shall have provided maintenance for others out of his own wealth. Of him and of those like him it is said, "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord." [Jeremiah 17:7]

Sometimes a poor person does not want to accept *tzedakah*. We can speculate on the variety of reasons why one wouldn't accept something he needs. Perhaps the most probable is that he is afraid of being emotionally hurt in some way by accepting the handout. We understand from previous texts that a poor person will do virtually anything to improve his situation or the appearance of his situation. At the same time, we have a responsibility to preserve the dignity of that person by not embarrassing him or making a big deal about the donation itself. But what do we when a person in dire need just won't accept *tzedakah*? Maimonides provides us with three teachings that can help us understand what to do with a reluctant receiver of *tzedakah*.

The first text instructs the donor to change the status of the donation from *tzedakah* to a gift or a loan. For a person who does not want to discuss his economic situation, this change in terminology allows him the dignity not to talk about. The next two texts address the reluctant recipient himself with surprisingly harsh words. One who does not accept *tzedakah* gains sin and guilt and is compared to one who sheds blood. Similarly, one who doesn't accept *tzedakah* and instead lives a life of want so as not to be a burden on the public will not die until he is able to help someone out of his own wealth. In other words, he will not die until he has accepted money himself and then becomes able to donate *tzedakah* himself.

Why are these texts seemingly so harsh regarding a reluctant receiver? Perhaps the reason is to assert that the poor person has no valid reason to refuse help. By refusing *tzedakah*, the person brings unnecessary suffering upon himself. After all, Jewish law and tradition has already provided an intricate system of *tzedakah* for assistance. The regular donation of *tzedakah* is a behavior that is presumably part of the everyday lives of

the members of the community. To refuse to enter this system, denies the donors of performing a mitzvah and at the same time, is an affront to God, creator of the system. Jewish tradition represents an attempt to consider the material and psychological needs of the poor person. As a result, that person should trust that tradition and accept *tzedakah*.

Tzedakah and the Community

Deuteronomy 15:7-8

If, however, there is a needy person among you, one of your kinsmen in any of your settlements in the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not harden your heart and shut your hand against your needy kinsman. Rather you must open your hand and lend him sufficient for whatever he needs. Beware lest you harbor the base thought, "The seventh year, the year of remission, is approaching", so that you are mean to your needy kinsman and give him nothing. He will cry out to the Lord against you, and you will incur guilt. Give to him readily and have no regrets when you do so, for in return the Lord your God will bless you in all your efforts and in all your undertakings. For there will never cease to be needy ones in your land, which is why I command you: open your hand to the poor and needy kinsman in your land.

Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah, 257

One is always obligated to give, because there are always poor around.

Pirkei Avot 2:21

He used to say: You are not required to complete the task, yet you are not free to withdraw from it.

Our society is such that there will never cease to be poor in our midst; the time is distant when poverty will be completely eradicated. Until that time, we have to deal with the reality that the poor need our help. While we may move to separate ourselves from poor neighbors or regions of the land, the Torah nevertheless reminds us that poor still exist. At the same time, we are also reminded that life constantly changes. While our

situation in life may be secure today, tomorrow is another story. The fact that poor people will always exist in our society reminds us of our precarious lot in life. One never knows what the future holds.

But that knowledge should not overwhelm us or give us a sense of hopelessness. We must remember that the *tzedakah* we give does indeed make a difference; all the work we do is not for naught. Instead, we are assured that the awesome task is not for us to finish—trying our best is good enough.

Pirkei Avot 2:4

Hillel said: Do not separate yourself from the community.

Jewish tradition holds that each person is responsible for everyone else in the community. The strength of the Jewish community rests in the fact that everybody looks out for each other. The organizations and societies that help to keep the community running smoothly have evolved to become essential to that community. To separate oneself from those is like being cut off from one's blood supply. The underlying message of this verse is that no Jew can survive without help from the community in which they live. From the observance of holidays to life cycle events to education and finding a mate, the community and its institutions are vital in a person's life.

So while we are warned not to remove ourselves from the community, we are also warned not to remove ourselves by not supporting the community—by isolating ourselves within the community. This verse reminds us to fulfill our responsibility to be actively involved and to maintain the institutions designed to keep the community alive and flourishing.

Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah, 259

The community has no right to assess or tax *tzedakah* funds.

The Tzedakah Fund and The Tzedakah Tray

Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 9:1-3

In every city inhabited by Israelites, it is their duty to appoint from among themselves well-known and trustworthy persons to act as alms collectors, to go around collecting from the people every Friday. They should demand from each person what is proper for him to give and what he has been assessed for, and should distribute the money every Friday, giving each poor man sustenance sufficient for seven days. This is what is called "alms fund."

They must similarly appoint other collectors to gather every day, from each courtyard, bread and other eatables, fruits, or money from anyone who is willing to make a free-will offering at that time. They should distribute these toward that same evening among the poor, giving to each poor man his sustenance for the day. This is what is called "alms tray."

We have never seen nor heard of an Israelite community that does not have an alms fund.

Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 9:7

Contributions to the alms tray are to be collected every day, those for the alms fund each Friday. The alms tray is to provide for the poor of the whole world, while the alms fund is to provide for the poor of the town alone.

Sanhedrin 17b

A scholar is not permitted to live in a city that has no charity box.

The establishments of the *tzedakah* fund and the *tzedakah* tray reflect the organization, centralization and professionalization of the value of *tzedakah*.¹ At the same time, they signal a fundamental change in the collection and distribution of *tzedakah*. As discussed previously, one significant result of *tzedakah* is the building of relationships within a community. With the introduction of central *tzedakah* funds, the

¹ The Dynamics of *Tzedakah*: From Dependence to Dignity, page 63.

potential to build direct relationships between the haves and the have-nots lessens. The image of poverty becomes faceless. Instead of donating to a person, one donates to the fund. While funds such as these may obstruct the fostering of relationships, simultaneously, they have the potential to effectively preserve the dignity of the recipients.²

The texts from *Mishneh Torah* describe two different types of *zedakah* reserves. The first is the *zedakah* fund, collected and distributed every Friday before Shabbat. These monies are collected from everyone and are calculated as a percentage of each person's wealth. Each person is assessed a particular amount of money, and this becomes like a community tax used to help members of the community in need. The money is then pooled and doled out to the poor of the community, enough for seven days of sustenance.

The second type of account is the *zedakah* tray. This type of *zedakah*, collected and distributed every day, consists of food and money donated by individuals. These donations are in addition to the assessed amount collected on Fridays, and are only from those willing and able to make a donation.

Help Wanted: Gabbai

Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, Chapter 10:6

He who persuades and constrains others to give shall have a reward greater than that of the giver himself, as it is said, "And the world of righteousness shall be peace." [Isaiah 32:17] Concerning such that solicit charity (for others) and their like, it is said, "And they that turn the many to righteousness (shall shine) as the stars." [Daniel 12:3]

² Ibid page 63.

Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah, 256

Collectors must be trustworthy and...strict...if they are not sages and fit, the community suspends them. If they cannot suspend them, it is forbidden to give them *tzedakah*.

Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah, 257

The order of the collection of *tzedakah*

When the treasury lacks funds, the *gabbai* should make a loan to it.

The *gabbai* should not take to heart the insults of the poor.

Gabbaim do not have to support a poor person who has wealthy relatives.

The distributor of *tzedakah* should not be partial to his relatives.

Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 7:11

A generous person who gives alms beyond what he can afford, or denies himself in order to give to the collector of alms so that he would not be put to shame, should not be asked for contributions to alms.

Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 7:11

Any alms collector who humiliates him by demanding alms from him will surely be called to account for it, as it is said, "I will punish all that oppress them." [Jeremiah 20:20]

Ta'anit 21b

It is not the position that honors the person, but the person that honors the position.

The position of the *gabbai*, the one who collects *tzedakah* in a community, was probably difficult at times, yet very rewarding. The texts that describe the characteristics of a *gabbai* reflect some of these potential difficulties and some of the rewards. Above all, a *gabbai* must be trustworthy, members of the community should feel comfortable giving him money and should be confident that the money is getting into the hands of those who need it. The *gabbai* should also be generous enough to give loans to the funds if the circumstances arise. A good *gabbai* should be one who uses sensitivity and discretion when asking and accepting donations from people. He must know the people of the community well enough to discern who should receive money and who should not.

The *gabbai* must also be careful not to use his clout or humiliation to obtain *tzedakah* from others. He must be especially sensitive with those in his community who have the likelihood to donate more than they can afford. When distributing the *tzedakah* funds, the *gabbai* must not take the insults of the poor seriously; after all, he is just doing his job. Finally, a *gabbai* must be fair, treating every potential recipient of *tzedakah* equally.

By meeting all of these requirements and doing his job well, a *gabbai* has the promise of both a great reward and much honor. But despite this, one might imagine the profession of the *gabbai* was, much like the I.R.S worker of today, a thankless job.

Tzedakah Is For Everyone—No Exceptions

Exodus 23:5

When you see the donkey of your enemy lying under its burden and you would prefer to refrain from raising it, you must nevertheless raise it with him.

Gittin 61a

The Rabbis taught that poor non-Jews are to be supported as well as poor Jews, sick non-Jews are to be visited as well as sick Jews and burial arrangements are to be made for non-Jews as for Jews, in order to promote peaceful relations between Jews and non-Jews.

Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 7:7

One must feed and clothe the heathen poor together with the Israelite poor, for the sake of the ways of peace.

Life always presents us with things we just don't want to do. As stated earlier, *tzedakah* is often times a difficult action to perform—to give up something of ours to someone else is just not something we always want to do. So, on top of this difficulty, we are instructed not only to help our family members and our fellow Jews but also non-Jews, heathens and our enemies! This selection of texts reminds us that we have a

responsibility to others besides those closest to us. Interestingly, the rationale stated in two of these texts is actually unrelated to value of *tzedakah*. Different from the rationale for giving *tzedakah* to Jews, the reason presented here is to promote peace between Jews and non-Jews. Presumably, these obligations apply only in places where Jews and non-Jews live side-by-side. Throughout history, Jews have been seen as scapegoats and enemies of the wider society. Not helping the non-Jewish poor in a community might be seen as elitist or offensive. So in order to maintain peaceful relations in their communities, Jews were encouraged to, in addition to helping their own, to help all who were in need. Because of their precarious position in many societies throughout the world, Jews have needed to make sacrifices to try and insure their safety and security.

Imposter!

Avot de Rabbi Natan, Chapter 3, Page 15

Rabbi Akiva says: Anyone who takes *tzedakah* when he does not need it will live to see the day when he really needs others' help. The one who bandages his eyes and his thighs and cries out: "Give to the blind! Give to the sick!" will in the end suffer blindness and disease.

Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 10:19

Whosoever is in no need of alms but deceives the public and does accept them, will not die of old age until he indeed becomes dependent upon other people. He is included among those of whom Scripture says, "Cursed is the man that trusts in man." [Jeremiah 17:5]

Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 7:9

If, on the other hand, a wealthy man starves himself because he is so niggardly with his money that he would not spend of it on food and drink, no attention need be paid to him.

Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 7:9

If a poor person unknown to anyone comes forth and says, "I am hungry, give me something to eat," he should not be examined as to whether he might be an imposter, he should be fed immediately. If, however, he is naked and says, "clothe me," he should be examined as to possible fraud. If he is known, he should be clothed immediately according to his dignity, without any further inquiry.

Leviticus Rabbah 34:10

R. Yohanah and Resh Lakish went to bathe in the baths of Tiberias. A poor man encountered them and asked them for a dole. They said, "When we come out we'll give." Upon exiting, they discovered that he had died. They said, "Since we did not merit helping him in life, we will help him in death." While they were washing him, they found a bag around his neck that contained 600 dinars. Thereupon they said, "Blessed is He who has chosen the Sages and their words." Didn't R. Abahu say in the name of R. Eliezer, "We have to give credit to the deceivers among the poor, for if not for them, if a man asks for *tzedakah* from another and he doesn't give him, he would be immediately punished."

There are always people in society who will take advantage of others for personal gain. The institution of *tzedakah* is no exception. With the requirement to give ingrained in every Jew's mind and heart, and the multitude of organizations that exist to promote it, imposters can easily arise to take advantage of the system. The consequences illustrated in these texts, is not what one might think. Instead of paying fines, imprisonment, or other worldly punishments, the penalty is like a type of curse in the form of Divine retribution: the one who takes *tzedakah* and doesn't really need it, will, in fact, come to need it someday.

The text from Leviticus Rabbah illustrates that the possibility of imposters is a social problem that is complicated to address. One must weigh the needs of the individual with the needs of the community. In a sense, the law ignores these poor pretenders. The law does this in order to preserve the integrity of the *tzedakah* system of the community. If

the community became too concerned with whether or not a person was telling the truth about his or her economic situation, then people would perhaps begin to give less or refrain from giving at all. The level of trust necessary within the system would disappear. In fact, R. Yohanah and Resh Lakish see these people as a necessity to keep the institution of *tzedakah* operating.

What Should I Give?

Leviticus 19:9

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I the Lord and your God.

Ketubot 67b

Our Rabbis taught: "Sufficient for his need" [implies] you are commanded to maintain him, but you are not commanded to make him rich; "in that which he wants" [includes] even a horse to ride upon and a slave to run before him. It was related to Hillel the Elder that he brought a certain poor man who was of a good family a horse to ride upon and a slave to run before him. On one occasion he could not find a slave to run before him, so he himself ran before him for three miles.

Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 7:3-4

You are commanded to give the poor man according to what he lacks. If he has no clothing, he should be clothed. If he has no house furnishings, they should be bought for him. If he has no wife, he should be helped to marry. If it is a woman, she should be given in marriage. Even if it had been his wont to ride a horse, with a manservant running in front of him, and he has now become poor and has lost his possessions, one must buy him a horse to ride and a manservant to run before him, as it is said, "Sufficient for his need in that which he wants." [Deuteronomy 15:8] You are thus obligated to fill his want; you are not, however, obligated to restore his wealth.

If an orphan is about to be wed, one must first rent a house for him, spread a bed for him, and provide all his furnishings, and only then have him marry a wife.

Ketubot 67b-68a

If he was in the habit of using gold articles, he shall now use silver ones. If [he was using] silver ones, let him now use copper ones.

Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 7:7

In the case of a poor man who goes from door to door, one is not obligated to give him a large gift, but only a small one. It is forbidden however, to let a poor man who asks for alms go away empty-handed, just so you give him at least one dry fig, as it is said, "O let not the oppressed turn back in confusion." [Psalms 74:21]

What a person needs is a matter of perspective. These texts remind us that the donation of *tzedakah* is not just a callous, blind gift of money. Instead, *tzedakah* is meant to build a relationship between the donor and the recipient. We learn that, ideally, a donor responds to a person's individual and personal need. While the donor may see her donation as dollars, the recipient sees it as clothes, home furnishings, or a horse. And for this very reason, donors must remember that fulfilling a particular need does more than create physical satisfaction—it provides psychological or emotional satisfaction. Quarters, dime and nickels, do not do this, rather, the fact that somebody cares enough to give them, does.

These texts also represent a concern for the amount of change experienced by the recipient. A rich man accustomed to riding on a horse with servants feels just as much emotional pain at becoming impoverished as a more humble man who has done the same. Therefore, if dignity and respect are our ultimate concerns when giving *tzedakah*, we take into account a person's previous social situation.

Now of course, we are not required to restore anyone's wealth. But we must be responsible to the particular needs and wants of an individual. We must see our *tzedakah* beyond the coins. Instead, we should see it as a means to improve someone's mental and physical state of being and a way to preserve their self-respect and their dignity in the community.

When Should I Give?

Among our sources, we encounter many different times during the year when one is instructed to give *tzedakah*. Throughout the High Holy Days we are reminded that *tzedakah* is one of the virtues that temper God's severe decree during this time of judgment.

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 130:1

One should also devote more time than usual to the study of Torah, the performance of its precepts and the distribution of *tzedakah*.

This period of focus on the value of *tzedakah* culminates the day before Yom Kippur and with the ritual of *Kapparah*. *Kapparah* is the ritual in which a person's sins are symbolically transferred to a bird, such as a chicken, and that bird is then slaughtered ridding that person of his sins for Yom Kippur. The custom in many places was for the bird itself to be donated for food to the poor. But the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* suggests that instead of giving the bird itself used in the *Kapparah* ceremony to the poor, it is better to take the extra step and redeem the bird for money. That money is in turn given to the poor.

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, Laws of Chanukah, 139:1

Tzedakah should be liberally dispensed on Chanukah, for this corrects the flaws of our souls, especially when given to maintain poor scholars engaged in the study of Torah.

Today, the giving of gifts to family members and friends is closely associated with Chanukah, particularly in America. But this statement instructs us to give out a lot of *tzedakah* to others during this holiday. This form of *tzedakah* grounds us, correcting the flaws of our souls, the selfishness we may exhibit toward others. But the donor is not the only one who benefits from the dispensing of *tzedakah*. Poor scholars studying Torah should be given *tzedakah* so they can enjoy the festive nature of this season, the commemoration of the rededication of the Temple cleansed by the Maccabees.

Like Chanukah, Purim is a festival that commemorates the victory of the Jews over difficult odds. Everyone is obligated to celebrate this holiday with elation and merriment. As a result of this obligation, those in need must be cared for so they are allowed to fulfill their responsibility also. So not only does one give *tzedakah* on Purim, but one is obligated to give money before the reading of the *Megillah* in the evening. This is so the poor will have time to prepare, in the appropriate manner, their feast for the holiday. The giving of *tzedakah* on Purim does not end there.

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 141:12

When saying the Shehecheyanu in the daytime, (before the reading of the *Megillah*) one should include the precepts of sending portions to friends and making gifts to the needy so that they may apply it to the Purim feast.

While one should engage in a great celebration and send *mishloach manot* to friends on Purim, one should not get carried away.

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, 142:1

It is better to give charity to the needy than to make a great feast and to send gifts to one's friends.

Citing the Torah, the rationale for this is that one who gladdens the hearts for the needy is just like the *Shekhinah* who "revives the spirit of the humble, and revives the heart of the contrite." Celebration and joy on Purim can be achieved through food and alcohol, but the text suggests one can also be joyous by donating *tzedakah* in order that someone else in need can feel that joy.

The giving of *tzedakah* on Purim transcends the traditional gender roles with regard to giving gifts. Women are obligated to send gifts to friends and give *tzedakah* on Purim. But women may only give their gifts to women and men to men. But in the giving of *tzedakah*, women and men donate money to whoever is need, regardless of gender.³

Fast days occur many times throughout the Jewish calendar year. While pious Jews fast on those days, they are also instructed to distribute food to the poor. In fact, the *Mishneh Torah* says that one who breaks the fast without giving *tzedakah* to the poor is seen as one who has shed blood.⁴ After a twenty-four hour fast, one ordinarily breaks that fast with a large meal. If a poor person does not have food to break the fast, not only does the fast day lose its meaning for that person but there are health considerations as well.

Berachot 6b

The merit of a fast day is in the charity dispensed then.

³ *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, 142:4

⁴ *Mishneh Torah*, Gifts to the Poor, 9:4

Going a day without food, in part, teaches us the feeling of hunger. Having gone through this experience, one should give *tzedakah* in order that nobody should have to be hungry at all. The merit, therefore, comes from the lesson we learn while fasting about the needs of other people.

Ta'anit 20b

When Rabbi Huna used to sit down to a meal, he opened the doors and proclaimed, "Let whoever is in need, enter and eat.

Related to the giving of *tzedakah* on fast days, we are reminded that when we eat a meal, there are people in our communities who don't have food. Rabbi Huna's custom teaches just that—while some may have food, others do not and it is our duty to fulfill that need.

Another appropriate time to remember to give *tzedakah* is on Shabbat. The *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* states that women should give *tzedakah* before they light the Shabbat candles.⁵ And similarly Maimonides reminds us that it was the custom of the greatest of the sages to give *tzedakah* before they began their prayers.⁶

The laws that instruct us to give *tzedakah* at certain times during the year or during the day help us develop the routine of giving *tzedakah*. In our everyday lives, we may not encounter poor people. Therefore, we must be reminded that they exist and that it is our obligation to help them. In the same way, we may never know what it feels like to be poor or hungry. But based on a small experience of hunger on fast days, we are forced to see that personally, we can keep a person from hunger by giving food.

⁵ *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, 75:2

⁶ *Mishneh Torah*, Gifts to the Poor, 10:15

Chapter 2

A History of Teaching *Tzedakah* in North American Reform Supplementary Schools in the 20th Century

A History of Teaching Tzedakah in North American Reform Supplementary Schools in the 20th Century

The decade of the 1930's is the first decade where we find the subject of *tzedakah* addressed in the literature and curricula of Reform religious schools in North America. From this time, the subject of *tzedakah* has grown to become an important part of the curricula of virtually every Reform religious school across North America. Throughout the decades of the previous century, much has changed with regard to the rationale, methods and goals of *tzedakah* in the supplementary school. Facets of schooling such as curricula, teacher bulletins, sample lessons and journal articles, paint a picture of how Jewish educators have approached the concept in their schools.

1930's

One of the central concerns of Jewish educators in the 1930's was promoting a sense of community among the growing American Jewish population. In the early volumes of the journal *Jewish Education* much of the space is devoted to these issues of community. One of the earliest articles is "The *Keren Ami* Project" by Ben M. Edidin. Edidin reports the origins of that the term, *Keren Ami*, (the fund of my people.) Early in that decade, the educator Dr. Alexander M. Dushkin coined the term. It is the creation of this term and this central fund that helped spark a revolution in the development of instruction strategies, classroom materials and curricula concerning *tzedakah*.⁷

In the article, Edidin emphasizes the voluntary nature of participation in the Jewish community. As a result, he believed that the task of Jewish education must be to

⁷ Ben M. Edidin, "The *Keren Ami* Project," *Jewish Education* June 1930: 69.

train the next generation to have a continued interest and participation in their community. With the influx of thousands of new Jews from Europe, the need for Jews to come to that aid of each other was crucial to Jewish survival in America. Because of this voluntary nature of the community, Edidin understood the critical need to address the fundamental change in the Jewish community as it shifted from the shtetls of Eastern Europe to the tenements of the biggest East Coast American cities. As a result, in order to teach community responsibility in the religious school classroom, the teacher must struggle to keep the focus on a small, local scale. The value of giving money to *Keren Ami* could be learned best if directed not to the national or international Jewish needs but to the intimate needs, those close to the sight and hearts of the students.⁸

But there were many problems in Sunday schools of the time with regard to the collection and teaching of *tzedakah*. According to Edidin, these problems prevented the value of *tzedakah* from becoming a significant part of the lives of these students. The most prominent of which was that, for the most part, the students did not even know where the money they donated went. In fact, some schools even used the money for their own operations—it became simply another type of tuition for the school.

The immediate problem that led to the design of a formal *tzedakah* program was the increase in requests for donations from the myriad of growing Jewish organizations in America. Five years after Edidin first wrote about his *Keren Ami* Project, he published a formalized theory and practice regarding the teaching of Jewish communal responsibility. In his next article on the subject in the periodical, *Jewish Education* he writes of the desirable outcomes of teaching about the importance of the Jewish community.

⁸ Edidin, 69.

Edidin believed that educators must teach an appreciation of the need for the Jewish community.⁹ His rationale for this stems from his observations of the society in America during the mid-1930's. Edidin saw the essential need for Jewish welfare agencies. These agencies must be supported "because of the Jews peculiar needs and because governments don't provide adequately."¹⁰ Obvious to many during this era was the importance of teaching community responsibility in the face of the fundamental changes occurring in the Jewish culture and society.

In response to this challenge, educators outlined specific goals and objectives to teach community responsibility, especially through the donation of money in the classroom setting. "The *Keren Ami* Project" article lays out practical steps for teachers to promote specifically the giving of *tzedakah* in religious school. Ben Edidin believed that through the collection of *tzedakah*, students can be taught to be, what he called, intelligent participants in the Jewish community. This goal was to be achieved through various objectives that encouraged the students' active involvement in the collection of money for *Keren Ami*. Educationally, Edidin believed that in order to successfully use *Keren Ami* as a teaching tool, teachers and principals must emphasize three aspects:

- Regular contribution
- Intelligent distribution
- Democratic operation

Edidin's *Keren Ami* Project was aimed at creating an activity with purpose and direction. What existed before Edidin, were problems in the collection of *tzedakah* and the teaching of the value behind it. These problems included poor methods of collection, no regular collection throughout the year and no student input as to where the money would be

⁹ Ben M. Edidin, "Aims of Teaching Jewish Community Life," *Jewish Education* April-June 1935: 103.

¹⁰ Edidin, *Aims* 103.

distributed. Edidin emphasized some of the general but primary functions of a Jewish school:

- to foster regular donations to Jewish needs
- to foster support for the Jewish community
- to develop proper attitudes toward the value of *tzedakah*

Important to Edidin was the union between the performance of *tzedakah* and the value of *tzedakah*: "If a child is to be a regular donor and focused on the community he must not only learn those values but must learn through doing."¹¹ In other words, a child can learn about the values of community and of *tzedakah*, but until she actually performs those values, the entire aim is not achieved. After all, giving *tzedakah* is not an end in itself. Edidin cautioned teachers and principals to remember two important concepts or secondary objectives when engaging in the project. He suggested that teachers keep in mind that the project is designed for children—therefore it is the students who should be given ownership. Second, Edidin wanted teachers to remember other benefits of the project, namely, the promoting of valuable social skills for participation and acceptance in the wider American society.¹²

In 1931, Alexander M. Dushkin pondered an important question concerning the relationship between Jewish charities and Jewish education in American. In his article which appeared in *Jewish Education*, Dushkin asserted perhaps one of the most powerful lessons in *tzedakah*: should Jewish educational activity be curtailed in times of economic difficulty?"¹³ The problem he addressed reflects the era of the Great Depression of the 1930's in the United States. When money was scarce, should funds go to aiding Jews in

¹¹ Edidin, *Keren Ami* 69.

¹² Edidin, *Keren Ami* 69.

¹³ Alexander M. Dushkin, "Jewish Charities and Jewish Education," *Jewish Education* January-March 1931: 18.

need or to the continuing education of the future of the Jewish people? Is it right to take money away from poor Jews to educate children? The continuation of religious instruction during this time of great difficulty was a powerful message for students learning about responsibility to the Jewish community. Dushkin cited evidence of this value that even in these difficult times, parents *still* paid their tuition to Jewish schools despite low income and unemployment. What is apparent is what Dushkin called the "primary obligation to train our children to be good Jews...and to provide for both their body and spirit."¹⁴ *Tzedakah* is not just for the poor and needy; *tzedakah* also benefits the entirety of the Jewish people in other important ways.

By 1935, Edidin formulated his more detailed goals for the instruction of *tzedakah* in the classroom. In his outline of goals, he described his objectives for the giving and allocation of funds to community institutions. It is evident in this article that Edidin sought to stress the value of *tzedakah* as it was in Europe. He believed that above all, *tzedakah* should be seen as self-taxation not as Christians tend to define it as charity or mercy. Agencies that help particular Jewish needs are essential in our society—not an object of our compassion.¹⁵ When students complete their formal Jewish education, they should contribute with meaning both willingly and regularly, with meaning. They should also be familiar with the methods of fundraising employed by the Jewish community in which they live.

In the 1930's, Edidin saw two significant obstacles that would prevent the development of *tzedakah* programs in religious schools. First, he believed that most schools do not integrate the concept of *tzedakah* and the activity of collecting *Keren Ami*

¹⁴ Dushkin, 19.

¹⁵ Edidin, *Aims* 106.

into their curricula. Instead, it is completely separate from subjects such as Hebrew, Bible and others where it could fit in without difficulty. For Edidin, the most substantial obstacle was the lack of materials in the 1930's for the instruction of *tzedakah* in the classroom. Edidin observed that much research and work was needed on the part of the teachers in order to present the issues and the funds involved. The nature of the subject matter also lends itself to the potential of not teaching age-appropriate material to a particular grade (especially younger ones.)¹⁶

Reflected in Edidin's articles "*The Keren Ami Project*" and "*Aims of Teaching Jewish Community*," is a needed direction for the instruction of *tzedakah* in religious schools. With all of the goals, objectives and materials he outlined, Edidin warned of dangers that teachers and principals must consider. In the standardization of the *tzedakah* program in schools, there is a possibility that apathy and loss of interest in the process may develop if *tzedakah* is not promoted regularly. When emphasis is placed solely on raising money, there is a danger that students will perceive this is its primary purpose.

The article "*The Keren Ami Project*" sketches out important innovations in the teaching of *tzedakah* in the supplementary school. Student involvement is a key to the success of the *Keren Ami* Project. As a result, the appropriate introduction of the project to the school is extremely important. Edidin suggested a three step gradual introduction into the school. The goal of this initial process was to create excitement and enthusiasm for the project. First, a few good students are identified to be the project's ambassadors to the school. They then participate in an assembly that presents the new project to the entire school. The final step, perhaps the most difficult to maintain, was for the teachers and the principal to create an atmosphere of *Keren Ami* in the school throughout the year.

¹⁶ Edidin, *Keren Ami*, 76.

Continuing the *Keren Ami* atmosphere in the classroom was the task of the teachers. In general, they were to provide constant reinforcement throughout the school year. At the beginning of the year, each class was to elect a *gizbor* (treasurer.) The *gizbor* would be in charge of the *Keren Ami* box and collection of *tzedakah* money. He/she would also make all of the pertinent *Keren Ami* announcements and initiate the reading of the frequent *Keren Ami* newsletters.¹⁷ Finally, the *gizbor* would set contribution goals and also track donations. Edidin suggested that three times a year the elected representatives from each class meet during a conference to decide where the sum of the money would go in the Jewish world. In November, March and June, the *Keren Ami* Conference would convene to distribute the funds collected by the students of the particular school. The entire process of the conference was intentionally modeled after the American democratic process. In each class, two representatives were elected by the students to speak for their wishes. In Cincinnati, in the 1930's, parents were encouraged to participate in the conference as well.

In some cities, the *Keren Ami* Conference met on a community-wide scale bringing together students from all of the congregational schools. At this meeting, during an extended day of religious school, representatives would give reports, debate issues, sing special songs and listen to guest speakers.

Where the money went was not solely up to the students. Before each conference, the principal chose a variety of funds that were then approved by the *Keren Ami* council of the school. The funds chosen were to represent the spectrum of Jewish life including, education, colonization of Palestine, aid to immigrants, etc. In general, the funds selected

¹⁷ The *Keren Ami* newsletter typically contained information about the religious school's past, present and future *tzedakah* projects and presented information about various *tzedakah* organizations.

were ones that attempted to benefit the entirety of world Jewry. As early as possible, the funds were chosen so they specifically could be incorporated into classroom instruction. Edidin suggested two methods to decide how much money would go to each of the funds. The first way was for the students to rate all of the funds then the corresponding percentage would go to each. The second method, according to Edidin, preferred by the majority of teachers, was for the students to pick some of the funds out of the total to receive equal portions of the money collected.¹⁸

Edidin also included other instructional innovations in his outline of the *Keren Ami* Project. As more and more congregational schools moved from one day instruction to two or three days, the question arose: should *tzedakah* be collected at each session? Edidin's answer was to collect money only once a week and at a certain time. He believed that this would promote habits and efficiency in the collection.¹⁹ This consistency would also allow for the carving out of one fifteen-minute lesson each week centered on the *Keren Ami* newsletter.

To round out his comprehensive *Keren Ami* Project, Edidin included strategies to stimulate contributions and to supplement *Keren Ami* activities. To stimulate the donation of *tzedakah* teachers were to take a very active role. Edidin suggested the creation of frequently rotating bulletin board displays on *Keren Ami* issues. Regular assemblies were also an important part of maintaining a continuing interest in donating. Special contributions were to be encouraged. These included *chai* contributions for birthdays and other personal occasions, holiday contributions on Chanukah, Purim and

¹⁸ Edidin, *Keren Ami* 72.

¹⁹ Edidin, *Keren Ami*, 70.

Passover, and special circumstance contributions to Jewish causes such as famine relief, and the struggle to build a homeland in Palestine.

In the 1930's, the formal instruction of *tzedakah* in supplementary schools began to take root. The theory and materials created were primarily a response to the changing and growing Jewish community in America. Both Alexander Dushkin and Ben Edidin were on the forefront of the push to expand and integrate both the value of *tzedakah* and the collection of *tzedakah* in schools across North America. Through their innovative and creative approaches the concept of *Keren Ami* spread and remained the primary method of the instruction of *tzedakah* for decades to come.

1940's

The 1940's saw a continuing expansion and elaboration of the concept of *tzedakah* in the classroom. By the end of the decade, schools across the country were working to implement their own *Keren Ami* projects. In an article appearing in the *Pedagogic Reporter*, Michael Alper wrote steps on "Organizing Your School for *Keren Ami*." Much of Alper's plan cited Edidin's article written 20 years earlier. One major difference was Alper's emphasis on the idea of belonging. The 1940's was a true watershed decade for world Jewry—from the darkness and horror of the Shoah to the hope and joy of the creation of the State of Israel. For Americans, the focus expanded beyond their borders. But, for Alper, a challenge remained: how do we create a sense of connection to both of these events? Alper believed that one of the most important school objectives was to create among the students a sense of belonging within the community of world Jewry.²⁰ Students can do this when they study the history and functions of Jewish institutions and organizations--organizations such as those that helped the

²⁰ Michael Alper, "Organizing Your School for *Keren Ami*," *Pedagogic Reporter* September 1951: 5.

refugees of Europe and institutions such as those that helped build a nation in the Land of Israel.

Specifically, Alper's article outlines three major ways in which a school can bring *Keren Ami* into the school. The first step requires research; research on the part of the principal, the teachers, the parents and the auxiliary organizations of the congregation. Engaging each group in the entire *tzedakah* process was important in ensuring a high level and continuing interest in the project. Alper gives the principal three suggestions on ways to introduce *Keren Ami* to the school. Each suggestion targets a different group within the congregational school. Besides recommending the Edidin article for teachers, he suggested the creation of a *Keren Ami* calendar that outlines for parents the instruction time and activities for the year. Alper's final decision was to encourage teachers to read the story, *Danny Introduces Keren Ami*, to children in various grades. Alper's insistence on the participation of the entire school community is a significant innovation of this decade.

The 1940's also saw the creation of many new materials to aid in the teaching of *tzedakah*. Besides the story mentioned above, the Bureau of Jewish Education of Los Angeles published a fantasy play entitled "The *Keren Ami* Box." The B.J.E. in Chicago also published a wide range of materials including plays, stories and assembly ideas for both teachers and students.

1950's & early 1960's

In the 1950's new challenges arose for schools in their efforts to teach *tzedakah*. For over 20 years, the supplementary schools of North America worked hard to incorporate *Keren Ami* projects into their curricula. The article "The *Keren Ami* Project"

of 1930 was still being used as the standard in many schools. But times were changing, schools were growing and there was a need for the *tzedakah* program of the school to evolve also. One major concern of the decade was the continuation of *tzedakah* into the higher grades.²¹ The system for implementing a *Keren Ami* Project in grades K-6 had been finely tuned. The materials developed by the Bureau of Jewish Education were, by in large, designed for those grades. Principals and teachers began to more frequently ask the question: How do we continue *tzedakah* instruction through middle school and on to high school?

Educators began to answer this question in the 1950's in two major ways. The first was with the creation of materials for older students in religious school. The second was the joining of secular secondary educational theory with, among others, the subject of *tzedakah*. In his article "A High School *Keren Ami* Project," Rabbi Norman Tarnor discussed his conception of how to convey the value of *tzedakah* to high school aged students. Tarnor suggested that initially, teachers must continue the instruction of *tzedakah* in much the same as in the lower grades.²² He emphasized a discussion of the differences among the terms charity, *tzedakah*, *tzedeck* and *tzaddik*. The author went on to describe a less formal collection of *tzedakah*. This included no *Keren Ami* council to decide where the money goes but instead, a shared responsibility among all the students to learn about the various organizations. In fact, the study of these organizations was to become a major part of the high school curriculum.

During the 1962-1963 school year at the Isaac M. Wise Temple in Cincinnati, Ohio the principal was Mrs. M. M. Singer. Her weekly teacher bulletins were added to

²¹ Rabbi Norman Tarnor, "A High School *Keren Ami* Project," *The Synagogue School* June 1961: 18.

²² Tarnor, 18.

the archive of the temple and are among the earliest record of this kind in that community. By examining these bulletins, a picture emerges of, among others, the attitudes toward *tzedakah* felt by both the principal and the teachers during the early 1960's

Singer began the year devoting a significant portion of her bulletin to the topic of *tzedakah*. In the first month of the school year she expressed shock at what she called the slimness of the amount of *Keren Ami* collected the week before at one of the first religious school sessions. In response, Singer strongly recommended two simple ways to increase *tzedakah* collected. First, she implores the teachers not forget to collect money—apparently there were some classes that had zero money collected for the week. Her second suggestion was to encourage the teachers to talk about *tzedakah* in class and not to just collect it. But what exactly should teachers talk about? Singer did not include any talking points or information for the teachers on how to talk to their students about *tzedakah*. In the next bulletin, though, Singer devoted another significant portion to *tzedakah*—this time summarizing the basics. She defined and spelled *Keren Ami* correctly on the front of the bulletin and then discussed the relationship between being Jewish and the obligation of *tzedakah*. She concluded this section by asserting that *tzedakah* is best translated 'justice' and not 'charity.' Singer also introduced a new scheme for dividing up the *Keren Ami* collected at the end of the year. Instead of dividing the money geographically, among local, national and international causes, the school will send the money to a variety of types of organizations. These included, health, educational, cultural, religious and social welfare organizations.

For the remainder of the year, the teacher bulletins are virtually devoid of any mention of the value of *tzedakah* and its collection. In October, Singer instructed the teachers to choose delegates for the *Keren Ami* council and again berates the teachers for not following up with the reading of the weekly *Keren Ami* newsletter. In the same bulletin, the principal proclaimed her support for the Halloween UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) collection. The middle of December is the next time the teacher bulletin addressed a *tzedakah* issue. This time, Singer announced the beginning of the Tu B'Shevat Tree Drive. She encouraged classes to compete to see who will be able to plant the most trees. The end of the year in April is the next and last time *tzedakah* is mentioned in the bulletins for that school year. The principal reviews the *tzedakah* projects of the year including a rummage sale, bake sales, and the Jewish Welfare drive.

The trends seen in this examination of teacher bulletins from this particular school are ones that appear in other school bulletins from around the country during the 1950's and early 1960's.²³ The weekly collection of *Keren Ami* took a backseat to the almost monthly special *tzedakah* campaigns and projects. Even the secular Halloween UNICEF campaign took precedence over the collection of *Keren Ami*. As curricula expanded to include more Hebrew, current events and Israel, *tzedakah* as a value or as a subject on its own became increasingly relegated to the margins as an extra-curricular collection of money.

In an article entitled "The Jewish Community—A Project for Study and Activity" Dr. Sol Colodner addressed this competition between regular collection of money and

²³ I had the opportunity to briefly examine various bulletins from the 1960's from congregations in Cleveland, Washington, DC, New York City and Miami. Unfortunately, these teacher bulletins were not well preserved or organized. As a result, only general conclusions could be gleaned from them.

special, short in duration campaigns. First, he maintained the significance and strength of the *Keren Ami* council insisting that they receive even more responsibilities than they had had in the past to make allocation decisions. There was a trend for teachers, already challenged by the task of imparting an enormous body of information, to all but ignore the topic of *tzedakah*; except for the brief time it takes to collect it at the beginning of class.²⁴ Dr. Colodner believed that *tzedakah* should be regularly collected all year; but at certain times during the year, assemblies should be held to remind the student body of their obligation, their goals and the needs of the community. Colodner believed that the efforts of the students should be celebrated at the end of the year with a joyous occasion. His idea was to connect this *tzedakah* celebration with Shavuot, *Chag Habikkurim*, the Festival of the First Fruits. During this assembly there was to be music and dancing and a review of the study and collection of *tzedakah* from the year.²⁵ Dr. Colodner reported that the goals of this experimental program were met with respect to the instruction of the value of *tzedakah* and the actual collection of *tzedakah*. Students developed a sense of belonging to the community and a feeling of responsibility to their community as well. At the same time, he reported that the campaign to raise money was successful, raising money for the United Jewish Appeal and for other Jewish organizations in the United States and Israel.

Late 1960's and 1970's

In 1967, The Union of American Hebrew Congregations published *Teaching in the Jewish Religious School*, an experimental edition of a guide for teachers in supplementary schools. It is primarily a varied source of teaching strategies, goals and

²⁴ Sol Colodner, "The Jewish Community—A Project for Study and Activity," *The Synagogue School* March 1959: 15-18.

²⁵ Colodner, 17.

objects, age-appropriate material and other resources for primary to high-school grade teachers. This highly organized guide listed both general and specific goals and objectives for Reform Jewish education. For the first time, this work offers a glimpse into the educational direction of the movement during a particular time period. Specifically, it presents the a snapshot of the Reform movement's attitude toward the instruction of *tzedakah* in its supplementary schools. In the section on the subject of *tzedakah* the editor lists three general goals:

- Familiarity with the Jewish tradition of *tzedakah*.
- Understanding of the various methods of helping others.
- Ability to decide how money and effort should be allocated to different causes.

Two ways to determine if the goals have been met are listed in the section entitled "Attitudes, Habits and Appreciations."

- Train a child to devote a portion of his time and money to worthy causes.
- Develop a positive feeling toward important Jewish and non-Jewish efforts.

Connected with these briefly stated goals and evaluation tools, the editor included various articles from diverse sources that suggest strategies for the general teaching of *tzedakah* in supplementary school. Nettie Goldstein outlined objectives, content and some activities to help teachers focus their *tzedakah* instruction. According to her, the primary goal of *Keren Ami* is "to enable children to contribute towards Jewish and general funds in a purpose and educative manner..." so they can further participate in the organized community.²⁶ The comprehensive list of objectives covers a wide range of community related topics:

- Active interest in the Jewish community.
- Ability to participate in Jewish community affairs.

²⁶ Lawrence Meyers, ed., *Teaching in the Jewish Religious School*, (New York: UAHC, 1967) 189.

- Understanding basic concepts and ideas.
- Knowledge of the Jewish community

Tzedakah is no longer just the collection of coins. Students are to be instructed to see the larger picture. In essence, they address the central questions American society was asking at the time: where should I donate my money? why do those organizations need my money? what can I do to make a difference? am I only responsible to Jews? There is also an emphasis on comparing past experiences of Jewish social action with present day ones.

At the same time, Jewish educators began to ask the same types of questions with respect to *tzedakah* in the classroom. They asked central questions regarding the attitudes and values taught through *tzedakah* projects: what is a Jew's obligation to the community, the nation and the world? Educators too, explored the question: How is the concept of *tzedakah* uniquely Jewish?²⁷

In the experimental curriculum the course for the instruction of *tzedakah* is laid out in great detail. The year 1967 marks one of the earliest times when *tzedakah* is explained in this manner as part of a larger curriculum. Previously, *tzedakah* instruction, ideas and projects were always discussed independently from the school's more complete course of study. Quite clearly, the curriculum first defines what *tzedakah* and *Keren Ami* are and are not. According to the text, *tzedakah* is social righteousness and justice, it is not charity but instead a type of self-taxation related to the values of *kol yisrael avarim ze leze, kl'al yisrael* (all Israel is responsible for one another) and *ahavat eretz yisrael* (love for the Land of Israel.) *Tzedakah*, translated into an educational context, becomes *Keren*

²⁷ Meyers, 191.

Ami. *Keren Ami* is a meaningful experience that emphasizes the totality of Israel, the idea of community; it is not just the donation of money.²⁸

This idea is further elaborated in the 1970 *Outline of the Curriculum for the Jewish Religious School*. In this work, specific goals and objectives along with teaching strategies are expanded. Two of these goals are listed in the section entitled, "Ethics and Personal Adjustment."²⁹ The students should have:

- An understanding of social problems and issues
- A commitment to active participation in dealing with social problems

The curriculum outlines general principles for educators to keep in mind with regard to *tzedakah* instruction. First, echoing the theories of previous authors on the subject, *tzedakah* only has meaning when students have the responsibility in the decision of the destination of the money. Second, schools should not only encourage students to give *tzedakah*, but should equally encourage students to explore the meaning behind why Jews donate *tzedakah*.³⁰

By the end of the 1960's, the instruction of *tzedakah* had become more standardized and a more specific, thought-out approach to the topic came into focus. The collection of *tzedakah*, along with music instruction and worship services became something common in every grade in the supplementary school; one educator even went as far to say that it is "difficult to imagine a school accomplishing its goals without a *tzedakah* fund."³¹ But this curriculum reveals a dichotomy regarding the place of *tzedakah* in the wider curriculum. While subjects such as holidays, Bible and Hebrew are

²⁸ Meyers, 189.

²⁹ *An Outline of the Curriculum for the Jewish Religious School* (New York: UAHC/CCAR, 1970) 11.

³⁰ *Outline*, 4-5.

³¹ *Outline*, 17.

built upon from one year to the next, *tzedakah*, on the other hand, is not. In other words, every year, the specific instruction of *tzedakah* has the same goals, separate from the rest curriculum and virtually the same in every grade.

In kindergarten, the curriculum calls for the introduction of such central Jewish themes as worship, Bible stories, and *tzedakah*. But as outlined in the curriculum, grades one through four do not have specific mention of the collection of *tzedakah* or the instruction of the value behind it. In fifth grade when the suggested course of study is an exploration of the local Jewish community, one part is concerned with the organizations that are supported themselves by families, synagogues and the *tzedakah* fund. In the middle school grades, *tzedakah* is used as a basis for instruction of Jewish ethics and of modern social issues. In seventh grade, when the students explore their personal ethics, *tzedakah* projects are listed as a possible extension of the classroom learning. The curriculum from grade eight is intended to help the students translate their personal ethic into the social realm. With a study of the Prophets as a background, the students wrestle with the problems that face the wider community and the role of Jews in trying to solve those problems. According to the outline of the curriculum the first time students formally explore the value of justice related to *tzedakah* is in eleventh grade where the central question is "are we enjoined merely to study justice—or rather, in addition, to pursue it, to do justly?"³² Finally, in twelfth grade, the integration of what comes before occurs. Students struggle with how to apply the personal and social values to social crises and modern Jewish problems.

At the same time, there was a sentiment among some educators that *tzedakah* should be further integrated into the general curriculum of supplementary schools.

³² *Outline*, 31-55.

"*Keren Ami*," after all, "is not an isolated activity."³³ Only in a general sense do they recommend this saying that *tzedakah* should be connected to Bible, history, prayers and holidays and Hebrew terms should be used in place of English ones. While these educators believed in the incorporation of *tzedakah* into the curriculum, they offered no suggestions on how to do this. Instead, this idea will wait and will be, in part, implemented over the next 15 years.

The legacy of this era on the study of *tzedakah* in the classroom can still be felt today. Mirroring the wider American society, the study of modern social issues and their relation to the individual expanded in the Reform Jewish educational world. More materials were created including filmstrips, mini-units and other multimedia kits. Activities became more diverse and widespread in the school. But the focus of these activities was primarily on the collection of *tzedakah*. Popular during this era were contests, campaigns and exhibits that all encouraged the raising of funds for worldwide causes.

Late 1970's

In 1974, George Miles, writing in the magazine, *Compass*, called *tzedakah* "the step-child of Jewish religious education."³⁴ Miles noticed that within schools, there was not unified approach to *tzedakah*. Sometimes, *tzedakah* was taught on the classroom level, but most of the time *tzedakah* was under the purview of the principal. While school-wide collection of *tzedakah* continued to be extremely successful, *tzedakah* taught in the classroom was seriously lacking. Miles cites a number of problems seen in the classrooms regarding the subject of *tzedakah*. He found that most teachers just made

³³ Meyers, 191.

³⁴ George M. Miles, "Tzedakah in the Religious School," *Compass*, October 1974: 3.

generalizations when they taught about both the collection of *tzedakah* and the value of *tzedakah*. While many classes collected hundreds of dollars, most students were unaware of the destination of the money that they worked so hard to collect. Miles also found that despite the regular collection, students still felt that the amount of money had a meaningless effect in the context of the larger problem.

In his article, Miles suggests a solution to help end some of these problems and the general malaise felt by the students. He recommends schools focus in on a specific problem and work on that one for a month or two. Funds raised during that time period would be collected only for that particular project. The project could then be concluded with a special assembly where the representatives of the organization received the funds in person. Without this procedure, Miles feels that students could never fulfill the goal of experiencing *tzedakah* in the fullest sense. Further, this approach has a better potential to lead to integration of *tzedakah* into other subjects.

In 1977, the UAHC published *An Interim Outline of the Curriculum for the Jewish Religious School*. This outline built on the first one created seven years prior. One noticeable change is in language—instead of the English term charity fund, the Hebrew term, *Keren Ami* is used throughout the work. This is a significant change in that it moves the concept of *tzedakah* further away from the idea of charity and closer to the Jewish meaning of righteousness and justice. This change in vocabulary is also reflected in one of the stated goals of Jewish religious education: “to enable children youth, adults to further the causes of justice, freedom and peace by pursuing *tzedek* (righteousness), *mishpat* (justice), and *chesed* (loving deeds.)” To achieve this broad goal, the interim curriculum relates specific objectives of Jewish religious education. In section II, one of

the values, attitudes and appreciations desired is the "habits of *tzedakah* on a regular basis."³⁵

Included in the 1977 curriculum, are sources for the teacher to aid in their instruction of *tzedakah* in the classroom. These *tzedakah* guidebooks are the first new books of their kind published in decades. The *Tzedakah Manual* by Azriel Eisenberg and *Tzedakah Guidelines: Discussion and Program Guide for Pupils and Teachers* by the New York City Bureau of Jewish Education are two works that give teachers something beyond general goals and objectives. They provide lessons and specific ideas to meaningfully bring *tzedakah* into the classroom.

1980's and 1990's

Tzedakah education became more challenging in the last two decades. Educators and sociologists cited the age in which children were growing up was an age of narcissism; an era where children had trouble understanding and relating to the value of *tzedakah*. They simply had difficulty seeing the problems of others in their communities and in the world.³⁶ As a result, the instruction of *tzedakah* in the classroom blossomed in the 1980's and 1990's with the creation of a myriad of sources, techniques and teaching strategies to help the teacher. Chiseled out over the preceding decades, a successful theory of and the attitude towards the teaching of *tzedakah* was finally beginning to take shape.

In her article "Teaching *Tzedakah*," Karen Goodis, summarizes many of these new ideas and some of the old theories regarding *tzedakah* instruction. The centerpiece of her approach consists of three integral parts: opportunities to give *tzedakah*, a study of

³⁵ *An Interim Outline of the Curriculum for the Jewish Religious School* (New York: UAHC, 1977) 3-5.

³⁶ Linda Thal, "Spectrum of *Tzedakah*," *Compass* Fall 1983: 8.

the sources behind the Jewish tradition of *tzedakah* and exposure to the various individuals and agencies, recipients of the *tzedakah* funds. Goodis reminds educators that while we can teach *tzedakah* terms and about needy individuals and organizations, we cannot truly teach the value of *tzedakah*. Instead, teachers must provide experiences of *tzedakah*. The motivation to give *tzedakah* must come from within.³⁷ We shall see later examples of new programs and techniques that seek to address these same ideas.

Goodis outlines a specific methodology by age level incorporating her three-aspect philosophy: In the primary grades the emphasis is on making a difference. Teachers should demonstrate to the young students that their actions—however small—do make a difference in the lives of particular people. From the earliest religious school age, children are able to put a face on the need and know that their quarters, nickels and dimes are helping those people. In the intermediate grades, emphasis is placed on the regular collection and discussion of *tzedakah*. This regular involvement on an intimate level is important to develop the sense that *tzedakah* is part of Judaism as a whole. In other words, *tzedakah* is just a behavior that Jews do. Grades four through seven are also an appropriate time to begin to examine the roots of *tzedakah* in Jewish tradition and history. Around the time of the bar/bat mitzvah, the students increasingly have the opportunity to personalize their approach to *tzedakah*. Through high school, as the student's sense of responsibility and independence increases, teachers can begin to emphasize the students' own interests and needs with respect to *tzedakah*. Students in these grades can take leadership roles in *tzedakah* projects and are of the age where they can regularly volunteer at certain agencies and organizations.³⁸

³⁷ Karen Goodis, "Teaching *Tzedakah*," *The Pedagogic Reporter* November 1985: 8.

³⁸ "Tzedakah and Mitzvot" *The Pedagogic Reporter* June 1984: 29.

In the 1980's and 1990's, one particular program grew in popularity around the nation, the *tzedakah* fair. In an article, appearing in 1983 in *Compass*, Linda Thal wrote that a *tzedakah* fair is a program that can "overwhelm students with large and diverse amounts of organizations and issues that demonstrate the need of those we are too rushed to see around us."³⁹ Through experience, students of all ages can learn about those around them in need and how best to help those people. Through both general activities and unique opportunities, students were exposed to both national issues and issues that touched their specific community—both Jewish and non-Jewish. What they learned was to answer these problems in Jewish context, through the value of *tzedakah*. Originally, *tzedakah* fairs were intended for families. The primary rationale was for children to see their parents as *tzedakah* role models. After all, *tzedakah* was understood as something that Jews did, because it was something that was simply expected. A secondary rationale for the inclusion of the entire family was that an event experienced by the entire family can be the basis of ongoing learning at home.⁴⁰ There is an inherent problem with *tzedakah* fairs though. All of the time and effort put into one day can easily burn out *tzedakah* learning efforts for the rest of year. Thal thought it was important to assert that *tzedakah* fairs only are intended to lay the groundwork for further instruction, discussion and action.⁴¹

During this decade, an article appeared in the *Pedagogic Report* that outlined a Reconstructionist approach to the instruction of *tzedakah*. While the emphasis of my work concerns the Reform Movement, this Reconstructionist model is significant. The

³⁹ Thal, 8.

⁴⁰ Thal, 8.

⁴¹ Thal, 22.

concept of Bet Tzedek has had some bearing on the direction of *tzedakah* instruction in some Reform schools.

Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of the Reconstructionist movement, proposed that the teaching of mitzvot to children be based strictly a study and action model. With regard to *tzedakah*, he recommended three objectives for the Jewish classroom.⁴²

- Study of traditional teachings on the value of *tzedek*
- Creation of a moral atmosphere in the school based on the work of Lawrence Kohlberg.
- Emphasis placed on the creation of model communities where Jewish and democratic ideals meet.

Embodied in these three objectives are elements that are simple and to the point with respect to teaching *tzedakah*. Working in tandem, they promote the creation of a Jewish environment where *tzedakah* is always on the forefront, inspiring the students to create that same environment throughout the rest of their lives.

Appearing in a wide array of Jewish education publications during the 1980's were sample lesson plans and programs that demonstrated truly creative approaches to the instruction of *tzedakah* in the Jewish supplementary school. In general, these dynamic programs, like the *tzedakah* fair, sought to actually provide the experience for children to participate in all aspects the collection and donation of *tzedakah* and the study of the value behind them.

In late 1984, Congregation Bnai Jehudah in Kansas City, made the most of a local current event turning it into an incredibly powerful *tzedakah* learning experience. Mobilizing the entire religious school, the congregation raised money and collected blankets and warm clothes for members of the community without gas to heat their

⁴² Jeffrey Schein, "A Reconstructionist Approach to Teaching Mitzvot," *The Pedagogic Reporter* October 1983: 10.

homes. How were the children motivated to work so hard and do so much? The educators of the congregation used non-traditional means to connect their students to the problem. Together with the use of video clips for the news, the school set up a cold room, so students could feel firsthand what it is like to live without heat.

Another innovative approach to *tzedakah* was the development of a *tzedakah* retreat. Planners of these types of retreats incorporated traditional *tzedakah* teachings with a close examination of the needs of Jewish communities. Discussion and debate were the major learning methods in this program. Participants planned *tzedakah* drives and debated the destination of *tzedakah* funds. They also heard from recipients of past *tzedakah* donations. An intense experience such as retreat has an added advantage for it can help create a student *tzedakah* leadership.

Yet another popular and successful way for students to connect personally with the value of *tzedakah* is the creation of *tzedakah* boxes. School contests for the most creative box helped create excitement and enthusiasm for the project. A *tzedakah* box at home helps to foster the idea that *tzedakah* is not just a religious school activity—it truly creates an overall atmosphere of *tzedakah* in the lives of the students. Above all, continuing the activity at home with a personal *tzedakah* box can provide them a deeper sense of emotion and attachment to the value of *tzedakah*.⁴³

Seventh grade, the bar/bat mitzvah year, increasingly became a year filled with *tzedakah* projects in the 1980s and 1990's. Many congregations began to require students to complete a number of projects as part of their preparation. Popular projects during this time included different types of involvement with Soviet Jews and Ethiopian Jews. The

⁴³ "Mitzvot and Jewish Values," *The Pedagogic Reporter* April 1985: 26.

goal during this year was to personalize *tzedakah*, giving each child, and many times their entire family, the opportunity to make an intimate connection to specific cause of their choosing.

While the use of *Keren Ami* councils began to decrease in the 1980's, other programs and projects took its place. These newer programs allowed for the participation of an entire class or an entire grade instead of a few chosen students as in the councils. The drawback, though, was that many of these programs were allocation simulations, not real experiences of distributing *tzedakah* funds. Many schools across the continent designed simulated Jewish Federation and United Jewish Appeal allocation meetings. For a period of time during the school year, students took on the roles of every participant from solicitation to allocation. They familiarized themselves with organizations and became advocates for them.⁴⁴

Increasingly in the 1980's and into the 1990's, the Jewish education field began to see the creation of specific curricula exclusively on the subject of *tzedakah*. These all-encompassing programs of study focused on connecting the traditional Jewish values of *tzedakah* with modern social issues both in American and around the world. An entire school might be engaged in study such as this, integrated into their wider Jewish studies curriculum. Each year, the students would revisit the topic of *tzedakah* but in a new and age-appropriate way. These spiral-type curricula, when taught properly were very successful in the teaching of the action of *tzedakah* and the value behind it.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ *The Pedagogic Reporter* May 1983: 29.

⁴⁵ *Pedagogic*, May 1983: 29.

Today

Perhaps the greatest contribution to the instruction of *tzedakah* through the 1990's to today, was the publishing of a wide range of materials for both the teacher and the student. The majority of the Jewish education publishing companies, not to mention local Bureaus of Jewish Education, produced many books, lessons, videos and other materials for use in the instruction of *tzedakah* in the supplementary school. These materials are described and critiqued in the subsequent chapter.

Conclusions

Over the past 70 years, the instruction of *tzedakah* as evolved greatly in Reform religious schools. In general, the trend has been toward the standardization of the *tzedakah* program as a whole. But this standardization came with a price. Throughout Jewish history, *tzedakah* was always focused on a narrow, community level. The needs of the particular community were absolutely primary. In fact, our Jewish texts are first and foremost, concerned with the particular needs of the individual. With the move to standardize the *tzedakah* program, the uniqueness of a city's or school's program is lost. The potential connections that an effective *tzedakah* program can foster with individuals are also lost. Today, educators have felt this problem and are beginning to address it. They have discovered that standardization is not the solution. Increasingly, educators have noticed that the efforts of individuals addressing the needs of both the students of the school and of their community promote the development of *tzedakah* values and *tzedakah* behavior among the students.

Above all, the evolution of *tzedakah* instruction in the classroom can be seen as a process of Americanization. Over the past century, both the value of *tzedakah* and the

behavior of *tzedakah* were adapted to fit into the wider American society. Two major trends are connected to this. The first is the introduction of democratic values into the allocation decision. *Keren Ami* councils and conferences are examples of ways students were empowered to decide where *tzedakah* money should be donated. The origins of the second trend can be traced back to the 1940's and 1950's. During this time, Jews began to look beyond their own communities seeking to address the needs of Jews around the world in places such as the Land of Israel and post-war Europe. Over the subsequent decades, this inclination to help others outside the local Jewish community continued and, increasingly, Jews began to feel the need to help non-Jews as well as Jews. Perhaps influenced by the civil rights movement of the 1960's or by the pull of assimilation, Jews progressively donated more *tzedakah* funds to organizations that were not strictly Jewish. These organizations include the United Way, Make-A-Wish and UNICEF. As a result of this trend, schools could no longer refer to their *tzedakah* projects and programs, *Keren Ami*. By the 1990's, the term went out of use after over fifty years of use.

Materials such as teacher's guides, workbooks and other alternatives to the traditional textbook have allowed teachers to become more creative with regard to *tzedakah* instruction. Simply said, there is more out there for teachers to use as they design effective and age-appropriate lessons in *tzedakah*.

Today, teachers and principals alike seek to strike a balance between the value of *tzedakah* and the habit of *tzedakah*. Most agree that to teach one or the other does not give the student everything he or she needs to know about the subject. Programs that emphasize the individual—donor and recipient—have the greatest potential to promote well-rounded and life-long *tzedakah* behavior.

Chapter 3

Annotated Bibliography of *Tzedakah* Materials for the Classroom

Annotated Bibliography of Tzedakah Materials for the Classroom

The following chapter consists of an annotated bibliography of the majority of resources that exist on the subject of *tzedakah* and its instruction. These materials range from textbooks and workbooks for student consumption to teaching guides, curricula and sourcebooks for the teacher. Other materials such as storybooks, instant lessons and art project kits can be used as an aid in the instruction of *tzedakah*. The educator will find that the materials in existence are geared toward students from a wide range of ages and grades. The bibliography is organized by type of material. The materials in each section are listed alphabetically by title.

In general, most of the books in existence are only *tzedakah* resources—collections of stories, texts and projects. Frequently, these materials do not tell an educator or teacher how to integrate the topic into the wider course of study. Further, the materials do not address techniques concerning how to organize the subject of *tzedakah* or how to approach it in a particular grade. Above all, one can see that there is no unity on how the subject of *tzedakah* is taught in a classroom setting or in a particular grade level. The value of *tzedakah* is a multifaceted subject requiring a diverse approach toward its instruction. The majority of these materials only focus on one of these facets in isolation.

The Structure of the Annotated Bibliography

- Bibliographic Information
- Type of Material
- Goals
- Age level
- Summary & Evaluation

Teacher Resources

***The Dynamics of Tzedakah: From Dependence to Dignity.* By David Hartman, Tzvi Marx and Noam Zion. The Shalom Hartman Institute, Jerusalem, Israel, (no date given.)**

Type: Teacher resource

Goals: To explore the problems of giving *tzedakah* without engendering abject dependency and without offending the dignity of the recipient. To present basic traditional and modern sources that relate to the giving of *tzedakah*.

Age: Grade 9 to Adults

The primary intention of this work is to present the issues involved in the donation of *tzedakah* related to our Jewish texts, both traditional and modern. Part one of the book is an essay that discusses the various contemporary aspects of *tzedakah*. Part two is a tool for educators teaching *tzedakah* as a text study. The authors hope that the students who study these texts will begin to understand the emotional elements involved in the donation of *tzedakah*. Part three is presented as a self-study of the texts introduced in part two. Included are activities and questions for reflection on the various texts. As a resource in general, this work is thorough and very well presented. It is organized clearly and provides understandable commentary and notes on the topics and texts.

***Eco-Tzedeka – Living Justly with Nature.* Food Works, Vermont. 1989-1990.**

Type: Teacher resource

Goal: Presents activities that students can do to help the environment.

Age: Can be adapted to any age.

This packet of background information and activities centers on the theme of living justly with nature. While the title is "*eco-tzedeka*," regrettably, the term is never defined, nor is it connected directly to the value of *tzedakah*. Instead, there are only resources and activities for composting, recycling, gardening and not wasting food. The

work can be used to supplement a study of the definition of *tzedakah*. *Tzedakah* in a broad sense means righteousness or justice and when we treat people, the community or the environment in a righteous manner, in essence we are performing *tzedakah*.

***For One Another.* By Raymond A. Zwerin. UAHC, New York City, New York, 1977.**

Type: Textbook and teacher's guide.

Goal: To show what some of the functions of the local Jewish community are, how they affect the lives of Jews living in the community and, how these functions exemplify the basic values of Judaism.

Age: Grades 5-8

This textbook consists of a comprehensive study of the nature of American Jewish communities and the organizations that help its members. Each chapter discusses a different institution from Jewish Family Service, to the JCC to the synagogue. Included in each chapter are a 'did you know?' section, activities to do and discuss, and texts from our 'heritage.' While intended for intermediate and junior high students, this textbook is probably better suited to junior high and high school students. The format of the book is only text, with a handful of black and white sketches and no diagrams or charts. It asks thought provoking questions and poses dilemmas for the students to work through. The teacher's guide helps the teacher organize information through vocabulary lists, outlines and extensions of the text. It is a vital tool to bring the textbook alive for the students learning about this important subject.

***The Ideal of Tzedakah.* Prepared by Saul S. Spiro. BJE Cleveland, Ohio, 1965.**

Type: Teacher's manual

Goal: To emphasize the importance of *tzedakah* in its manifold phases through a variety of teaching tools.

Age: For teachers of all grades

This teacher resource begins with a very poignant personal statement from the author concerning the present state of *Keren Ami* collection and *tzedakah* instruction. Spiro strongly recommends that teachers must address this growing apathy toward *tzedakah*. He asserts that students and teachers must focus on the "ideal of *tzedakah*" instead of merely its collection. The main content of this work is a selection of articles about *tzedakah* and local charitable organizations. These articles can provide relevant background for both teachers and students seeking to add more to their *tzedakah* instruction. Also included in this book are texts studies, sample lessons, mini-plays, readings for assembly programs and ideas for arts and crafts. For 1st through 3rd graders there is an original *tzedakah* activity book created especially for this volume with hands-on games and coloring exercises. This teacher's manual on *tzedakah* provides the teacher with important information about *tzedakah* organizations. It can help teachers move away from the everyday habit of collecting coins toward a deeper understanding of the ideal of *tzedakah*.

***Kadima Mitzvah of the Month #7: Tzedakah.* Prepared by Vicki Fishof. United Synagogue of America, Department of Youth Activities, New York, New York, (no date given.)**

Type: Lesson plan

Goal: Students will consider various aspects of *tzedakah* beyond putting a few coins in the *pushka*. Students will explore different ways in which they can perform the mitzvah of *tzedakah* and will be motivated to personally involve themselves in the mitzvah of *tzedakah* and through the *Kadima Yad B'yad* Program.

Age: Grades 4-6

This lesson, published by the United Synagogue of America Youth Department, is part of a wider series called Mitzvah of the Month. Every month a different mitzvah

lesson guide is published with the goal to “encourage positive attitudes toward Judaism and active Jewish life.” This lesson on *zedakah* contains all of the resources needed for a teacher to teach this lesson in a supplementary school setting. Included are explanations and key discussion questions, text studies on Torah commandments and Maimonides and programming activity suggestions. The discussion questions encourage the students to find a personal connection to the donation of *zedakah*—including money other objects and time. The lesson is deliberate in emphasizing the connections between being informed about *zedakah* and actually performing the mitzvah of *zedakah*. The final page of the lesson includes an evaluation form that originally was intended for the Kadima office. Even though this form is around 25 years old, it still can be used by the teacher to evaluate the program and to plan future expansion activities. In general, this lesson is written on a basic level. It can be useful as an introduction or as a one-time lesson on the mitzvah of *zedakah*.

Sing Out for Justice. By the Tikkun Olam Committee of NATE.

Type: Teacher’s guide and parent resource

Goal: Students will be able to connect songs about justice with Jewish texts and values.

Age: Primary grades through high school

This unique resource is designed for students and families to explore Judaic themes through a variety of popular songs about justice. Each song is connected to a value and its textual sources. The guide then outlines a selection of activities for primary grades, intermediate grades, high school and families both at home and at school. The activities range from questions for discussion, field trips and videos. Each one helps the students relate the words and themes of the song with some form of social action. This resource

guide is an interesting and innovative way to connect music instruction with class instruction.

***Tikkun Olam Projects.* By Deborah Niederman. Project Curriculum Renewal, Jewish Education Center of Cleveland, 2002.**

Type: Guidebook for *tikkun olam* projects

Goals: To offer a Judaic context for those working with teens on *tikkun olam* projects.

Age: Grades 7-12

This guidebook provides texts, project ideas and logistical support for leaders helping students participate in *tikkun olam* projects. The first part is an introduction to the concept of *tikkun olam*. Activities and stories help the students and the facilitators define *tikkun olam* and contextualize the projects they will perform. The second part of the book lists a variety of potential projects organized by core value from which the student can choose. Connected to each of these core values are text studies for the student to complete. The final section of this resource contains worksheets that help the facilitators organize the particular projects. There are also journal sheets for the students to reflect on the *tikkun olam* projects in which they participated. This guide is an excellent source for helping teenagers glean more meaning from the *tikkun olam* projects they perform. Through the use of Jewish texts and journal writing, the students are better able to understand and connect with their projects.

***Tsedakah and Us.* By Reuven Kimelman. The National Jewish Resource Center. New York City, New York, 1983.**

Type: Teacher's Guide

Goal: To help illustrate how to raise the Jewish commitment in the act of raising Jewish money.

Age: Can be adapted to any age

This resource outlines various aspects of *tzedakah* including giving, soliciting, allocating and the art of giving. In each chapter, the author presents Jewish texts from the Tanakh, Talmud and others along with a running commentary. Each page consists of a subject heading, text and its accompanying commentary. This manual is very useful and easy to read. The texts presented are appropriate and relevant and can be used with virtually any age level.

***Tzarchei Tzibbur: Community and Responsibility in the Jewish Tradition.* By Barbara Fortgang Summers.**

Type: Teacher's guide

Goal: Students will be able to personalize Jewish texts and the needs of individuals in the Jewish community. Students will desire to participate in a group community service projects.

Age: Grades 7-12

This guide is intended as a source book for activities that combine study and action. Each unit consists of three parts: study of Jewish texts and how it relates to personal attitudes, implementation of projects in association with community agencies or individuals in need, and reflection of actions related to the Jewish texts studied at the onset. These three steps allow the students to take what they have learned in the classroom and apply in the real world. Some of the topics covered in this resource include, caring for the elderly, welcoming the stranger, visiting the sick, Soviet Jewry, and respect for the poor. This guide is written in a style that is easy for teachers to use. Listed in each unit are goals, an outline, introductory activities, text study, discussion questions, modern applications, ideas for group activity and evaluation activities. This teacher resource can stand as an entire curriculum for the study of *tzedakah* and *gemilut*

chasadim. The diverse activities and opportunities for reflection can provide the students with a personal connection to the topics presented.

***Tzedakah: Not Charity But Justice!* Edited by Lillian Ross. The Central Agency for Jewish Education, Miami, Florida, 1977.**

Type: Teacher resource

Goal: To underscore the thesis of *tzedakah*—giving is living.

Age: Can be adapted to any age

This book is a compilation of a wide range of materials appropriate for the instruction of *tzedakah* in the classroom. It includes Jewish texts, stories, songs, crafts, poems and resources. Also, specifically for teachers, there are lesson plans, games and discussion questions. The book is organized into two broad sections. The first is the philosophy and background of the value of *tzedakah*. This part includes texts from our Jewish sources and a summary of the connection between *tzedakah* and the Miami Jewish Federation. Part two is a collection of practical resources for the religious school teacher. Included here: a bibliography, arts and crafts, a summary of educational philosophy toward *tzedakah*, activities and other projects. Unfortunately, this section, the one potentially the most useful to teachers, is poorly organized. It is simply a collection of sources pulled from many different places and people.

***Tzedakah: Teaching Ourselves and Others to Care.* By Gavriel Goldman. Cleveland Bureau of Jewish Education, Cleveland, Ohio, 1989.**

Type: Teacher resource

Goal: A workbook of school and home activities, projects, stories, lesson plans and resources for the teaching of *tzedakah* and the Jewish Welfare Fund Appeal.

Age: Can be adapted to age.

This diverse resource contains a wide range of activities on the subject of *tzedakah* for all ages. The resource is organized by type of activity: home *tzedakah* projects, games, texts, stories, and other resources. This rich source can be used to supplement a study of *tzedakah* or study of other subjects such as holidays, values, history or Tanakh.

Storybooks

***Abba Yudan: A Story from our Sages.* By R. Keren, illustrations by Rachel Vaye. Hakerem Ltd., Jerusalem, Israel, 1980.**

Type: Storybook in English and vocalized Hebrew

Goal: To present a story about *tzedakah* and about God's providence

Ages: Can be adapted for use in Pre-School- Grade 4

This richly illustrated storybook tells a *midrash* from *Midrash Rabbah* about Abba Yudan. All his life, Abba Yudan gave *tzedakah* to support students in Israel. But one day, Abba Yudan lost all of his wealth and despite this, he still gave what he could to help the scholars in Israel. The collectors of the money blessed him asking God to replenish all he had lost. In the end, Abba Yudan is restored to wealth and lives happily ever after. This book would be useful as part of a study of *tzedakah*. It presents a lesson that may be easily misinterpreted by children—that giving *tzedakah* will, in return, bring somebody wealth. Rather, Abba Yudan teaches us that no matter what one's economic situation, we are always able to give *tzedakah*.

***As Big as an Egg.* By Rochel Sandman. Hachai Publishing, Brooklyn, NY, 1995.**

Type: Storybook

Goal: Jews are obligated to give of what they have no matter what their economic situation.

Age: pre-school – 4th grade

This illustrated storybook is set in Russia during a time when bread was very hard to come by. Chaim, the main character is poor and always very hungry. Every time he buys his bread, he is “forced” by Bubbe Hinda to give some of it to the sick. Frustrated by this, Chaim seeks out a different bakery away from Bubbe Hinda to buy his bread. When he wakes up the next morning after buying the bread, he always finds a chunk of

bread missing—the chunk of bread he would normally give to Bubbe Hinda. In the end, Chaim learns the importance of giving that chunk of bread, about as big as an egg, to the needy. Chaim understands that that portion of his bread does not belong to him in the first place. This book does a good job in teaching the importance of giving *tzedakah*, even when you have very little in the first place.

***Creating Angels.* Retold by Barbara Diamond Goldin. Jason Aronson, Inc. Northvale, New Jersey, 1996.**

Type: 24 stories and folktales about *tzedakah*

Goal: To show that *tzedakah* is not just about giving money to the poor, but includes an attitude and encompasses a whole belief system.

Ages: Can be adapted to any age.

The collection of stories represented in this book originated from a variety of Jewish sources and places around the world. What they all have in common is their portrayal of generous people who perform acts of *tzedakah*. This volume contains stories both short and long both Ashkenazic and non-Ashkenazic worlds. Teachers and parents will find the glossary and the bibliography in the back of the book helpful in an educational setting. These timeless stories are appropriate in almost any setting from the youngest children to the oldest adults.

***The Gift.* By Aliana Brodmann. Simon & Schuster, New York City, New York, 1993.**

Type: Storybook

Goal: To show a child who instead of buying something for herself gives the money as *tzedakah* to a musician on the street.

Age: pre-school to grade 4

This book tells the story of a girl who goes shopping with a five-mark coin she received from her father. Instead of buying something for herself, she chooses to donate the money as *tzedakah* to a musician playing the accordion on the street. Apart from the first sentence of the book about Hanukkah, there is nothing overtly Jewish in this book; only the value of *tzedakah* demonstrated by the young girl is. This is a marvelously illustrated book that is very readable. The story is also one to which students can easily relate.

***Hand in Hand: Stories about You and Me.* By Menucha Fuchs. Judaica Press, Inc., New York City, New York, 1999.**

Type: 8 short stories

Goal: To encourage children to enjoy reading and to show them the beauty of performing *mitzvos* a helping family, friends and neighbors.

Age: Grades 1-4

This collection of short stories is intended for beginning readers. It presents 8 stories on the theme of helping others and *tzedakah*. These simple stories are written from an Orthodox perspective but are appropriate for any child interested in learning about ways that children like themselves can make a difference by giving to others.

***The Humongous Pushka in the Sky.* By Danny Siegel. Town House Press, Pittsboro, NC, 1993.**

Type: Storybook

Goal: To encourage children to think about the world around them in terms of performing acts of *tzedakah* and *gemilut chasadim*.

Ages: Grades K-4

This storybook with black and white illustrations centers on the theme of what children can do to help others in need. Siegel begins by showing how we use our

imagination to see people, animals and objects in the shapes of the clouds or in the constellations of the night sky. He then asserts how we can take one step further. When we see those objects we can begin to imagine ways in which those people, animals and objects can be used to help others. This book can successfully help children broaden their view of the world by thinking of hundreds of things they can do to perform a mitzvah and give *tzedakah*.

***Partners.* By Deborah Shayne Syme. UAHC Press, New York City, New York, 1990.**

Type: Storybook

Goal: Children will learn that they have the power to help the needy.

Age: pre-school – 4th grade

This black and white storybook is about Josh and Jacob, two boys who go on a field trip and travel through a poverty stricken part of town. They learn that they can become partners with God by helping those in their community who are less fortunate. They learn that by collecting money and other objects, giving their time and effort to worthy causes, they can become partners with God and help repair the world.

***A Thousand Eggs for Sarajevo.* By Ronnie M. Horn. UJA-Federation of New York, 1994.**

Type: Storybook & curriculum guide

Goal: Students will learn how Jews helped other Jews celebrate Passover in Sarajevo during the Balkan War.

Age: Can be adapted to any age

This book tells the true story about how the JDC helped the Jews of Sarajevo celebrate Passover in the middle of a war. It describes the journey of the men who delivered 1000 eggs, *haggadot* and matzah to the Jews of Sarajevo on the eve of

Passover. This story can be a meaningful addition to a study of either Passover or *tzedakah*. The curriculum guide helps teachers and parents extend and personalize the story. Although this story is now dated, it still can provide a valuable lesson about *tzedakah* and the importance of helping our fellow Jews around the world.

***The Very Best Place for a Penny.* By Dina Herman Rosenfeld. Merko L'inyonei Chinuch, Inc., New York, 1984.**

Type: Storybook

Goal: A *tzedakah* box is the very best place for a penny.

Age: 4-9 years old

This beautifully illustrated storybook traces the life of a little shiny penny. The penny goes from place to place, eventually falling underneath a boy's bed. The boy finds the penny and places it in his *tzedakah* box. In the box, the penny is happy to find all his friends and realizes that the *tzedakah* box is the very best place for him. This story teaches the concepts of *tzedakah* and mitzvah from a more traditional Orthodox view.

Curricula

***Gemilut Hasadim Curriculum Guide.* Prepared by Rachel Meisels and Rena Rotenberg. BJE Baltimore, Maryland, 1989.**

Type: Curriculum

Goal: Students will explore personal involvement in *gemilut chasadim*.

Age: Pre-School & Kindergarten

This curriculum is written for teachers to use as an introduction to *gemilut chasadim* in the early childhood classroom. Each of the four units of the curriculum includes objectives, a set induction, circle time discussion, music, art and other activities. The objectives are clearly outlined and defined. The set inductions and circle time discussions instructions are well detailed and are appropriate to engage the students in the topic. The music for each unit is written out in the back of the book complete with words, music and guitar chords. The strength of this curriculum lies in its concern for multi-modal activities in each unit.

***The Jewish Welfare Fund Campaign Curriculum.* Curriculum Department of the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland, 1997.**

Type: Curriculum

Goals: By grade level:

Age: Three year cycles each for grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8

Grades K-2: Students will become familiar with the range of local agencies that the Jewish Welfare Campaign supports.

Grades 3-5: Students will be able to differentiate between the Jewish Welfare Campaign process and regular *tzedakah* giving.

Grades 6-8: Students will explore the connections between Jewish texts and the helpfulness of the Jewish Welfare Fund Campaign.

This curriculum presents general objectives and ideas for activities for teachers related to the annual Jewish Welfare Fund Campaign. The curriculum is designed to help teachers plan one lesson per grade about the campaign. It provides teachers with age-

appropriate activities that are intended to raise awareness among the children about *tzedakah* and the Jewish Welfare Fund. Each of the three curricular pieces is intended to be used in a three-year cycle among primary, elementary and middle school levels. Included in with each unit are a variety of resource sheets that contain activities and other useful information on the Jewish Welfare Campaign. This curriculum is a unique resource on *tzedakah* that provides the students with a meaningful connection with the *tzedakah* activities of the community in which they live.

***Jews, Judaism and Civic Responsibility.* By Zvi Nierman, Joshua Perry, Sid Schwartz, Michael Shepard. The Washington Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values, Washington, DC, 1998.**

Type: Day school curriculum

Goal: To help a new generation of American Jews understand the value of using their Jewish commitments and knowledge to increase their passion for creating a better world.

Age: Grades 9-12

This comprehensive day school curriculum examines Jewish civic responsibility through three different lenses: historical, textual and issues. Each section presents various sources, readings and texts that serve as a jumping off point for students to debate, discuss and reflect. The texts are presented in Hebrew with a glossary to help the students grasp them. The translations can be found in the teacher's guide. The section on issues is well organized and readable. Each issue is presented with background material and discussion questions that allow the students to think critically about these complex concerns. While this curriculum is not centered on the value of *tzedakah* per se, it does present topics directly related to our relationships to our communities and tradition. Above all, this curriculum emphasizes knowledge of and action within the communities and issues that affect all Jews in America.

***Homelessness: A Jewish Response.* Prepared by Ellen Kwait. BJE Baltimore, 1991.**

Type: Curriculum

Goal: Students will see homelessness as a Jewish issue through an exploration of Jewish texts, history and values.

Age: Three sections: grades 3 & 4, grades 5 & 6, grades 7 and above

This curriculum consists of three easy to follow lesson plans for each of three different age levels. Every lesson is organized according to a grid that lists teacher and student objectives, materials and vocabulary words, set inductions, instructional procedures and evaluations. Each lesson also includes Jewish texts and discussion questions. Very useful in the curriculum are resource items located in the back of the book. These worksheets include stories, background information and scenarios for the students to gain an added perspective to the learning. This curriculum was written as a response to the growing homelessness problem in the Baltimore area. The Baltimore Jewish Council produced this work to demonstrate both the responsibility of the Jewish community to address this problem and the vast need in the wider community. While this program is specifically connected to the Baltimore community it can easily be adapted to any community where homelessness is a concern.

***The Tzedakah Partnership Program: Giving and Organizing Positive Social Change—a Curriculum for Religious Schools.* By Sharon Wechter. Jewish Fund for Justice, New York City, New York, 2000. www.jfjustice.org**

Type: Day school curriculum

Goal: Students will learn that there is a Jewish mandate to combat poverty and that mandate entails *tzedakah* and personal action. Students will understand what causes poverty and who the poor are. Students will understand different strategies for combating poverty and will redefine their understanding of *tzedakah* to include action.

Ages: Grades 6-8

This curriculum includes a selection of resources for students in a day school setting to teach about the Jewish response to poverty. The curriculum includes 6 lessons with goals, background information for the teacher, suggestions for activities, discussions and *tzedakah* projects, set inductions and closing exercises. Students are also exposed to the realities of poverty through hands-on projects in their local community. Together with these hands-on projects, the curriculum also helps the students plan and implement a *tzedakah* project connected with a local community organization. Personal reflection is the final component of this curriculum. Students are asked to keep a journal of their ideas and experiences through their course of study and action. This comprehensive curriculum is well written and easy to follow. It seeks to integrate the value of *tzedek* with the action of *tzedakah*. While this curriculum requires a great deal of work on the part of the teacher, it can be a powerful and meaningful experience for the students.

***The Ziv Giraffe Program: To Fix the World—Stick Your Neck Out.* By Rabbi Steven Bayar. Ziv Tzedakah Fund, 1998.**

Type: Curriculum

Goal: To build *tzedakah*-oriented communities, communities that actually do what needs to be done to fix the world, rather than just talking about it.

Age: Grades 4-12

The Ziv Curriculum is a comprehensive course of study on the topic of *tzedakah*. It is not merely a course of study though, it is a course of action too. The curriculum consists of four major parts. Formal lessons are text based and emphasize challenging discussions and personalizing the values and mitzvot presented. In general, the goal of the formal lessons is for the students to take something concrete away. Ziv Notes appear throughout the curriculum. These notes are connections to the life and writings of the

inspiration of the curriculum itself, Danny Siegel. The profiles throughout the curriculum present true stories about ordinary people performing various mitzvot and *tzedakah* projects. According to the authors, the final part, Things to Do, is the most important part of the curriculum. This is the section that will help the students put all of the words and lessons they have learned into action. The curriculum also provides resources for student reflection, connection to the holidays, telling stories and watching contemporary movies. This innovative curriculum provides an enormous amount of information and ideas for the teacher. At the same it allows room for input and creativity on the part of the teacher. A great deal of preparation and evaluation would be needed to implement a curriculum such as this. But to do so would potentially reap far-reaching results in orienting the students and the school as a whole toward *tzedakah*. The section on "Assuring the Dignity and Self Respect of the Poor" presents a variety of activities and projects that introduce the concept of the obligation of *tzedakah* to the children. The main objective in this unit is learning about the *tzedakah* box and the habit of regularly giving *tzedakah*.

Instant Lessons

***What Can \$5.00 Do? A Primary Instant Lesson.* By Marci Fox. Torah Aura Productions, Los Angeles California, 1991.**

Type: Sticker Instant Lesson and Teacher's Guide

Goal: To develop understanding of the concepts of *tzedakah* and mitzvah

Age: Grades 1-3

This lesson first defines the terms *tzedakah* and mitzvah and then describes the use of a *tzedakah* box. The primary activity allows the students to place \$5.00 bill stickers next to actions that fit the definition of *tzedakah* and mitzvah. To reinforce the lesson, the students review what can be placed in a *tzedakah* box and what types of mitzvot can be done with *tzedakah* money. Finally, the students draw their own mitzvah of what they would do with \$5.00 from their own *tzedakah* box.

This lesson successfully allows the students to add a personal connection to the donation of *tzedakah*. By making their own choices, the children learn that they have the power to help people through a variety of mitzvot. They will understand the difference between spending money on themselves and spending money to help others.

***How Much Should I Give? An Instant Lesson.* Torah Aura Productions, Los Angeles, California, 1990.**

Type: Instant Lesson & Teacher's Guide

Goal: To help students allocate *tzedakah* funds through a decision-making process influenced by our biblical tradition on *tzedakah*.

Age: Grades 4-6

This lesson centers on the Torah commandments related to the tithing of one's field. Using a 10 x 10 grid as a field, the students learn about the variety of tithes outlined in the Torah by marking off the required portions. Two follow-up questions

after the main activity help the students speculate on the practical applications of these commandments. The final activity of this lesson is a decision making process for allocation of *tzedakah* funds. Through the use of open-ended questions, the students explore the issues involved in the decision as to where *tzedakah* money should go. They explore the amount of money collected, the past history of giving and the rules and standards of the planning process for the present year. This lesson would be very helpful for *Keren Ami* Councils or other decision-making bodies. The lesson adds another, deeper dimension to the *tzedakah* allocation process by looking at the essential questions and the biblical background. The teacher's guide that accompanies this lesson contains an excellent step-by-step instructional outline. This includes set inductions, task foci, discussion questions and other extension activities.

***Begging the Question: An Instant Lesson.* By Joel Lurie Grishaver. Torah Aura Productions, Los Angeles, California, 1991.**

Type: Instant Lesson & Teacher's Guide

Goal: To explore the differences between Jewish law and American law with respect to this particular court case on the issue of *tzedakah* and homelessness.

Age: Grade 6 to Adults

This lesson presents the issues involved in a New York State court case, which banned begging in the NYC transit system. To begin, the students compare and contrast the meanings of the *Shema* and the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The lesson consists of lists of sources on the issue of homelessness and *tzedakah* from both American legal sources and Jewish sources. The students are then instructed to answer questions based on the meaning and concern of these different sources. When compared, the students can glean a sense of the stark differences between American law and Jewish

law regarding poverty, *tzedakah* and homelessness. While this lesson centers on a case that relates directly to *tzedakah*, the major substance of the lesson is on law. Perhaps this lesson is best suited for a class that contrasts the Jewish and American law.

***Rambam's Rungs: An Instant Lesson.* Torah Aura Productions, Los Angeles, California, 1990.**

Type: Instant Lesson & Teacher's Guide

Goal: To introduce students to Maimonides' eight rungs of giving and to empower them to translate the values he teaches to their own *tzedakah* practices.

Age: Grades 4-6

This lesson provides a thorough introduction to Maimonides' 8 levels of *tzedakah* giving. Before the rungs are introduced, the students rank eight *tzedakah* donors themselves as part of an annual *tzedakah* contest. The lesson then presents Deuteronomy 15:11 on *tzedakah* and the Hebrew etymology of the word *tzedakah*. The central activity is the presentation of Rambam's rungs of *tzedakah* giving. It is presented in connection with the first activity where the students had the opportunity to rank the donors. The conclusion of the lesson asks the fundamental question: why doesn't God help the poor? To answer the question, the lesson presents the classic discussion from the Talmud between Rabbi Akiva and Tinnius Rufus. This lesson can be an effective method to present Rambam's rungs of *tzedakah* to the students. Rather than simply presenting the rungs, the lesson allows the students to connect through their own ideas and knowledge of the subject. The teacher's guide that accompanies this instant lesson is extremely helpful for planning the scope of the lesson. It provides background information, objectives, a wide range of activities and methods for evaluation.

Textbooks

***Tzedakah: A Source Book on Caring and Sharing.* By Abraham Eckstein and Azriel Eisenberg. BJE of Greater New York, 1982.**

Type: Textbook

Goal: Students will be able to place the story of *tzedakah* in its historic and demographic perspectives. Students will learn the tenets of *tzedakah* and will be engendered with a deep appreciation for the enduring values and ideals of *tzedakah*.

Age: Grades 7-12

This textbook traces the development of the value of *tzedakah* from biblical times to the present. Every chapter contains stories and texts that illustrate various aspects of *tzedakah*. At the end of each chapter are questions for review and for discussion. Activities listed at the end of every chapter help the students bring to life what they have read. The final chapter entitled, "*Tzedakah* and You," discusses various ways the students can personally connect with *tzedakah*. It includes stories about everyday individuals who demonstrate the value of *tzedakah* in their lives. This book is filled with interesting stories and perspectives of *tzedakah* at different points in Jewish history. This textbook could conceivably be used in a history class rather than in a course on *tzedakah*.

Workbooks

***To Learn is to Do: A Tikkun Olam Roadmap.* By Sharon D. Halper. UAHC Press, New York City, New York, 2000.**

Type: Workbook & teacher's guide

Goal: To offer students ways of making their own Jewish journey one that is based on personal consideration and choice. It suggests many ways of traveling the Jewish road of mitzvot and *tzedakah* and encourages deliberate and reflective selection.

Age: Grades 5-8

This workbook is a well-thought out, organized text for students usable in conjunction with a variety of types of classes and lessons. Every chapter begins with a Jewish value and an accompanying text from a Torah portion. The book then presents questions that allow the student to personally explore the text and connect it to the value presented. In each chapter there is a *tzedakah* connection that expands the value and Torah text into the realm of action. A Hebrew connection is also included allowing the students to discover etymology and roots related to the value. In general, the workbook is visually stimulating, complete with pictures and a wide range of activities. The book encourages the students to think critically and to connect the material with other Jewish topics. Because of this book's flexibility, it can be integrated into virtually any Jewish subject—from *alef-bet* to Israel. An extremely helpful teacher's guide accompanies this workbook. The guide is filled with countless ideas including goals, activities, and useful bibliographic resources.

***The Tzedakah Workbook.* Created by Jan Rabinowich and revised by Jane Golub. Torah Aura Productions, Los Angeles, California, 1986.**

Type: Workbook

Goal: Students will learn that the quarters donated to *Keren Ami* can make a difference and explore the lives of specific people who give their time and resources to help others.

Age: Grades 4-6

This diverse workbook contains many activities for students to explore the *tzedakah* and personally connect with *tzedakah* values and actions. Throughout the workbook there are short stories called "Profiles in *Chesed*" about specific people and their charitable actions. Every chapter presents texts from Jewish sources and varied activities that help the students learn about a wide range of aspects of *tzedakah*. These include:

- Giving *Tzedakah*
- Defining *Tzedakah*
- Occasions for Giving *Tzedakah*
- *Kevod & Bushah*
- *Gemilut Chasadim*
- Why Give *Tzedakah*?
- *Tzedakah* box
- Allocations

Some of the chapters have been separated out and made into Torah Aura Instant Lessons.

This workbook can be an excellent addition to a focused study on *tzedakah*. It provides activities and presents concepts that can be meaningful jumping off points into any number of discussions or lessons about this important value.

***Tzedakah: Jewish Awareness Worksheets.* By Amye Rosenberg. Berhman House, West Orange, New Jersey, 1979**

Type: Workbook

Goal: Students will understand that *tzedakah* is the way we show charity and kindness to others.

Age: Grades 1-3

This workbook consists of activities for primary age students about *tzedakah*.

Activities such as coloring, drawing, cutting and pasting help the students explore various

aspects of *tzedakah* including behaviors and examples about helping others. These activities are appropriate for this age and can be used as a part of a wider lesson on *tzedakah*. Above all, the workbook emphasizes putting a human face on *tzedakah* giving and receiving—throughout the book are pictures of children helping others.

***Tzedakah Copy Pak.* By Marji Gold-Vukson. A.R.E. Publishing, Denver, CO, 1997.**

Type: 29 ready-to-photocopy activities

Goal: To provide teachers with challenging and creative worksheets that encourage high-level thinking skills and individual creativity on the topic of *tzedakah*.

Age: Grades 3-6

This student resource consists of 29 separate worksheets on various topics related to *tzedakah*. They are flexible enough to be used in a variety of ways in the classroom: individual or group work, as part of learning centers, or as the introduction to discussions or homework. Included with each worksheet are instructional objectives and ideas for extending the activity in the classroom. These photocopy masters can be an excellent tool to introduce or conclude a unit on a particular aspect of *tzedakah*. Together with other resources, they can provide an excellent extension or added dimension to a *tzedakah* lesson or curriculum.

***LA BJE Tzedakah Kit.* By Jan Rabinowitch. Torah Aura Productions, Los Angeles, California, 1984.**

Type: Workbook

Goal: Students will learn that the quarters donated to *Keren Ami* can make and about specific people who give their time and resources to help others.

Age: Grades 4-6

This workbook is the precursor to the updated *The Tzedakah Workbook*. See that entry for a detailed description.

***Tzedakah, Gemilut Chasadim and Ahavah.* By Joel Lurie Grishaver and Beth Huppin. A.R.E., Denver, Colorado, 1983.**

Type: Workbook

Goal: To expose the student to the concept of *tikkun olam* and the various ways one can help others and repair the world.

Age: Grades 4-8

This innovative workbook engages students in an exploration of their own ideas and own attitudes toward *tikkun olam*, *tzedakah* and *gemilut chasadim*. Through the use of stories, texts, and a variety of activities, the students gain insight into our Jewish tradition on these topics. At the same time, students keep a journal of their developing thoughts and attitudes toward the subject matter. The workbook is strong in that it presents texts and other stories to which the students can easily relate. On the other hand, the pictures and format of the book, in general, are a bit outdated for the contemporary student in religious schools. This workbook can also be used effectively in pieces, or in units as part of a larger curriculum.

Chapter 4

Survey of *Tzedakah* Instruction in Selected Reform Religious Schools of North America

Survey of Tzedakah Instruction in Selected Reform Religious Schools of North America

A copy of the survey can be found at the end of this chapter.

About the Survey

This *tzedakah* survey was sent to the principals of fifty-five supplementary congregational schools in North America in June of 2002. The survey asked questions regarding the instruction and collection of *tzedakah* during the 2001-2002 school year. Educational leaders were asked a variety of questions including demographics, instructional modes and materials, and recipients of *tzedakah* funds. By September 1, 2002, I had received back 70% of the completed surveys. While this survey is, by no means scientific, it does offer a fascinating glimpse into the instruction of and attitude towards *tzedakah* in supplementary schools today. The completed surveys came from a cross section of religious schools in North America: schools of different sizes, schools in every UAHC region, and schools in cities with different sizes of Jewish populations. The Northeast and the Midwest are two regions that are particularly well represented in the survey. Of course, this survey would be more accurate and therefore more useful had more schools chosen to participate.

The 2001-2002 school year was a difficult one for all Americans, young and old, religious and non-religious. As educators, we too, had to confront the tough questions and confused emotions that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 produced. As Jewish educators, we also had to address additional questions and feelings stemming from the barrage of terror attacks in Israel. We must take into the impact of these tragedies as we examine

the data from this survey—the data may not be a balanced representation of typical *tzedakah* collection and practices of previous or subsequent years.

The first section consists of the data presented by survey question with commentary interspersed. The second section consists of a selected data organized by school size.

Total Number of Surveys:

55 surveys mailed out, 38 surveys returned.

Approximately how much *tzedakah* money did your school raise in 2001-2002?

13 schools collected \$5500 or more
7 schools collected \$2500-\$3500
6 schools collected \$1500-\$2000
4 schools collected \$100-\$500
4 schools collected \$3500-\$4500
2 schools collected \$4500-\$5500
1 school collected \$500-\$1000
1 school collected \$1000-\$1500
0 schools collected \$2000-\$2500

Who decides where the money goes?

25 schools reported students in individual classes
13 schools reported the educator
2 schools reported the rabbi
1 school reported the *Tzedakah/Keren Ami* Council
1 school reported the teachers
1 school reported families
6 schools reported more than one answer to the question

For the majority of schools, the decision as to where the *tzedakah* donations go remains in the school itself—with the students, the educator or with the teachers. In some cases, the rabbi or families either influence or make the decision. In some instances, the educator helps the students narrow down list of potential recipients, by

providing his or her own list of organizations. An educator closely in touch with the experiences of his or her students will choose organizations that the students will find relevant to their own lives. Relevance and a sense of ownership are two of the most important factors to successfully impart the value of *tzedakah* to the students.

One major change from about 20 years ago is the absence of *Keren Ami* councils as the body that decides where the money should go. Popular throughout the 1970's and 1980's, the *Keren Ami* council was an effective way of engaging students in a democratic process in order to allocate funds.

About what percentage of your *tzedakah* goes to Jewish causes?

1 school reported 1%-20%
0 schools reported 21%-30%
3 schools reported 31%-40%
3 schools reported 41%-50%
4 schools reported 51%-60%
7 schools reported 61%-70%
12 schools reported 71%-80%
7 schools reported 81%-90%
1 school reported 91%-100%

The majority of schools reported that they donate the majority of their *tzedakah* funds to exclusively Jewish causes. Only one school reported a donation of 91%-100% of the money they collected went to Jewish recipients. Perhaps this is a reflection of the changing identities of American Jewry. Jewish-Americans, a common term heard often today, have a foot in two worlds, the religious and the secular. No longer are Jews primarily concerned with their fellow Jews in their own communities. Instead, Jewish concerns reach all over the world: from AIDS victims in Africa to the rainforests of

South America, to the children of the sweatshops of Southeast Asia. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 were further factors that blurred these boundaries of cultural identity. Perhaps this year, more than previous years, more schools donated money to non-Jewish causes than to Jewish ones.

Briefly list the goals of your school's *tzedakah* program.

Selected goals of *tzedakah* programs in various supplementary schools:

- To create a sense of responsibility for *tikkun olam* (repairing the world)
- To empower students to make knowledgeable decisions regarding particular organizations
- To make the performance of the mitzvah a life-long habit and obligation
- Decide where money goes based on individual decisions
- To reinforce values taught in school
- To give students the opportunity to perform the mitzvah of *tzedakah* on a regular basis
- Weekly collection in class
- For families to understand the meaning of *tzedakah* and its connection to living a Jewish life
- To educate the student so they can understand and transform their knowledge into actions of *tikkun olam*
- *Tzedakah* is an obligation
- *Tzedakah* is related to the word justice
- To learn about some organizations
- To enable the giving of *tzedakah*
- To help students see that needs exist and that they can help out
- To support the active network of local Jewish charities
- To get the students to understand the extent of the Jewish charities' services
- To demonstrate an understanding of the concept of *tzedakah*
- Provide ample opportunities to give
- *Tzedakah* is an obligation
- To instill the practice of *tzedakah* in their lives
- To teach the importance of *tzedakah* in Judaism
- To familiarize students with various organizations

- To make students aware of the importance of giving throughout their lives
- To create an awareness about the obligation of contributing and bettering the world
- To create a habit of giving *tzedakah*
- To expose the students to organizations that help people in need
- To connect giving to Jewish tradition and Jewish law
- Importance of sharing our resources
- *Tzedakah* is not just donating money
- To understand the meaning and responsibility (mitzvah) of *tzedakah*
- *Tzedakah* is a central Jewish activity
- Differentiate between various responsibilities of different groups (Local, family, Israel, International, etc.)

In general, the goals reported by the schools represent six major areas related to the instruction of *tzedakah*. Many schools desire to instill in their students the responsibility of donating *tzedakah* funds. These schools want their students to understand that helping others through *tzedakah* is an activity that is up to them. *They* have the power in their hands to help others through their actions. Our Jewish tradition is the source of this value—Jews have a responsibility to help others in their community and around the world.

Many schools also want to help the students make informed decisions when donating *tzedakah*. Principals and teachers are able to empower the students by modeling the decision-making process. This goal fits well with another goal, the goal of developing in the students a life-long habit of giving *tzedakah*. The regular collection and donation of *tzedakah* is one that encourages students to make *tzedakah* a recurrent activity in their lives. A weekly discussion and donation of *tzedakah* are essential if this goal is to be reached.

Some schools reported the goal of conveying the obligatory nature of *tzedakah* in Judaism. Our tradition is quite clear on this. All Jews are obliged to donate *tzedakah* on a regular basis. While this goal is an important one to impart, only when it is partnered with other goals is it able to be successfully communicated. For example, one can easily learn the Jewish texts that say *tzedakah* is a Jewish obligation, but only when the students recognize the need can they truly understand its mandatory nature. Therefore, an important goal reported by many schools is to familiarize the students with the various organizations in the community and in the world that address the various needs. These organizations become models for the students. They learn that people can make a difference and really help people with their needs.

The last major goal reported by the schools was the goal of action, providing opportunities and enabling students to perform the act of *tzedakah* itself. The goals of many of the schools include these activities as extensions of the classroom learning. It is a way for the students to take what they learn and put it into action in a Jewish context.

Summary of the six general goals:

- Students will feel the responsibility to donate *tzedakah*.
- Students will be able to make informed decisions prior to donating *tzedakah*.
- Students will begin a life-long habit of donating *tzedakah*.
- Students will understand that our Jewish tradition deems *tzedakah* as an obligation.
- Students will have the opportunity to perform acts of *tzedakah*
- Students will become familiar with the various Jewish and non-Jewish organizations that seek to help people in need.

To what types of organizations does your *tzedakah* go?

Percentage of religious schools that donate money to the following types of organizations:

35% social needs

29% medical needs

13% education/camps/Israel trips

9% Israel
8% synagogue funds
4% 9/11 funds
2% environmental

Category Definitions:

Education/camps/Israel trips: funds that provide scholarships for children to attend religious, Jewish summer camps and to visit Israel.

Environmental: organizations that help to preserve the environment all over the world.

Israel: various organizations in Israel such as *Magen David Adom* & the Emergency Israel Relief Fund.

Medical needs: organizations that help those with a variety of medical conditions through care and/or research such as Make-A-Wish Foundation, the American Cancer Society, March of Dimes, etc.

9/11 funds: funds set up especially to help the victims and survivors of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania.

Social needs: organizations that address the various material needs of individuals such as UJA, homeless shelters, Habitat of Humanity, etc.

Synagogue funds: various temple funds that are for a variety of causes.

All of the schools reported donating *tzedakah* funds to a variety of different types of organizations. School generally tended to donate their money to organizations that addressed social needs and medical needs. This data was expected especially when contrasted with the types of organizations portrayed in *tzedakah* curricula and textbooks and at *tzedakah* fairs. Similarly, our Jewish tradition understands *tzedakah* as a type of societal tax that helps people who are in the most need. Since the allocation decision is made by students in the majority of the school, this is expected. The students donate to places with which they are familiar and with which they perceive a need. As a result, organizations that don't have a perceived need are generally the ones that receive little or no money. These types of organizations include synagogue funds and education/camp/Israel trip scholarships.

Four percent of the schools donated money directly to 9/11 relief funds. This percentage is small perhaps because of the typical procedure of collection and allocation of *tzedakah* in schools. For the most part, *tzedakah* that is collected throughout the year and is allocated in the final weeks of religious school in May or June. Because of the relatively long period of time between September and the end of the school year, few schools reported donating money to these funds. Presumably, the schools that did report donations to 9/11 relief funds, collected and gave this money close to the actual events.

Nine percent of schools reported donations to help Israeli organizations. Some of the same reasons that applied to 9/11 donations may apply here also. We saw earlier that a significant number of schools donate less money to Jewish causes in general and at the same time 60% and 70% of the total money collected by schools stays local. Therefore, one might expect that donations to Israeli causes would be even less.

How do you commonly refer to *tzedakah* in your school?

100% of schools reported that they refer to *tzedakah* as '*tzedakah*'
0% used the terms '*Keren Ami*' or '*charity*'.

All of the schools reported using the term '*tzedakah*' to refer to the topic, collection and donation of money. This reflects a change in terms over the last twenty years. Previously, many schools used the term *Keren Ami*, fund of my people, or simply charity. Using the English term fell out of usage as Hebrew instruction increased and it was understood that the word did not precisely reflect entire meaning of the word *tzedakah*. One can only speculate why *Keren Ami* is not the term used by these schools. Perhaps one reason is its particularistic tenor. We see that the *tzedakah* funds collected in schools today go to many cause that are not Jewish and therefore not only to *am yisrael*.

Interestingly, one school reported using the term *tzedakah* as a category with the broader theme of *ge'ulah*, redemption. Another school said that they commonly refer to *tzedakah* as 'the right thing to do.'

In what grades is *tzedakah* collected?

27 schools collect *tzedakah* in pre-school (some of the schools did not have pre-schools)

38 schools collect *tzedakah* in the primary school (grades K-3)

38 schools collect *tzedakah* in the middle school (grades 4-6)

32 schools collect *tzedakah* in the junior high (grades 7 & 8)

26 schools collect *tzedakah* in the high school (grades 9-12)

All schools reported that they collected *tzedakah* from kindergarten to 6th grade.

Congregations with pre-schools also reported regular collection of *tzedakah* during those pre-religious school years. A few less had regular *tzedakah* collection in grades 7 and 8 and even less had regular collection in the high school grades. In general, collection tapers off, as the students grow older.

In what grade level is the concept of *tzedakah* first taught?

Every school reported beginning the instruction of *tzedakah* in either pre-kindergarten or in kindergarten. The concept and collection of *tzedakah* is taught from the very beginning.

In what grade level(s) is the concept of *tzedakah* a significant part of the curriculum.

13 schools reported no particular grade

7 schools reported 5th Grade

6 schools reported 7th Grade

4 schools reported Kindergarten

4 schools reported 3rd Grade

4 schools reported 6th Grade
3 schools reported 4th Grade
3 schools reported 1st Grade
2 schools reported 2nd Grade
2 schools reported 8th Grade
0 schools reported 9th Grade
0 schools reported 10th Grade
0 schools reported 11th Grade
0 schools reported 12th Grade

Thirteen schools reported that *tzedakah* does not play a significant part of the curriculum of any particular grade. This means that these schools do not have a unit or particular grade levels where the subject of *tzedakah* is discretely taught. This does not mean that *tzedakah* is not addressed at all. When taken with other data from the survey, this seems to suggest one of two possibilities. The first possibility may be that the instruction and collection of *tzedakah* is integrated completely into the curriculum itself. The second possibility is that *tzedakah* collection may occur throughout the year and it is simply not talked about in the classes. It may be discussed in the beginning of the year and then only collected through the remainder.

The majority of the schools reported that *tzedakah* is a significant part of the curricula of 5th-7th grades. No schools reported *tzedakah* as a significant part of the curricula of 9th-12th grades. Seven schools did report *tzedakah* as a significant part of the curricula of multiple grades. These schools reported *tzedakah* as a significant part of two or three grade curricula. Schools that reported more than one grade spaced out the units two to three grades apart.

There were a sizable number of schools that reported studying *tzedakah* as a unit only once and in a primary grade. It can be concluded then, that the topic of *tzedakah* is not approached in depth again throughout a student's religious school experience.

Out of the twenty-five schools that did report teaching *tzedakah* at least once as a unit, 25% of them reported that this occurred in 7th grade. All of the schools reported that *tzedakah* plays a role in the bar/bat mitzvah program of the congregation. Many schools suggest or require that students perform mitzvah projects prior to becoming a bar/bat mitzvah. Frequently, these programs are done not according to a curriculum but individually and in consultation with only the rabbi. Presumably, the particular *tzedakah* activity is stressed over the concept and motivation behind the action.

Tzedakah is not a concept that is taught in depth in any high school grade level. If an important goal is develop the life-long habit of *tzedakah* donation, then this data represents an obvious failure in the system. One could imagine the countless educational opportunities missed by not approaching the concept of *tzedakah* through high school. Not only is it important for the sake of continuity, but also for the sake of integrating the importance of *tzedakah* in the lives of young adults learning to be responsible adults. Sometimes, the collection of *tzedakah* and other projects are organized and performed outside of the school either by youth groups or through the secular high school. This may account for the small degree that the subject is broached in the high school years.

In what types of special *tzedakah* programs does your school regularly participate?

18 schools reported family programs
17 schools reported congregational wide programs
13 schools reported community wide programs
9 schools reported *tzedakah* fairs
2 schools reported retreats

Category definitions:

Family programs: *tzedakah* programs or projects that involve parents or grandparents either on school premises or from the home.

Congregational wide programs: one-shot, large projects such as mitzvah days that involve the efforts of the entire congregational family.

Community wide programs: *tzedakah* related programs usually sponsored by the local federation or Bureau of Jewish Education that involve more than one religious school.

Tzedakah fairs: programs of varying sizes where students learn from different types of presentations from a wide range of *tzedakah*-oriented organizations.

Retreats: off-site, overnight programs on the subject of *tzedakah*

Almost all of the schools reported facilitating some type of special *tzedakah* program over the course of the year. The majority of those schools held family programs related to the subject of *tzedakah*. Almost the same number of schools reported having congregational wide programs and projects. These big, one-shot, programs are usually hugely successful by involving a large number of people and raising both awareness and a great sum of money for a particular cause or causes. *Tzedakah* fairs have grown in popularity over the past few decades. These types of programs usually involve many students and organizations. They also provide different types of instructional modes for the students. Organizations like these types of programs because they have a chance to do some public relations about their cause. In turn, the students gain a positive view into the many different ways they can actually help others.

What role does *tzedakah* play in your Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program?

22 schools report that *tzedakah* is a requirement for Bar/Bat Mitzvah. 16 schools report that students are encouraged to perform *tzedakah* for Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

All of the school reported *tzedakah* as an element of their bar/bat mitzvah program. 58% of the schools require the students to perform some type of *tzedakah*

project. The remaining schools only encourage the students to perform *tzedakah* projects prior to the bar/bat mitzvah ceremony.

In what types of fundraisers/collections does the school participate?

80% of the schools collect through food drives
67% of the schools collect through bake sales
53% of the schools collect through clothing drives
37% of the schools collect through toy drives
16% of the schools collect to assist local shelters
16% of the schools collect through blood drives
11% of the schools collect through school supply drives
11% of the schools collect through pet supply drives
5% of the schools collect through book sales
5 % of the schools collect for the rainforest

This data reveals the diverse ways, besides the collection of money, that schools collect *tzedakah*. The collection of materials for a variety of causes is another way in which students can amass *tzedakah*. These types of collections help the students understand that *tzedakah* is more than the coins they place in the *pushke*. Instead, *tzedakah* can be understood in two other ways. The first is that *tzedakah* is anything that helps somebody's material needs, including clothes, toys, school supplies and even blood and platelets. The second way is through the donation of time and materials through bake sales, car washes, and book sales that are eventually sold or converted into money and donated to causes. This data suggests that the easier the fundraiser, the more popular to organize and facilitate.

Do you participate in the JNF tree drive during Tu B'shvat?

89% of the schools participate in the JNF Tree Drive

Connecting *tzedakah* collection to a particular holiday is an effective way to achieve empathy and subject integration in the school. When students learn about the importance of trees in Judaism and in Israel, they can bring those lessons alive through the donation of money to buy them. At the same time, this project is short in duration and the students are able to see the fruits of their *tzedakah* donation immediately when they receive their tree certificates. Competitions between classes also help boost the popularity of this type of collection.

Which other organizations do you work with to raise *tzedakah*?

15 schools work with *Mazon*
10 schools work with the local Jewish Federation
7 schools work with local hospitals
6 schools work with local homeless shelters
5 schools work with UJA
5 schools work with Israeli relief organizations
3 schools work with Meals on Wheels
3 schools work with Habitat for Humanity
2 schools work with the local SPCA
2 schools work with the Make-A-Wise Foundation
2 schools worked with the UAHC 9/11 Disaster Relief Fund
2 schools work with Toys for Tots
Others schools work with various medical and non-Jewish religious organizations

Some schools team up with other organizations to both raise awareness for a certain cause and to collect *tzedakah* funds. Many times these types of projects or collections are effective because of the direct involvement of the organization. In effect, these organizations add a face to the often times faceless organizations that the students learn about. At the same time, many of these organizations have both experience in working with students and provide particular educational materials about their cause. When organizations and schools work together over an extended period of time, that

relationship can be an excellent source of education for the teachers, students and the congregation itself.

What materials do you use for instruction?

11 schools use: *Teaching Mitzvot* by Rabbi Bruce Kadden & Barbara Binder Kadden

10 schools use: *Rambam's Rungs Torah Aura Instant Lesson*

9 schools use: *Making a Difference* by Bradley S. Artson & Gila Gevirtz

9 schools use: *Tzedakah Workbook*

9 schools use their own, original curriculum

6 schools use: *How Much Should I Give?* Torah Aura Instant Lesson

5 schools use: *Let's Discover Mitzvot* by Marlena C. Thompson

5 schools use: *What Can \$5.00 Do?* Torah Aura Instant Lesson

5 schools use: *Tzedakah Box Craft Kits*

5 schools use: *Tzedakah, Gemilut Chasadim & Ahavah* by J. Grishaver & B. Huppin

4 schools use: *Tzedakah* by Amye Rosenberg

4 schools use: *Tzedakah Copy Pak* by Marji Gold-Vukson

4 schools use: *To Fix the World-Stick Your Neck Out-* Ziv Curriculum

3 schools use: *To Learn is to Do* by Sharon D. Halper

3 schools use: *Begging the Question* Torah Aura Instant Lesson

2 schools use: *Tzedakah Lotto Game*

2 schools use: *Tzedakah Media Kit (Video)*

Other materials reported used by only one school:

BJE Materials/Curricula (Chicago)

Various books by Danny Siegel

Teaching Tolerance

Teaching Mitzvot by Audrey Friedman Marcus

It's a Mitzvah by Bradley Artson

Jewish Heroes, Jewish Values by Barry Schwartz

Mrs. Katz & Tush by P. Polacco

The Lorax by Dr. Seuss

All of the school reported using at least one published material on the subject of *tzedakah*. The majority of the schools reported using four or more different materials as part of their curriculum. Typically, schools favored using textbooks and materials that were of a workbook style. Schools also tended to use materials that allowed them to be

flexible in the curriculum. Torah Aura Instant Lessons, A.R.E. Copy Paks, and craft kits are popular because they allow the teacher to extend a *tzedakah* lesson or perhaps integrate it into the study of another concept or subject. Nine schools reported using their own curriculum for the study of *tzedakah*. These curricula perhaps work best because they meet the particular needs of that particular student body.

What are some of the greatest successes of your *tzedakah* program?

- Large, multi-modal, multi-grade *tzedakah* programs
- Students directly involved in allocation of *tzedakah* funds
- High level of participation
- High level of family participation
- Specific, relevant, projects with defined goals and student are familiar with the cause
- Continuity from lower grades through teen years
- Students understand the key concepts and vocabulary

This list is a summary of the greatest successes of *tzedakah* programs reported by the educational leaders of the thirty-eight schools. Participation seems to be the greatest factor of a successful program. Student and family participation in every aspect of the *tzedakah* program creates commitment; and commitment is probably the most important lesson students can learn regarding *tzedakah*. Specific, relevant, short-term projects were also cited as successful parts of many of the schools' programs.

What are some of the areas in which you could improve your *tzedakah* program?

- Continuity from year to year and grade to grade, especially into high school
- Integration of *tzedakah* into larger concepts and theology as a whole
- Sustaining momentum throughout the year

- Developing the habitual behavior of *tzedakah*
- More parent involvement in study and participation
- Making B/M projects more meaningful
- More student involvement in the allocation of *tzedakah* funds
- Increasing awareness and connection to others needs (including Israel)
- Teaching more about the concept of *tzedakah*, the values behind the giving

The educational leaders of the schools reported many different ways in which they felt their *tzedakah* programs could improve. Continuity and integration were the two areas of improvement cited most by the schools. In this case, continuity can be understood on three different levels. The first is continuity throughout the course of the year. Many schools reported difficulty in sustaining momentum throughout the year. The involvement of the students is strong at the beginning of the year but then diminishes throughout the remainder of the school year. Schools also expressed difficulty in maintaining continuity from grade to grade, from elementary school to middle school to high school. For the most part, schools reported strong *tzedakah* participation in the younger grades but as the students grew older, *tzedakah* participation diminished overall. Finally, several schools reported a concern with continuity of *tzedakah* participation beyond high school. One of the important goals cited by many schools was to develop in their students, the life-long habit of donating *tzedakah*. Schools reported that they were challenged by this goal of lasting continuity throughout the lives of their students.

Integration of *tzedakah* into the overall curriculum was a second widespread concern in the schools. Schools reported a desire to better improve the collection of *tzedakah* with more learning of the values and theology behind it. This included several schools that specifically wanted to make the bar/bat mitzvah *tzedakah* projects more meaningful for the students.

Tzedakah Collection according to School Size

This section compares data based on the number of students enrolled in the school.

Categories:

- Surveys received
- Money collected in 2001-2002
- Who decides where the money goes?
- Percentage of *tzedakah* that goes to Jewish causes
- Places where the majority of the *tzedakah* funds go

Schools with 100-300 students enrolled

Number of surveys received:

10

Money collected in 2001-2002

3 schools collected between 100 and 500 dollars

1 school collected between 500 and 1000 dollars

3 schools collected between 1500 and 2000 dollars

3 schools collected between 2500 and 3500 dollars

This data suggests that the number of students enrolled in a school does not have a bearing on the amount of money collected during the year. Schools of similar size in the same regions and in different regions collected a wide range of money from \$100 to \$3500.

Who decides where the money goes?

6 schools reported students in individual classes

4 schools reported the educator

1 school reported the rabbi

1 school reported more than one answer to the question.

There is some data that suggests that if students are able to decide where the money goes at the end of the year, the more money is collected. If students have ownership in the endeavor, they often put more effort into the task. More data is necessary to prove this hypothesis. In some schools, more than one person makes the

decision of where the money goes. For example, in one school of this size, the educator provides the students with a narrow list of organizations as a guide for students in individual classes to choose from.

About what percentage of your *tzedakah* goes to Jewish causes?

1 school reported 1%-20%
3 schools reported 31%-40%
3 schools reported 41%-50%
1 school reported 71%-80%
1 school reported 81%-90%
1 school reported 100%

This table suggests that in smaller schools, more money goes to non-Jewish causes than to Jewish causes.

The majority of *tzedakah* goes to:

60% of the school reported that the majority of their *tzedakah* money stayed local
20% of the schools reported that the majority of their *tzedakah* money when to Israel
20% of the school reported that the majority of their *tzedakah* money when elsewhere in the US

All of the schools in this category sent some money to each the four general categories of places: local organizations, Israel, elsewhere in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world. Sixty percent of the schools of this size reported that the majority of their money stayed within their community. The remainder of the schools sent the majority of their money either to Israel or somewhere else in the United States. There isn't as much concern for the needs of others outside the United States and outside of Israel.

Schools with 300-500 students enrolled:

Number of surveys received:

6

Money collected in 2001-2002:

1 school collected between 1000 and 1500 dollars

3 schools collected between 3500 and 4500 dollars

2 schools collected over 5500 dollars

In general, schools with 300 to 500 students collected more money than schools with a smaller number of students. All but one school in this survey collected over \$3500. Again, this seems to suggest that student population has no bearing on the amount of *tzedakah*. Similarly, it seems that geography has little impact on the amount of *tzedakah* collected by a school. One might expect that schools in different sized cities or in certain regions of the United States to collect different amount according to the idiosyncrasies of the place. The data from this survey simply does not support such as expectation.

Who decides where the money goes?

4 schools reported students in individual classes

1 school reported the educator

1 school reported the teachers

The majority of schools of this size leave the decision of the allocation of *tzedakah* funds to the students in the individual classes. In one case, the school reported that the teachers in each class are the ones who decide where their classes' money goes.

About what percentage of your *tzedakah* goes to Jewish causes?

3 schools reported 61%-70%

3 schools reported 71%-80%

Schools of this size, in general, donated more money to Jewish causes than smaller schools. These particular schools are found in cities with greater Jewish populations and therefore, those cities have more Jewish benevolent organizations. This may be a factor in the greater percentage donated to Jewish cause than to non-Jewish ones. This same hypothesis can apply to the following data that 70% of the schools in this size category donate the majority of their *tzedakah* money to local organizations.

The majority of *tzedakah* goes to:

70% of the schools reported that the majority of their *tzedakah* stays local

30% of the schools reported that the majority of their *tzedakah* goes to Israel

Schools with 500-700 students enrolled:

Number of surveys received:

10

Money collected in 2001-2002:

3 schools collected between 1500 and 2000 dollars

4 schools collected between 2500 and 3500 dollars

1 school collected between 3500 and 4500 dollars

2 schools collected over 5500 dollars

It is difficult to draw any conclusions from this data set of the amount of money collected from schools with 500 to 700 students enrolled. There was a wide range of *tzedakah* amounts collected—from \$1500 to over \$5500. School location also does not lend a hand in interpreting this data.

Who decides where the money goes?

6 schools reported students in individual classes

2 schools reported the educator

1 school reported the rabbi

1 school reported families

One of the schools reported that families are charged with the decision of where to allocate the *tzedakah* funds. This was the only school that reported a response such as this. This particular school has a high level of family participation throughout its *tzedakah* program.

About what percentage of your *tzedakah* goes to Jewish causes?

4 schools reported 51%-60%

3 schools reported 61%-70%

2 schools reported 71%-80%

1 school reported 81%-90%

This data agrees with the hypothesis that the larger the school the greater the percentage of money donated to Jewish causes.

The majority of *tzedakah* goes to:

60% of the schools reported that the majority of their *tzedakah* stays local

20% of the schools reported that the majority of their *tzedakah* goes to Israel

20% of the schools reported that the majority of their *tzedakah* goes elsewhere in the US

Schools with 700-900 students enrolled:

Number of surveys received:

6

Money collected in 2001-2002

2 schools collected between 4500 and 5500 dollars

4 schools collected above 5500 dollars

Who decides where the money goes?

6 schools reported students in individual classes

3 schools reported the educator

3 schools reported more than one answer to the question

About what percentage of your *tzedakah* goes to Jewish causes?

3 schools reported 71%-80%

3 schools reported 81%-90%

The majority of *tzedakah* goes to:

50% of the schools reported that the majority of their *tzedakah* money stays local

50% of the schools reported that the majority of their *tzedakah* money goes to Israel

Schools with 900 or more students enrolled:

Number of surveys received:

6

Money collected in 2001-2002:

1 school collected between 500 and 1000 dollars

5 schools collected above 5500 dollars

Who decides where the money goes?

4 schools reported students in individual classes

3 schools reported the educator

1 school reported the *tzedakah*/Keren Ami Council

2 schools reported more than one answer to the question.

About what percentage of your total *tzedakah* goes to Jewish causes?

1 school reported 61%-70%

3 schools reported 71%-80%

2 schools reported 81%-90%

The majority of *tzedakah* goes to:

33% of the schools reported that the majority of their *tzedakah* money stays local.

33% of the schools reported that the majority of their *tzedakah* money goes to Israel.

33% of the schools reported that the majority of their *tzedakah* money goes elsewhere in the US.

Survey Conclusions

While this survey only represents the activities of 38 schools, a few general conclusions can be drawn about *tzedakah* instruction in today's Reform supplementary schools. The data suggests that the amount of *tzedakah* collected by a school does not directly relate to the size of the school. If this is true, then we have to look to other factors that influence the amount collected. Factors such as content, instructional modes, sequence and student involvement must influence the *tzedakah* activities of the school. In essence, the quality of the program is as much an aspect in the amount of *tzedakah* collected as the number of students of the school. If teachers can inspire the students to internalize the values and behavior of *tzedakah* in their lives, then we might expect more *tzedakah* activities and more money collected.

Most schools reported that they value student input when deciding where to donate *tzedakah* funds. This fact suggests that these schools understand the importance of demonstrating *tzedakah* values beyond just talking about them. When the students participate in the decision-making process, they bring to life the information they are learning in the classroom. Indeed, it is difficult to teach about *tzedakah* without doing *tzedakah*.

The goals reported by the schools reflect a vast spectrum of objectives. For the most part, schools either stress the development of the responsibility to donate *tzedakah* or the offering of opportunities for the student to engage in *tzedakah* activities. In general, schools would benefit from a careful examination of their *tzedakah* goals and then editing to make these goals more specific and precise.

Most of the money collected by students goes to organizations that are either nationally or internationally well-known. This data suggests that not a lot of research is conducted to determine which organizations should receive the *tzedakah* funds. Instead, children choose places with which they are already familiar.

All of the schools reported that *tzedakah* is the term primarily used to refer to activities and programs that collect money and other materials for those in need. No longer is the term *Keren Ami* (fund of my people) appropriate as more and more *tzedakah* funds are donated to non-Jewish organizations.

While most schools reported collecting *tzedakah* in every grade of the religious school, a significant number of schools are unclear as to what grade the instruction of *tzedakah* is emphasized. The majority of schools reported *tzedakah* is not emphasized in any particular grade, rather it is taught in roughly equal amounts throughout the religious school program. These types of programs are very difficult to evaluate because they usually have no clearly defined scope and sequence relating to the *tzedakah* program.

On the whole, schools reported that the greatest successes of their *tzedakah* program are connected to special *tzedakah* programs. These schools emphasized large, annual programs as the most meaningful and effective methods in creating enthusiasm and concern for *tzedakah* issues and projects. Congregational mitzvah days, *tzedakah* fairs, *tzedakah* retreats and short duration collection projects are the types of programs that are the most wide spread among the surveyed schools.

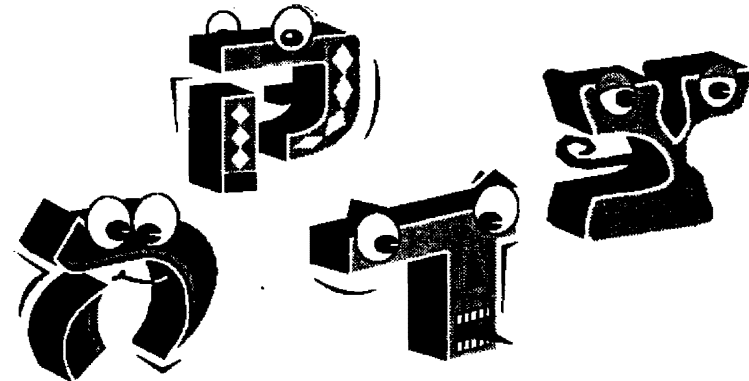
Tzedakah Survey

Please feel free to elaborate on or add other information about your tzedakah program here and on separate sheets if needed.

[illegible]

Phone: 513-793-2556
Email: mshulman@wisetemple.org

A survey of Reform Jewish Supplementary Religious School in North America



Michael Shulman,
5th Year Rabbinical Student, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, OH
msbulman@wisetemple.org

Please Return Survey by August 20, 2002

Please Check the Appropriate Answer**In what region is your school?**

Northeast
 New York/ New Jersey/Pennsylvania
 Mid-Atlantic
 Northeast Lakes
 Midwest
 Pacific Central
 Pacific Northwest
 Pacific Southwest
 Southwest
 Southeast

How many students are in your school?

0-100
 100-300
 300-500
 500-700
 700-900
 900 and above

Approximately how much tzedakah money did your school raise in 2001-2002?

under \$100
 \$100-\$500
 \$500-\$1000
 \$1000-\$1500
 \$1500-\$2000
 \$2000-\$2500
 \$2500-\$3500
 \$3500-\$4500
 \$4500-\$5500
 \$5500 and above

What are some of the greatest successes of your tzedakah program?

What are some of the areas in which you could improve your tzedakah program?

What materials do you use for instruction?*Please Check All That Apply*

Tzedakah by Amye Rosenberg
Let's Discover Mitzvot by Marlena C. Thompson
Making a Difference by Bradley S. Artson & Gila Gevirtz
Begging the Question Torah Aura Instant Lesson
How Much Should I Give? Torah Aura Instant Lesson
Rambam's Rungs Torah Aura Instant Lesson
Tzedakah Lotto Game
Tzedakah Workbook
What Can \$5 Do?
 Tzedakah Box Craft Kits
 Tzedakah Media Kit (Video)
Tzedakah, Gemilut Chasadim & Ahavah by Joel Grishaver
 & Beth Huppin
Tzedakah Copy Pak by Marji Gold-Vukson
Teaching Mitzvot by Rabbi Bruce Kadden & Barbara
 Binder Kadden
To Learn is to Do by Sharon D. Halper
To Fix the World-Stick Your Neck Out Ziv Curriculum

Own Curriculum

BJE Materials/Curricula

From what city? _____

Other Materials:

Please Check All Answers that Apply**Who decides where the money goes?**

Educator
 Rabbi
 Tzedakah/Keren Ami Council
 Teachers
 Students in Individual Classes
 Other

Please Specify: _____

About what percentage of your tzedakah goes to Jewish causes?

0%
 1%-20%
 21%-30%
 31%-40%
 41%-50%
 51%-60%
 61%-70%
 71%-80%
 81%-90%
 91%-100%

About what percentage of your tzedakah:**Stays local**

Under 20%	20%-50%	50%-80%	Over 80%
-----------	---------	---------	----------

Goes elsewhere in the U.S.

Under 20%	20%-50%	50%-80%	Over 80%
-----------	---------	---------	----------

Goes to Israel

Under 20%	20%-50%	50%-80%	Over 80%
-----------	---------	---------	----------

Goes elsewhere in the world

Under 20%	20%-50%	50%-80%	Over 80%
-----------	---------	---------	----------

To what types of organizations does your tzedakah go?

Synagogue funds
 Medical needs
 Education/camps/Israel trips
 Social needs (shelters, food banks, etc.)
 Others

Please Specify: _____

Please Check All Answers that Apply**How do you commonly refer to tzedakah in your school?**

Tzedakah
Keren Ami
Charity
Others

Please Specify: _____

In what grades is tzedakah collected?

Pre-School
Primary (K-3)
Middle School (4-6)
Junior High (7 & 8)
High School (9-12)
Day Camp

In what grade level is the concept of tzedakah first taught?**In what grade level(s) is the concept of tzedakah a significant part of the curriculum?** _____**In what types of special tzedakah programs does your school participate?**

congregation wide programs
family education programs
retreats
community wide programs
grade level programs

Please describe briefly: _____

**What role does tzedakah play in your Bar/Bat Mitzvah program?
Is it required? encouraged?**

In what types of yearly fundraisers/collections does the school participate? (food drives, blood drives clothing drives, turkey drive, etc.)

Do you participate in the JNF tree drive during Tu B'shvat?

yes _____ no _____

Do you work with any other organizations to raise tzedakah?

yes _____ no _____

If yes, which ones?

UJA
Local Federation
Mazon
local hospitals
SPCA
Others

Please Specify: _____

Chapter 5

A Model Integrated *Tzedakah* Curriculum for Supplementary Schools

Introduction to the Curriculum

This model *tzedakah* curriculum is the product of the four primary areas of research discussed in the previous chapters. Each of these four areas of study greatly influenced the scope, sequence and shape of this integrated curriculum.

The Jewish texts contained in the first chapter provide the foundation of the entire curriculum. It is through these texts that both teachers and students gain insight into the attitudes and outlook of our tradition toward the subject of *tzedakah*. The chapter exploring the historical development of *tzedakah* instruction provides a glimpse into the philosophies and the sociology of the subject throughout the 20th Century. We learn which ideas worked and which ideas didn't. We also learn that *tzedakah* instruction is closely related to the school's efforts, including the attitudes and efforts of the teachers and the principal. The chapter concerning *tzedakah* textbooks and curricula presents the wide range of materials available for students of all ages. While in most cases these materials are excellent tools for *tzedakah* instruction in the classroom, we find that, in general, they are limited in their ability to move beyond a traditional classroom setting. Finally, the survey data and its analysis provide insight into what is really happening in the religious schools of the present. It addresses such questions as effectiveness of *tzedakah* programs and successful implementation of goals.

Why an integrated curriculum?

The intention of this curriculum is that it be fully integrated into the wider curriculum of the supplementary religious school. As Reform Jews of the 21st Century we struggle every day with the integration of Judaism into our lives. In fact, our society

today is such that often times we have found the religious aspects of our identity at odds with our secular parts. As a result, we must frequently find ways to blend our Jewish values and beliefs with our secular, American ones. In many of the same ways, our Jewish tradition asserts the importance of integration of the value and behavior of *tzedakah* into our wider everyday lives: *tzedakah* should be an activity in which Jews engage throughout their lives. As educators, we should ask ourselves, how do we promote such a life-long *tzedakah* behavior?

This curriculum seeks to demonstrate the various ways *tzedakah* infuses both the Jewish aspects of our identity and, indeed, our entire one. *Tzedakah* is not something that should only be studied a handful of times throughout one's Jewish education. Rather, teachers, parents and students should toil to make *tzedakah* a regular part of their lives. When students talk about *tzedakah* and do *tzedakah* throughout their Jewish education the probability that this value will become internalized can only increase. Therefore, this curriculum seeks to identify all of the various ways one can talk about *tzedakah* and engage in *tzedakah* throughout a religious school experience—both inside the classroom and at home.

Because of this very reason, this curriculum can only be a model. Every religious school curriculum is different and therefore, the integration of a curriculum such as this will be different from school to school. Hopefully, this work will spark a new way of thinking about a school's *tzedakah* program. Educational leaders will begin to see that every moment in the classroom is an opportunity to encourage *tzedakah* values. If we share the opinion that *tzedakah* is one of our central Jewish values then we, as educators, must take advantage of these opportunities every chance we get.

Format of the Curriculum

This curriculum presents the scope and sequence of *tzedakah* instruction from kindergarten through 12th grade. Principals will find it helpful in planning the scope and sequence of the integration of *tzedakah* into the school's wider curriculum. Similarly, teachers will find it helpful as a resource for materials, activities and *tzedakah* programs for their particular grade. Both principals and teachers can use this curriculum as a source for ideas for integration into particular lessons and subject matter. Each grade level begins with a text from our Jewish sources that seeks to capture the flavor of our Jewish tradition on a particular aspect of *tzedakah*. These texts are intended to introduce and focus the exploration of a specific *tzedakah* concept. At the same time, the texts are also intended to add an element of legitimacy and authority to the study of *tzedakah*. The curriculum also provides sample questions and activities intended to encourage the continuation of the discussion and development of the habit of *tzedakah* at home among families.

Keys to Success

For successful implementation, teachers must be knowledgeable of the entire *tzedakah* curriculum. After all, it is their efforts in the classroom that affect the success or failure of the program. Teachers must also be engaged in the development and facilitation of the curriculum—involvement leads to commitment. A teacher orientation on this curriculum would benefit both the teachers who will be implementing the curriculum and the students who they are trying to reach. Regular communication between the teachers and the *tzedakah* coordinator is also vital to the success of this program. (The role of the *tzedakah* coordinator is discussed later on in this chapter.)

Overall, this curriculum wants students to practice *tzedakah* every day, but at the same time, wants them not to see this practice as everyday. For educators, our challenge is seek a balance between the values of *tzedakah* and the routine of *tzedakah*. Too much of the routine jeopardizes the internalization of the values and conversely, the instruction of the values alone endangers the practice of *tzedakah*. This curriculum seeks to create this sense of balance between these two extremes.

From Quarters to Morals:
A Model Integrated *Tzedakah*
Curriculum for
Supplemental Religious Schools

Grades K-12

Table of Contents:

- Overall Goals of the *Tzedakah* Program
- Definition of *Tzedakah*
- *Tzedakah* Fair
- Congregational Mitzvah Day
- *Tzedakah* Coordinator
- 10th Grade *Tzedakah* Retreat
- *Tzedakah* and the Holidays
- Explanation of the Grade Level Template
- Kindergarten Through 12th Grade Programs

Appendix I....*Tzedakah* Fair—BJE of Greater
Washington, D.C.

Appendix II....Bar/Bat Mitzvah *Tzedakah* Projects

Tzedakah and the Holidays

The students study *tzedakah* related to a different holiday each year. In most grades, students explore the various rituals, values and traditions related to each holiday. In this integrated curriculum, the value of *tzedakah* connected to particular Jewish holiday is examined according to the following sequence:

Shabbat—1st Grade

Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur—3rd Grade

Sukkot —2nd Grade

Chanukah—7th Grade

Tu B'shvat—6th Grade

Purim—4th Grade

Passover—5th Grade

Yom HaShoah—9th Grade

Shavuot—10th Grade

Overall Goals of the Tzedakah Program

- Jews who actively participate in the donation of *tzedakah* throughout their entire lives.
- Jews who recognize various ways to engage in the practice of *tzedakah*.
- Jews who recognize the central role *tzedakah* plays in our tradition and in our history.
- Jews who are knowledgeable about Jewish and relevant non-Jewish causes and organizations.
- Jews who make informed decisions regarding where to donate *tzedakah*.
- Jews who live a life guided by the value of *tzedek* (righteousness).
- Jews who respect others regardless of their background or need.

Definition of Tzedakah

Tzedakah is an obligation for Jews. All Jews are responsible for the needs of others, but must be especially concerned for the needs of other Jews, in our communities, in our own country and all over the world.

Tzedakah is the right thing to do. The performance of *tzedakah* is an act of justice and an act of righteousness. All people have the ability to practice *tzedakah* and through that act, all people can act righteously.

Tzedakah is considering the specific needs of the recipient—both material and psychological.

Tzedakah is an act that builds relationships among individuals. It strengthens the bonds of community and of mutual understanding.

Tzedakah is one of the ways we repair the world (*tikkun olam*.)

Tzedakah Fair

Typically, a *tzedakah* fair is a large scale experiential learning program that focuses on the concepts and values of *tzedakah*. Through the use of participatory activities, students are exposed to a variety of these concepts and values. A *tzedakah* fair is also an opportunity for organizations to present the type of work they do to the students. This *tzedakah* fair spans the curriculum— the 11th and 12th students of the religious school organize and facilitate the program for the 4th grade students.

At this *tzedakah* fair, students will rotate through 4-5 stations spending about 30 minutes as each. At each station, students will learn about a community organization through different activities. Students will also collect brochures, worksheets and other materials that will be made into a scrapbook at the end of the program. Other materials and worksheets can be used for enrichment either in future classes or at home.

Goals for 4th Grade:

- Students will be exposed to a variety of Jewish and non-Jewish *tzedakah* organizations.
- Students will understand the participation of even a single person can help a great deal.
- Students will continue to develop the habit of giving *tzedakah*.

Goals for 11th & 12th Grades:

- Students will plan and facilitate a *tzedakah* fair for younger students.
- Students will model responsible *tzedakah* behavior for younger students.
- Students will be exposed to a variety of Jewish and non-Jewish *tzedakah* organizations.
- Students will learn how contact organizations and solicit their help.
- Student will continue to develop the habit of giving *tzedakah*.

Some general program details:

The 11th and 12th grade students will research, organize and facilitate a *tzedakah* fair for the 4th graders in the religious school. They will select the organizations, contact them and plan all of the details for the fair. During the *tzedakah* fair, the older students will be partnered with younger students modeling responsible behavior and enthusiasm.

The *tzedakah* fair will begin with a text study chosen by the older students. The majority of the time will be for all the students to rotate through different learning stations set up by each organization. At the conclusion of the program the students will create scrapbooks of their experiences at the *tzedakah* fair with the material they collected over the course of the morning. If possible the organizations can remain after the program or after school for other students and parents to learn about their activities and efforts.

See Appendix I for an example of a tzedakah fair

Congregational Mitzvah Day

The congregational mitzvah day is intended to motivate the entire congregation from the youngest children to the oldest adults to participate in a variety of projects to be completed in one afternoon. These projects can be performed both at the congregation site or off-site at various community organizations.

The program should begin with some type of prayer service, singing, sermon, or text study that will frame what the congregation is doing Jewishly.

Families should be encouraged to participate and work together in appropriate projects.

The projects offered often depend on the time of year when the mitzvah day is held. Holding the day near or on a Jewish holiday is an excellent opportunity to extend and perhaps redefine the observance of that holiday.

Projects can be Jewish and non-Jewish but it is extremely helpful to connect the non-Jewish ones to a Jewish value.

Publicize the event in every way and in every place you can think of. The more people know about the event the more anticipation and excitement are created.

Connect the mitzvah day to the religious school. Talk about the experience before and after the actual day in all classes. Cancel formal religious school to encourage students and families to come.

Serve a meal and snacks. Food always attracts people!

Offer a diverse range of programs and projects.

Include ways for congregants to stay involved in projects throughout the year. Provide information and ways to continue the learning at home.

Above all, be creative, be inclusive and have fun!

Tzedakah Coordinator

This curriculum seeks to integrate the subject of *tzedakah* fully into the overall curriculum of the religious school. This best way to accomplish the goals of this ambitious *tzedakah* program is to appoint a coordinator to oversee the implementation of the curriculum. This coordinator will be able to see the big picture— he or she can see the successes and the gaps in the *tzedakah* education within the school. That person can also unify and integrate the subject matter while evaluating instructional effectiveness. Having one person as coordinator of the various *tzedakah* projects helps maintain consistency, continuity and diversity in experiences for the students. The principal should appoint one person to serve as *tzedakah* coordinator for the school. This person can be a teacher, parent, or other organized and motivated lay person..

The following is a list of responsibilities of the *tzedakah* program coordinator.

- Plan all grade level *tzedakah* projects.
- Makes sure *tzedakah* goals are being followed in each grade.
- Make changes to *tzedakah* curriculum when needed.
- Promote enthusiasm in the school toward *tzedakah* collection.
- Serve as the contact person for *tzedakah* organizations working with the school.
- Pool, count and deposit all *tzedakah* money.
- Publicize results of *tzedakah* collections after projects are completed.
- Coordinate *tzedakah* projects and curriculum *tzedakah* goals with grade level teachers.
- Work with senior staff and relevant committee leaders of the congregation to integrate school *tzedakah* activities with congregational and community *tzedakah* activities.

10th Grade Tzedakah Retreat

Goals

- Students will reflect on the role of the *tzedakah* in their lives, past, present and future.
- Students will explore the impact of *tzedakah* on the Jewish community as a whole.
- Students will explore current social issues that affect both the Jewish community and American society.
- Students will demonstrate the value of *kevod* to each other.
- Students will bond as a community.

Activities

Study texts about *tzedakah*: such as Maimonides' 8 rungs of *tzedakah*.

Step-by-step *tzedakah* allocation process: use the *Torah Aura Instant Lesson: How Much Should I Give?*

Create something as a group that will address the psychological needs of a person or a group of people. Design and make quilts for babies or toddlers, Design and make a mural for a homeless or women's shelter.

Debate: the pros and cons of anonymous vs. public donation of *tzedakah*.

Guest Speakers

Formally homeless person to speak about his or her life.

Organizational leaders to speak about why they do the work they do.

People with disabilities or with diseases to talk about what it feels like to be in need and to receive assistance.

Community Building

Participate in a ropes course and other group-building initiatives.

Celebrate Shabbat together.

In small groups, reflect on Jewish education thus far from consecration to confirmation.

Grade

Central text: Each grade has a central text that embodies the particular aspect(s) of *tzedakah* studied that year.

Goals: Goals are specific to each grade and relate to the wider course of study. The goals are formulated in a spiral fashion— each set of *tzedakah* goals builds on the entire course of study of the year before. Each grade has at least one goal related to the study of *tzedakah* connected to a Jewish holiday.

Integration: This curriculum seeks to make the instruction of *tzedakah* a regular part of the wider school curriculum. This section provides the teacher with ideas and methods to integrate the teaching of *tzedakah* into the study of other topics and subjects. Examples of these include: holidays, history, Hebrew, values, Israel, etc. Including *tzedakah* as a part of the overall curriculum helps the students see the concept as a regular part of Jewish life and thought.

Materials/textbooks: Materials and textbooks are included in the curriculum to give the teachers sources and other materials both appropriate for the age and for the subject matter. All of the sources cited in this section can also be found in the annotated bibliography section of this rabbinic thesis.

Activities

Tzedakah projects

Every grade level has at least two *tzedakah* project listed for the students. These projects were carefully selected keeping in mind age-appropriateness, subject matter and opportunities for integration. The *tzedakah* projects are meant to be short projects with a maximum scope of about two months. Where and when appropriate, students should be given ownership of the projects. Research has shown that the most successful projects are the ones that are closest to the hearts and minds of the students or of a particular community. Teachers, principals and students should ask, what are the issues that are important to this community and what are the particular issues that are most important to me.

Field trips and Speakers:

Adding to the students' experience of *tzedakah*, each grade has at least one *tzedakah* related field trip or speaker. Again, these have been carefully thought out considering integration and age-appropriateness.

Family Connection:

This section includes questions and activities that are intended to engage the family in continuing study and practice of *tzedakah* at home. What little instructional time we have during school hours can be greatly supplemented when the learning continues at home. Encouraging the study and practice of *tzedakah* at home can lead to the development of an adherence to the habitual concern and giving. Questions and activities in this section can be used to create a worksheet or email listserv that allows parents to participate in the study of many of the same issues and topics as their children.

Kindergarten

Whoever practices *tzedakah* and justice is as though he or she filled the whole world with lovingkindness. — Sukkot 49b

Goals

- Students will be able to define *tikkun olam* as repairing the world.
- Students will be able to recall that we are partners with God as we work to make the world a better place.
- Students will be able to define *tzedakah* as 'doing the right thing' when helping other people.
- Students will be able to identify *tzedakah* in connection with *tikkun olam*.
- Students will be able to list 2 examples of *tzedakah*.

Integration

Tikkun Olam— discuss other ways to repair the world.

Torah—read and discuss the story of creation, Genesis 1-2

Materials/textbooks

Read the story *Partners* by Debra Syme

Read some folktales from *Creating Angels* by Barbara Diamond Goldin.

Make a *Tikkun Olam* puzzle. On a piece of foam board draw a picture of the world. Cut the foam board into pieces and work together as a class to put the world back together one piece at a time.

Activities

Tzedakah projects

These projects are intended to demonstrate to the students the types of things that can be accomplished when people work together.

Do an art project that can only be accomplished with the help of a partner. Create a mosaic with a partner using pre-cut squares of colored paper. One person lays out the design and other person glues the pieces in place.

Have the students bring in coins from home each week for two months. The teacher will keep track of the collection on a bulletin board in the classroom. See how much can be collected. Buy something with that money that everyone in the class can use or benefit from.

Speakers and Field Trips

Invite parents or other people who are involved in a "helping" profession, like a policeman, fireman or doctor. Have them talk to the students about what they do to help other people.

Family Connection

What is the family's attitude toward *tzedakah* donation?

How do family's decide where they donate their *tzedakah*?

Does the family donate *tzedakah* to mostly Jewish organizations or to non-Jewish organizations?

1st Grade

We have never seen nor heard of an Israelite community that does have an *tzedakah* fund. —Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 9:3

Goals

- Students will be able to connect *tzedakah* to the concept of mitzvot—Jewish responsibilities.
- Students will be able to articulate that Shabbat is a good time to give *tzedakah*.
- Students will be able to identify a *tzedakah* box as a Jewish home symbol.

Integration

Art—show pictures of different types of *tzedakah* boxes. Use Jewish art books.

Holidays— begin a model Shabbat observance with the donation of *tzedakah*

Values— *tzedakah* is one type of mitzvah

Materials/textbooks

Read the story, *The Very Best Place for a Penny*, by Dina Herman Rosenfeld

Use the *Gemilut Chasadim Curriculum Guide*. Ask some of the discussion questions and do some of the art projects.

Make *tzedakah* boxes using pre-made *tzedakah* box kits.

Activities

Tzedakah projects

Using a variety of different media, make and decorate *tzedakah* boxes to keep at home. Learn how to write tzedakah in Hebrew to put on the box.

Make two Shabbat projects, one to keep and one to give to someone else so they can celebrate Shabbat. Examples include, *challah* dough, kiddush cups, *challah* covers.

Speakers and Field Trips

Invite an artist to display and talk about original and creative *tzedakah* boxes. Ask the artist to talk about why he or she makes *tzedakah* boxes.

Family Connection

Decide the best place to put the *tzedakah* box in the home.

Decide as a family when to regularly place money in the *tzedakah* box.

Decide as a family how much to put into the *tzedakah* box.

When the box is full, decide as a family where to donate that money.

2nd Grade

You are commanded to give to the poor person according to what he or she lacks... Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 7:3-4

Goals

- Students will be able to identify actions of *tzedakah* in stories from the Bible
- Students will be able to explain that *tzedakah* more than giving money, but giving other material needs.
- Students will be to connect the holiday of Sukkot with the donation of food to shelters.

Integration

Torah— point out *tzedakah* qualities in biblical stories [Abraham welcoming the strangers into his tent, Moses and the Israelites give gifts to build the Tabernacle, Boaz allows Ruth to glean from his fields.

Holidays —*tzedakah* is more than just giving money, donating other things such as food such as on Sukkot.

Music—learn some songs about *tzedakah*

Materials/textbooks

Complete some of the activities from *Tzedakah: Jewish Awareness Worksheets* by Amye Rosenberg.

Read or make a puppet show with some of the stories from *Hand in Hand: Stories about You and Me*, by Menucha Fuchs.

Learn songs from *Sing Out for Justice*.

Activities

Tzedakah projects

These projects emphasize that students can practice *tzedakah* by donating something other than money.

Have a bake sale with homemade or donated baked goods. Use the money to buy food to donate to a food bank.

Collect cans of food for 3 months and stack them in the classrooms. Have the students sort and pack the food to be given to a food bank.

Speakers and Field Trips

Invite a farmer or grocer to speak to the students about donating food.

Deliver boxes of food to the food bank before Thanksgiving or Christmas.

Family Connection

Clean out closets, basement, attic, garage.

Have a garage sale to raise money for a particular cause. Advertise that the money is going to that cause at the sale.

Instead of a garage sale, donate the items directly to a Jewish cause.

Read *tzedakah* stories at home.

3rd Grade

During the High Holy Days, one should also devote more time than usual to the study of Torah, the performance of its precepts and the distribution of *tzedakah*. —Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 130:1

Goals

- Students will be able to articulate that Jewish holidays are appropriate times to give *tzedakah*.
- Students will be able to connect with the donation of *tzedakah* with the High Holy Days.
- Students will be able to explain the connection between *tzedakah* and repentance.

Integration

Holidays—*Tzedakah* is given on most holidays to help Jews mark the special day. *Tzedakah* is one of the liturgical themes of the High Holy Day season. It is one of the ways we make amends with where we missed the mark over the past year.

Music—learn some songs about *tzedakah* using *Sing Out for Justice*

Materials/textbooks

Complete some of the worksheets from the *Tzedakah Copy Pak*, by Marji Gold-Vukson

Read through the High Holy Day services in the *Torah Aura Rosh Hashanah Machzor* and the *Torah Aura Yom Kippur Machzor*. Emphasize the themes of *tzedakah* and repentance.

Activities

Tzedakah projects

Make Rosh Hashanah cards for shut in Jewish elderly at home or in nursing homes.

Collect school supplies for poor neighborhood schools.

Speakers and Field Trips

Deliver cards to Jewish elderly in nursing homes.

Invite the rabbi in to talk about the connections between saying sorry and the donation of *tzedakah*.

Family Connection

Create a special *tzedakah* project to do between Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur.

Younger children are not required to fast on Yom Kippur, so instead of fasting donate the food or the equivalent money to a food bank. Serve a meal on Yom Kippur at a soup kitchen.

Make Rosh Hashanah cards for friends and family members.

4th Grade

Maimonides' 8 degrees of charity.—Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, Chapter 10.

Goals

- Students will be able to explain the text "All Jews are responsible for one another."
- Students will be able to list 4 ways that Jews can help other Jews through *tzedakah*.
- Students will be able to identify 4 Jewish *tzedakah* organizations in their community.
- Students will be able to name 4 ways people can show respect for people in need.
- Students will be able to list the 8 levels of Maimonides' ladder of *tzedakah*.
- Students will be able to define *tzedakah* as acts of justice and righteousness.
- Students will be able to connect Purim to the giving of *mishloach manot*.
- Students will be able to make informed decisions as to where *tzedakah* money goes.

Integration

Holidays— Purim is a time to give *mishloach manot*.

Music—learn some songs about *tzedakah* and various organizations or write a song or a commercial jingle to get people to donate *tzedakah*.

Materials/textbooks

Any of the following materials can be used as a unit for the study of *tzedakah* in this grade.

The Tzedakah Workbook, by Jane Golub.

How Much Should I Give? An Instant Lesson.

Rambam's Rungs, Torah Aura Instant Lesson.

The Humongous Pushka in the Sky, by Danny Siegel.

For One Another, by Raymond A. Zwerin.

Activities

Tzedakah projects

Using the allocation activities presented in the Torah Aura Instant Lesson, *How Much Should I Give?*, set a goal to collect a certain amount of money. Have meetings to discuss where the money should go.

Collect hats, gloves, coats and blankets in the winter for the homeless shelter.

Speakers and Field Trips

Visit a homeless shelter. Talk to the organizers and the residents. Discuss beforehand how one can show respect to the organizers and the residents.

Have a formerly homeless man or woman speak to the students.

Attend *tzedakah* fair organized by the 11th and 12th graders.

Family Connection

Discuss respectful ways to help people we may encounter on the streets.

Visit local Jewish *tzedakah* organizations. Volunteer in some of their projects.

As a family, discuss how to decide where *tzedakah* money is donated.

Research places to donate family *tzedakah* funds.

5th Grade

This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Whoever is hungry—let them come and eat! Whoever is needy—let them come and celebrate Passover! —
Haggadah

Goals

- Students will be able to identify life cycle events as appropriate times to give *tzedakah*.
- Students will be able to identify Passover as a time to give *tzedakah*.

Integration

Holidays— discuss the role of *tzedakah* during Passover, especially the symbol of matzah as the bread of affliction.

Hebrew—*tzedakah* vocabulary and the root: צ.ד.ק

Materials/textbooks

Read the story *A Thousand Eggs for Sarajevo*, by Ronnie M. Horn.

Activities

Tzedakah projects

Make Passover baskets for poor Jews, Jews in the hospital or for Jews new immigrants.

Collect used and new books and CD's and sell them to raise money for local literacy groups.

Speakers and Field Trips

Visit the local Jewish Family Services organization to learn how the organization helps Jews at various points throughout their lives.

Have a speaker from JFS come to the school to speak to the students.

Family Connection

Before Passover, clean out the kitchen cupboards and donate food to local food banks.

During the Passover seder, discuss the problem of hunger in the world and brainstorm ways to address the problem throughout the coming year.

Make a donation to an organization instead of buying a gift for a life cycle event. Write a note explaining why you did this and why you picked that particular organization.

6th Grade

In every city inhabited by Israelites, it is their duty to appoint from among themselves well-known and trustworthy persons to act as *tzedakah* collectors... —Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor, 9:1-3.

Goals

- Students will be able to identify the Mishnah and the Talmud as sources of our *tzedakah* traditions.
- Students will be able to explain the institution of *tzedakah* collection and distribution in European Jewish history.
- Students will be able to identify times in American Jewish history where *tzedakah* was performed.
- Students will be able to identify time in the history of Israel where *tzedakah* was performed.
- Students will explore the connections between *tzedakah* and Tu B'Shevat.

Integration

Hebrew— learn the phrase, *tzedek, tzedek tirdof*, justice, justice, you shall pursue.

History— discuss the role of *tzedakah* throughout different periods of Jewish history.

Holidays—buying and planting trees on Tu B'shevat is a form of *tzedakah*.

Israel— explore how the planting of trees helps out Israel.

Materials/textbooks

Use Selections from *Tzedakah: A Source Book on Caring and Sharing*, by Abraham Eckstein and Azriel Eisenberg.

Activities

Tzedakah projects

Organize and facilitate the Jewish National Fund (JNF) tree drive for Tu B'Shevat.

Raise money by doing a car wash during Religious School.

Speakers and Field Trips

Visit a history museum or a historical location and investigate *tzedakah* donation in a particular period of history or in the congregation's community.

Invite a speaker who immigrated to the United States to talk about how *tzedakah* helped them start their new life here.

Family Connection

Ask family members if they ever have received *tzedakah* from a Jewish organization. Why did they need it? How did they feel about having to accept *tzedakah*?

Buy JNF trees in memory of family members.

Brainstorm ways to help the State of Israel besides donating money to the JNF.

7th Grade

Through the righteous of charity, I shall behold Your face. Notice that [this verse illustrates the] immense power of *tzedakah*... —Tanchuma, Leviticus 17a

Goals

- Students will be able to define what means to be a *mensch*.
- Students will reflect on the prophetic phrase, “not by might, not by power.”
- Students will explore the role of *tzedakah* as part of their Jewish identity.
- Students will explore ways to integrate the value of *tzedakah* into their bar/bat mitzvah celebration.
- Students will connect *tzedakah* to the holiday of Chanukah.

Integration

Hebrew—learn blessing: *she-na-tan lanu hiz-dam-nut le-ta-kein et ha-o-lam*.

Bar/bat mitzvah—recognize *tzedakah* projects during bar/mitzvah celebration. Require students to perform *tzedakah* projects and discuss with other students their experiences.

Holidays— the role of *tzedakah* during the Chanukah season.

Materials/textbooks

Tikkun Olam Projects, by Deborah Niederman

These textbooks can be used as a the basis of this grades *tzedakah* unit.

To Learn is to Do: A Tikkun Olam Roadmap, by Sharon D. Halper.

Doing Mitzvot, by Ronald Isaacs and Kerry Olitzky

Activities

Tzedakah projects

Discuss ways that to integrate a specific *tzedakah* project into their family's preparation for bar/bat mitzvah.

See Appendix III for examples of ways to do this.

Discuss ways to integrate a *tzedakah* project into the celebration of their bar/bat mitzvah (*Mazon*, donating the flowers from the ceremony, etc.)

Speakers and Field Trips

Invite someone from *Mazon* to discuss the organization and the ways it helps address the hunger problem in the United States.

Visit a soup kitchen as a class and help serve a meal.

Family Connection

Compile a list of websites of *tzedakah* organizations in your community.

In what ways is your family integrating the value of *tzedakah* into the celebration of your son or daughter becoming a bar/bat mitzvah?

In what types of *tzedakah* projects can every member of your participate together?

8th Grade

The Rabbis taught that poor non-Jews are to be supported as well as poor Jews...in order to promote peaceful relations between Jews and non-Jews. —Gittin 61a

Goals

- Students will be able to identify the role of “*tzedakah*” in other religions.
- Students will be able to compare and contrast *tzedakah* in different religions.
- Students will be able to articulate that *tzedakah* is meant for everyone regardless of religion.

Integration

Text Study— read texts that discuss *tzedakah* and non-Jews

Holidays— explore the value of *tzedakah* during the holidays of other religions, especially the winter holidays.

Materials/textbooks

Summaries of the concept of *tzedakah* in other religions.

(The Internet is a great place to find materials, use key words such as charity for Christianity and Eastern religions, *zakat* in Islam.)

Activities

Tzedakah projects

Team up with another religious school and raise money together for a mutually agreed upon cause. (Peace organizations, centers for religious understanding, etc.)

Collect toys and wrap them as Christmas presents for needy children.

Participate in a Christmas/Chanukah wrapping project at the local mall to raise money for local organizations.

Speakers and Field Trips

Invite clergy or scholars of other religions to talk about the role of charity in their faith.

Family Connection

Discuss with family friends and neighbors, their attitudes toward charity and *tzedakah*.

Discuss, as a family, the importance of helping both Jews and non-Jews in today's society.

Discuss your family's habit of collecting and donating *tzedakah*.

9th Grade

Tinnus Rufus asked: "Why does your God who loes and cares for the needy not provide from their support?" ...Akiva replied, "God wants the one to help the other. Thereby, the whole world becomes a household of love." —Baba Batra 10a

Goals

- Students will be able to define *tzedakah* as building and strengthening relationships in the community and in the world.
- Students will be able to list 4 ways that *tzedakah* builds and strengthens relationships.
- Students will be able to connect the value of *tzedakah* to the observance of Yom HaShoah and the Holocaust.

Integration

Holidays— explore the role of *tzedakah* during the Holocaust.

Israel— discuss how giving *tzedakah* to Israeli organizations strengthens the bonds between American Jewish and Israelis.

Materials/textbooks

The Jewish Welfare Fund Campaign Curriculum, by the Curriculum Dept. of the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland. (use elements of all three but with an emphasis on the grades 6-8 section.)

Activities

Tzedakah projects

With parents and other adults, help build a Habitat for Humanity home for someone in the community.

Help with the annual Federation fundraising campaign.

Speakers and Field Trips

Invite someone from the Federation to speak about its role in the community.

Invite a Holocaust survivor to speak about the role of *tzedakah* in his/her story of survival.

Ask questions such as: How did non-Jews or other Jewish risked their lives to help them survive? How did *tzedakah* organizations help them begin to put their life back together?

Family Connection

Brainstorm ways that the family can help out with the Federation fundraising campaign.

Discuss ways that the family can encourage others (neighbors, friends, co-workers) to give money or to donate other materials.

Watch recent movies that deal with various aspects of *tzedakah*.

10th Grade

Hillel said: Do not separate yourself from the community. —
Pirkei Avot 2:4

Goals

- Students will reflect on the role of the *tzedakah* in their lives, past, present and future.
- Students will explore the impact of *tzedakah* on the Jewish community as a whole.
- Students will explore current social issues that affect both the Jewish community and American society.
- Students will be able to describe ways to show respect for people with material needs and with psychological needs.
- Students will reflect on the phrase “one person can make a difference.”

Integration

Confirmation— write a *tzedakah* themed confirmation service

Holidays— discuss the role of *tzedakah* during Shavuot.

Materials/textbooks

Review Rambam's *rungs* using the text from *Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor*.

Read and discuss some of the issues from *Tzarchei Tzibbur: Community and Responsibility in the Jewish Tradition*, by Barbara Fortgang Summers.

Activities

Tzedakah projects

Make & serve lunch or dinner for the Ronald McDonald House.

Devise a *tzedakah* project that will raise money to begin a special fund for camp and education scholarships.

Speakers and Field Trips

Invite a local politician to speak about how the government helps out the needy in the community.

Tzedakah Retreat (See introduction for details.)

Family Connection

Have parents reflect on the same questions as the 10th graders. What role has *tzedakah* played in the lives of family members past, present and future.

Discuss current events and issues that relate to the subject of *tzedakah*. Share articles about these issues among the family members.

11th Grade

Sustaining oneself is every person's priority...Then, he shall provide for his father and mother if they be poor...neighbors precede townspeople, and one's own townspeople precede the inhabitants of another city... —Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 251:3

Goals

- Students will explore the issues regarding the pros and cons of donating money to non-Jewish organizations.
- Students will discuss the process by which the community sets its welfare priorities.

Integration

Identity—discuss ways to balance our dual identity of being American and being Jewish. Discuss the experience of minority/majority issues. Discuss prejudice and stereotypes of Jews especially regarding money.

Materials/textbooks

Begging the Question: An Instant Lesson, by Joel Lurie Grishaver.

Activities

Tzedakah projects

The activities for 11th grade are deliberately left vague to allow students to pick and choose their own *tzedakah* projects. At this point in their education, the students should be empowered to make the own decisions about where to donate *tzedakah* money.

Help organize 4th grade *tzedakah* fair.

Create and implement own *tzedakah* project.

Speakers and Field Trips

Talk to or visit representatives from various organizations in the community that are of interest to the particular students.

Family Connection

Discuss attitudes and prejudices that exist within the community the family lives.

How do these attitudes and prejudices affect our personal donation of *tzedakah*?

What is our responsibility to help Jews in Israel and around the world?

12th Grade

He used to say: You are not required to complete the task, yet you are not free to withdraw from it. —Pirkei Avot 2:21

Goals

- Students will reflect on their knowledge and practice of *tzedakah* that they learned and did throughout religious school
- Students will debate and discuss ways to get others to integrate *tzedakah* into their lives.
- Students will explore ways to continue practicing the value of *tzedakah* into adulthood.

Integration

Include the value of *tzedakah* in all of the activities and exercises about Jewish values and Jewish continuity.

Materials/textbooks

Current events articles from newspapers, magazines and the Internet.

Curriculum of the religious school.

Activities

Tzedakah projects

The activities for 12th grade are deliberately left vague to allow students to pick and choose their own *tzedakah* projects. At this point in their education, the students should be empowered to make the own decisions about where to donate *tzedakah* money.

Help organize 4th grade tzedakah fair.

Create and implement own *tzedakah* project.

Speakers and Field Trips

Talk to or visit representatives from various organizations in the community.

Family Connection

What are some of the ways that the family has been able to integrate *tzedakah* into their lives?

What has been difficult about integrating *tzedakah* into the habits of the family?

What strategies could address these difficulties?

Appendix I

Experiential Education Department
BOARD OF JEWISH EDUCATION of Greater Washington
4928 Wyaconda Road, Rockville, Maryland 20852

**FAIR OF REPAIR:
Tikun Olam Festival**

TEACHERS' GUIDE

Contents

- I. PROGRAM GOALS AND OVERVIEW (pages 2-4)
- II. GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT PREPARATION (pages 5-10)
- III. IDEAS FOR FOLLOW-UP (pages 11-13)
- IV. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER (page 14)

Teachers' Guide prepared by **Ina Miller Lerman**
Experiential Educational Specialist
Board of Jewish Education of Greater Washington

October, 1998

Event Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Coordinator: _____ Telephone: _____

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Board of Jewish Education of Greater Washington
4928 Wyaconda Road, Rockville, Maryland 20852
Telephone: 301-984-4455 TTY: 301-984-1670 FAX: 301-230-0267

FAIR OF REPAIR: *TIKUN OLAM* FESTIVAL

PROGRAM GOALS:

This event seeks to help students . . .

1. Define the vocabulary of *tzedakah*. The vocabulary of *mitzvot* and *tzedakah* is very large. Each word suggests specific obligations. Understanding this vocabulary is important because it helps us to anticipate our obligations in life.

Students will be introduced to the following concepts:

<i>Hesed</i>	kindness
<i>Bal Taschit</i>	do not waste
<i>Bikur olim</i>	visiting the sick
<i>Derekh Eretz</i>	courtesy
<i>Kavod and Busha</i>	honor, dignity and shame
<i>K'vod Habriyot</i>	individual differences
<i>Hakhnasat Orhim</i>	hospitality
<i>Mazon</i>	feeding the hungry
<i>Tzedek</i>	justice
<i>Tzibur</i>	community

2. Become aware of the range of human needs and of responses to those needs. There are specific actions (prescribed by *halachah*) that people take to help others. Students may meet volunteers from your synagogue and from some of the community organizations. The event organizer should provide you with a list of participating organizations or synagogue committees. Here are some possibilities:

- Shomrei Adamah: Jewish resource center for the environment
- United Jewish Appeal Federation: Fundraising, planning, and community building organization for the Washington Jewish community
- Jewish Foundation for Group Homes: Residential programs for disabled adults
- Board of Jewish Education of Greater Washington: Works to improve the quality of Jewish Education in our community
- Hadassah: supports the Hadassah Medical Center with facilities at Kiryat Hadassah and Mount Scopus in Jerusalem

- Jewish Chaplaincy Services: Pastoral care, visitation, counseling, Sabbath and Festival programs, and bedside visitation to local hospitals and nursing homes
 - Mazon: The Jewish Response to Hunger: encourages contributions and allocates funds to a variety of agencies that help those who are hungry
 - YACHAD, Inc.: Works cooperatively with other organizations to raise funds and give grants and loans to help create low-income housing
 - Congregation Bikur Holim Committee: Visits and supports people who are hospitalized, homebound, or in nursing homes
 - Congregation Social Action Committee: Works tirelessly to put all the meanings of "*tikun olam*" into action around our community
 - Project Shalom of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington: provides volunteer opportunities for Jewish teens in a variety of settings in the metropolitan Washington area.
3. Realize that acts of human kindness are more than "nice things to do" -- they can effect world change. The actions of *tzedakah* can change a person's self-image and the image of an entire community of people.
 4. Identify with *K'lal Yisrael* to recognize the specific ways they can become involved in the process of repairing the world. *Tzedakah* is given in many ways -- financially and personally.

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A FAIR OF REPAIR: *TIKUN OLAM* FESTIVAL

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Fair of Repair is a "fair" of *tzedakah* concepts and values. Each concept will be introduced to the students through a participatory activity and illustrated by the work of a particular organization. Students will rotate through several of the stations.

Students will be divided into groups of 20. A schedule outlining each group's morning itinerary will be sent prior to the event. Each group will spend 25 minutes each at four different stations. At each station, the students will meet with a community organization volunteer and complete a learning activity. Students will collect brochures about *tzedakah* organizations and worksheets about *tzedakah* concepts as they visit each station. Each student will create a *tzedakah* box at the conclusion of the event.

As follow-up, each student will be asked to complete the *tzedakah* worksheets with a parent at home. These worksheets will be distributed to students at the Fair of Repair. Completed worksheets should be returned to the classroom teacher for comments and review. Each family successfully completing the worksheets will receive an award from the BJE.

Event Date and Time: _____

Location: _____

Coordinator: _____

Telephone: _____ FAX: _____

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A FAIR OF REPAIR: *TIKUN OLAM* FESTIVAL

TEACHER'S GUIDELINES

Prepare Your Students

The concepts of *Tikun Olam*, *Tzedakah*, and *Gemilut Chasadim* are Jewish giants! If they are taught as units of study only, we deprive our students of important Jewish life experiences. With that in mind, **you are encouraged to follow these four steps to prepare your students for the Fair of Repair: *Tikun Olam* Festival.**

I. **Make *tzedakah* projects part of each holiday.** Use the list of concepts covered in the "Fair of Repair" to think of interesting projects for your class. Here are some ideas:

- Bring canned food to class every week. Have the class give it to a local food bank -- *Mazon*.
- Begin a recycling program at your religious school. Find out where to take glass bottles, plastic bottles, and aluminum cans -- *Bal Tashit*.
- Explore ways your class can reach out to new students in your religious school. Perhaps your class can create a welcome kit for newcomers and plan a personal delivery system -- *Hakhnasat Orhim*.
- Raise money for the Jewish Braille Institute during Jewish Book Month - *K'vod Habriyut*.
- Make a visit to a nursing home or hospital to deliver flowers or put on a short program - *Bikur Cholim*.
- These are only a few ideas. You are encouraged to brainstorm with your class.

Make the *tzedakah* project a Jewish learning experience. Put the project in a Jewish framework and talk about *mitzvot* and our obligations to repair the world. Please contact Ina Lerman or visit the Teacher Center if you would like assistance, ideas, etc.

- II. A *Tzedakah* Lesson on the **eight levels of giving** presented by Rambam in the *Mishneh Torah* is a good way to introduce your students to the Jewish concept of *tzedakah*. This teachers' guide includes one worksheet on this *tzedakah* ladder.

Suggestions for other lessons can be found in:

- Grishaver and Huppin, *Tzedakah, Gemilut Chasadim and Ahavah*, A.R.E.
- The Tzedakah Workbook*, L.A. BJE *Tzedakah* kit

III. FAIR OF REPAIR -- TIKUN OLAM FESTIVAL

Discuss the meaning of the title of this program before the field trip. What is *Tikun Olam*?

- A. Ask students to write down everything they know about *tzedakah*.
- B. Have students work in small groups (3 students) to complete a *tzedakah* chart like the one below. They will use this chart to organize what they know about *tzedakah*. They will add to this any new thoughts that the group generates.

Why we give <i>tzedakah</i>	What the word <i>tzedakah</i> means	Examples of <i>tzedakah</i> acts	<i>Tzedakah</i> heroes	Organizations that do <i>tzedakah</i>	Other interesting thoughts about <i>tzedakah</i>
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- C. Make a class list on the blackboard, an overhead projector or mural paper (this can be saved). Use this time to correct wrong impressions and generate more new thoughts. You may also want to introduce the terms "*Gemilut asadim*" (acts of loving kindness) and "*Mitzvah*" (commandments). Talk about what makes these actions "Jewish."
- D. Write words "*Tikun Olam*" on blackboard and then write translation "Repairing the World." Ask student what they think this means. What is the difference between *Tikun Olam* and *Tzedakah*? Whip around the room, asking for examples of *Tikun Olam* (visiting the sick, giving money, food, shelter to the needy; helping someone learn to earn a living; offering hospitality to new neighbors; planting trees and cleaning rivers, etc.). Ask for examples of *Tikun Olam* that the students have done.

- E. CONCLUSION: write on the blackboard -- FAIR OF REPAIR and tell the students this is the title of a program they will be attending. Can they guess what the title means? (The "Repair" is a reference to *Tikun Olam*, repairing the world.)

Tell them about the program:

1. They will be placed into groups of 20 students. **(Be sure students know their group before arriving at the event.)**
2. They will visit four stations. Each station is about a different way of doing "*Tikun Olam*" -- repairing the world. They will also meet people who are involved in special *Tikun Olam* projects. They will visit each exhibit for a short time, 25 minutes.
3. As they leave each exhibit, they will have several things to take home.
 - a. At some exhibits, they will complete a project or art activity.
 - b. They will receive brochures about several of the *tzedakah* organizations to take home and share with their parents.
 - c. They will receive *tzedakah* worksheets, which they can complete at home with their parent. If they complete 4 of the 5 worksheets, their family will receive an award from the Board of Jewish Education.

IV. PARTICIPATE IN OUR SPECIAL TZEDAKAH PROJECT.

Your event coordinator will give you information about a special collection of items for *tzedakah* (canned food, houswares, school supplies, winter coats, etc. Organize your students for full participation.

FAIR OF REPAIR -- *TIKUN OLAM* FESTIVAL

***TZEDAKAH* POWER
MAIMONIDES IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

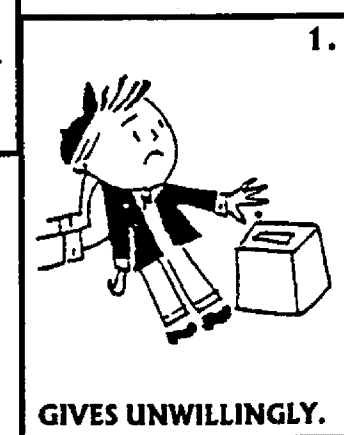
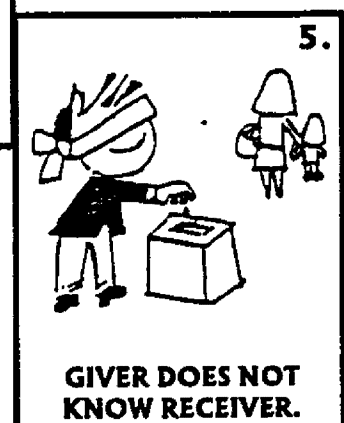
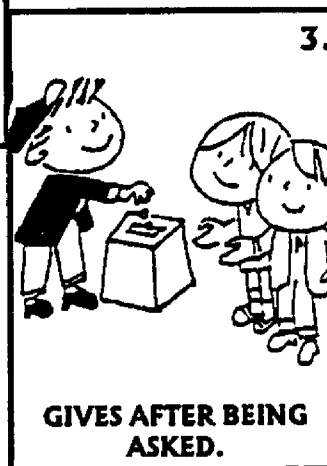
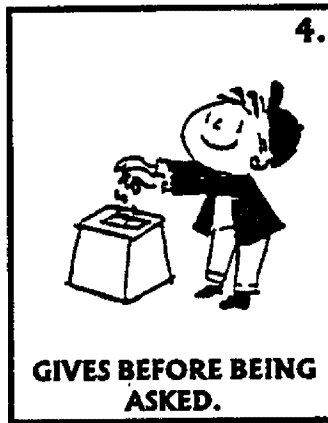
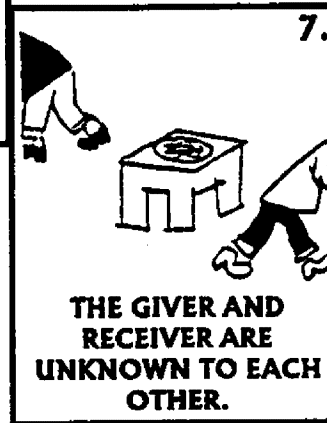
1. Ask your class to rank the steps on the Ladder of *Tzedakah* that Maimonides developed from the lowest to the highest. This may be done as a way of measuring their perceptions of righteousness and comparing it with Maimonides'.
2. After presenting Maimonides "Ladder of *Tzedakah*" to your students, ask them to think of examples from their experience of *Tzedakah* that match each of the steps on the ladder. Ask your students which steps the United Jewish Appeal Federation (UJAF) helps to carry out; the answer is steps 7 and 8. When we give to the UJAF to help Jews in Israel, abroad and at home, we never know who receives our help and the needy person never knows exactly who gives it. The UJAF beneficiary agencies help people with their education and job-skills so that they can become self-supporting and need no more help.
3. After presenting copies of the "Ladder of *Tzedakah*" ask your students to rate the following acts on Maimonides' scale of 1-8.
 - a. A committee from the synagogue has to visit with a contributor seven times and make many phone calls before the person finally gives five dollars.
(Step 1)
 - b. Someone calls up a charity and says he has heard that they have a deficit and offers to give them one week's salary.
(Step 4)
 - c. The principal announces a collection is to be made for a recently arrived Russian Jewish family. All contribute and sign a card with their names which is given to the family together with the check.
(Step 5)
 - d. A person does not attend a *tzedakah* fundraising breakfast at synagogue. Two weeks later, the chairman of the committee calls upon this person to make a contribution which the person does generously.
(Step 3)

- e. Someone who is planning a world cruise, gives a very modest contribution but is happy to give it.
(Step 2)
- f. You read in the newspaper of a child who had worked for a year, delivering newspapers in order to save money for a bike. The bike was stolen and his family cannot afford to buy another one. Your class takes up a collection and sends the child a new bike with a note saying "From a group of children."
(Step 6)

4.

- a. Ask your class the following questions based on Maimonides ladder: Why do you think Maimonides considered a case where the giver knows who gets the charity and the receiver doesn't know who has given it (Step 6), as "higher" than when the poor person knows who gives it and the giver does not know who receives the charity (Step 5)?
- b. Why is the seventh step -- where neither the giver nor the receiver know each other -- "higher" than both of these other cases?
- c. Why do we consider an interest-free loan or finding a job for a needy person a form of *tzedakah*? Do you think most people would consider this charity?
- d. Which of the eight steps will cause the least embarrassment to the poor person? Which one enables the needy to keep their self-respect?

The Ladder of צדקה



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FAIR OF REPAIR: TIKUN OLAM FESTIVAL
IDEAS FOR FOLLOW-UP AFTER THE FESTIVAL

In order for this special event to make its greatest educational impact on the students, the students must (1) have some knowledge about *Tzedakah* before the event and (2) have the opportunity to discuss the program and to do some additional follow-up.

Debriefing should be done as soon as possible after the event, while memories are still fresh. If you will not have the opportunity to discuss the event with your students for a week, you may want to prepare a work sheet so that students can write down their immediate reactions. (But do not hand out the work sheet until the program has ended, perhaps as students are leaving or while you are on the bus returning to school.)

Here are some general debriefing questions:

1. Ask students for their general reactions to the Fair of Repair. What was interesting and why? What makes this a "Jewish" program?
2. What new thing(s) did you learn about *Tzedakah*? Who taught it to you?
3. What did you learn more about today? (Try to encourage your students to be as specific as possible.)
4. What questions do you have that remain unanswered? To whom or what place could you go for the answer?
5. Make a list of the *Tzedakah* concepts to which you were introduced at the event. Define these concepts. (Encourage your students to go beyond translation, to describe why this is an important *mitzvah* and ways to perform it.)
6. As we discussed before the field trip, there are many, many ways to do *Tzedakah* and *Tikun Olam*. If you were organizing the Fair of Repair, what other ways to doing *Tzedakah* or *Tikun Olam* would try to include and why?
7. Why do you think we have an obligation as Jews to do acts of *Tzedakah*?
8. How would you explain *Tzedakah* and *Tikun Olam* to someone who had never heard these words before?

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The Fair of Repair: *Tikun Olam* Festival was designed as an introduction to *Tzedakah* vocabulary and to the ways to fulfill our obligations. Through the school year, you can provide your students with numerous opportunities to become involved in acts of *Tzedakah* and to learn more about these *mitzvot*. But fourth graders do not live alone and in order to be successful in teaching the students, it is imperative that the school reach out to educate the family about *Tzedakah*: *Tzedakah* as a Jewish obligation and a Jewish value.

Because it is not practical to invite all the parents to attend the Fair of Repair, we are sending part of the Fair of Repair home to the parents. At the event, students collected several family work sheets about the *Tzedakah* concepts introduced. These work sheets can be an effective follow-up tool for the student, as they reinforce what was taught at the Fair. These work sheets require students to think for themselves, to make some decisions and do some investigation to learn more about *Tzedakah* on their own. But most importantly, these pages are for student and parent to do together. Parent and child will share ideas, work through difficult questions, investigate Jewish sources together. Hopefully, the work sheets will encourage the family to get involved in one specific area of *Tikun Olam* that they may not have considered earlier.

Please encourage your families to complete these work sheets. Here are some suggestions:

1. The most simple and obvious method is to talk about the event and the work sheets in class in the two weeks after the Fair of Repair. Remind students about it each time you have class.
2. Send a reminder note about the work sheets home to parents one week after the Fair of Repair. Make extra copies of the work sheets available in case some students have lost theirs.
3. Make a "class honor roll" and list the names of the families who have participated in this home study about *Tzedakah*.
4. Write an article about the Fair of Repair (or better, have a student write an article) for your synagogue or temple newsletter. Include the names of the families that have completed the work sheets. Tell your students in advance that such an article will be prepared.
5. Our school will award certificates to each family completing the study program.

It is the teachers responsibility to encourage families to participate. The teacher is also responsible to carefully review the sheets that are turned in. These sheets are not graded but your comments could be very useful. Let the families know you have read their work sheets are happy/proud, etc. that they have chosen to participate.

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FAIR OF REPAIR: *TIKUN OLAM* FESTIVAL

Try this creative writing exercise to help you summarize what you know about *Tikun Olam* and *Tzedakah*. You can work by yourself, with a partner, or you can do this at home with the help of other family members.

TIKUN OLAM

In an acrostic poem, the first letters of every line spell a word when they are put together. Acrostic poems are a part of a very ancient Jewish tradition and are found in the Bible and in the *Siddur*.

Create an acrostic poem about *Tikun Olam* using the letters of the words "*Tikun Olam*" to start each line. Acrostic poems do not need to rhyme and they do not need to have a fixed rhythm.

T _____

I _____

K _____

U _____

N _____

O _____

L _____

A _____

M _____

What piece of music would go best with your acrostic poem? Would this music be background or would you be able to sing the poem?

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A FAIR OF REPAIR -- TIKUN OLAM FESTIVAL
TEACHERS' GUIDE

Administrative Information for the Teacher

Event Coordinator:_____

Telephone Number:_____FAX:_____

Event Date:_____Time:_____

Location:_____

1. Notify families of this event. Distribute flyers, permission slips, etc.
2. Encourage participation in the *Tzedakah* Campaign.
3. **Notify coordinator if any of your students are unable to walk up steps or of they have any other special needs.**
4. Arrange for one adult chaperon for every TEN students. (Teachers count as chaperons.) Chaperons will escort groups of students around the fair and will be needed to help with activities at each station.
5. Arrange transportation to the event. Your coordinator will give you directions. Make sure everyone know what time the event will start.
6. Each student should wear a coded name tag that with their group assignment. Students should bring as little as possible with them. They will receive pencils and folders at the event.
7. **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

You will get information from the event coordinator about contingency plans in case of a winter storm.

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FAIR OF REPAIR: TIKUN OLAM FESTIVAL
PLANNER'S MANUAL

RESOURCE #1
OVERVIEW OF CONCEPTS, ACTIVITIES, ORGANIZATIONS

TIKUN OLAM CONCEPT	ACTIVITY AT "FAIR OF REPAIR"	SUGGESTION FOR ORGANIZATION CONTACT
BIKUR HOLIM ביקור חולים Visiting the sick	1. Create cheer up gift packs for hospital or nursing home patients. Create cheerful cards and decorate wrapping paper for items. <i>Activity #1.</i> 2. Create get well cards for hospital patients. If possible, personalize the cards for members of your congregation who are ill. <i>Activity #2.</i> 3. Create get well cards to send to patients in Hadassah Hospital. These cards are unique because we had students write get well greetings in Hebrew, Arabic, English and Russian.	Your synagogue's Bikur Holim Committee. Jewish Chaplaincy Services of the United Jewish Appeal Federation 301-230-7294. (They can help you find a volunteer or arrange for delivery of the cheer-up gifts.) Bikur Cholim of Greater Washington, provides visitation and training for volunteers. Contact Dr. Warren Cohen, pres. 301-681-9193. Local chapter of Hadassah.
BAL TASHCHIT בל תשחית CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT	1. Show "Rap for the Planet" video and discuss concepts of reduce, reuse, recycle from a Jewish point of view. Video is available from Shomrei Adamah. Words of the "rap" are on <i>Activity #3.</i> 2. Adapt the "web of life" activity to the age of your students, with a discussion relating Rabbinic ideas about the environment. <i>Activity #4.</i>	Volunteers from your synagogue who are involved in education or advocacy work on behalf of the environment. Make sure they have the "Jewish perspective" on this issue. Shomrei Adamah of Greater Washington, contact De Fishler Herman, 301-588-1626. (Regional affiliate of Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life.)

MAZON מזון FEEDING THE HUNGRY	Simplified version of a "world hunger banquet." This simulation recreates, in simple form, the unequal distribution of food resources around the world and encourages students to find a response. <i>Activity #5.</i>	Your congregational representative of "Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger." (Mazon's nat. office in L.A.: 310-442-0020, e-mail: mazon-mail@aol.com)
K'VOD L'BRIYOT כבוד לבריית SENSITIVITY TO INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set up four learning stations within the station; each student completing only one of the sensitivity exercises: poor fine motor coordination, learning disability, vision impairment, hearing impairment. Wrap up with full group discussion with resident of local group home. <i>Activity #6.</i> 2. Discussion about hearing impairment, especially in the synagogue or school. Learn to sign a blessing or a prayer. <i>Activity #7.</i> 3. Create learning tools or games that can be used in Jewish special ed. classrooms. 	<p>Members of your congregation involved as professionals or volunteers in special education.</p> <p>Jewish Foundation for Group Homes, Venessa Ripps, Volunteer Coordinator: 301-984-3839. She can also arrange for a resident to visit your school or for your students to visit a group home.</p> <p>Bd of Jew Ed. Special Needs Dept, 301-984-4455 ext. 312, Lenore Layman can help you contact local Jewish schools/programs for children with special needs.</p>
TZIBUR צבור BEING PART OF A COMMUNITY	Review some of the main Jewish communal organizations and play "Jewish Community Lotto", matching case descriptions with the agency that could provide service. <i>Activity #8.</i>	<p>Congregational liaison to the United Jewish Appeal Federation.</p> <p>Jewish Information and Referral Service of U.J.A.F., Sharon Fink, 301-770-4848.</p>
KAVOD, DEREKH ERETZ כבוד ודרך ארץ HONOR & COURTESY	View a short segment of the film/video, "The Shopping Bag Lady." Discuss meaning of these concepts and their power to change lives.. The video or film can be borrowed from the BJE Teacher Center. <i>Activity #9.</i>	Volunteer from your synagogue involved with older people or with homeless people (or a volunteer who is an older adult who enjoys working with kids.)
HACHNASSAT ORCHIM הכנסת אורחים HOSPITALITY	Tell Midrash about Abraham receiving guests. Teach "hachnassat orchim" vocabulary. Create list of ways to help visitors to your home feel comfortable. Personalize "Guest Book of Memories." <i>Activity #10.</i>	Members of your community involved in welcoming newcomers to your synagogue. Families that are well-known for their hospitality to visitors.

GEMILUT HASADIM גמילות חסדים ACTS OF KINDNESS	<p>This station can be used to introduce and review many of the concepts taught at other stations. Options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Divide students into teams to play "Tikun Olam Feud", a game like "Family Feud. <i>Activity #11.</i> 2. Play a card game based on "Go Fish", where students match one of the morning blessings with an act of hesed done by God, with the name of the mitzvah in Hebrew & English, with a community organization that puts the ideal to work. <i>Activity #12.</i> 3. Play the "tzedakah-nary" game. Four teams compete at a game similiar to "pictionary" and charades. Players are called upon to either draw or act out an action related to hesed. <i>Activity #13.</i> 	<p>This is a good station to use teen leadership from your congregational youth group. Make certain that they have been well oriented about the game they will lead and that they are comfortable with the Jewish concepts, in Hebrew.</p>
MISHPACHAH משפחה HELPING YOUR FAMILY	<p>Activity asks students to think about the ways they can help the people closest to them. <i>Activity #14.</i></p>	<p>Volunteers involved in Family Education, Big Brother/Big Sister Programs, etc. Contact Jewish Social Service Agency, 301-881-3700.</p>
TZEDAKAH צדקה (note: if possible, do not translate the term tzedakah.)	<p>Students have the opportunity to decorate a tzedakah box. This can either be a station, like the other acitivites, or it can be a conclusion where everyone comes together to work at the same time. Make sure students understand the difference between a piggy bank and a tzedakah box. See <i>Activity #15</i> for ideas about concluding remarks.</p>	<p>White coin banks(3" x 5 1/2") with slotted metal top, suitable for decorating, can be ordered from: Armbrust Paper Tube, Inc.773-586-3232. Explain your project and request wholesale pricing. (The more you order the less they cost. Order in cases of 100.)</p>
Bringing Tikun Olam Projects to the Home	<p>Use of "Family Contract" to encourage families to adopt of specific <i>mitzvah</i> project. See <i>Activity #16</i> for practical ideas and sample contract.</p>	

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**FAIR OF REPAIR: TIKUN OLAM FESTIVAL
PLANNER'S MANUAL**

**RESOURCE #2
SOME ISSUES TO CONSIDER...**

TIMING OF STATIONS.

The activity plans presented here are based on spending 25 minutes at each station, including arrival, settling in, and cleaning up time (i.e. each activity is really 20 minutes long, at most). Each group of students visits only four stations and everyone decorates a tzedakah box. Leaders find it difficult to teach anything if less time is allotted. Keep in mind that the point is not simply to do a series of activities but to come away with an understanding that these mitzvot are part of the Jewish person's way of looking at the world and of working to make it a better place. But there is a certain tension: students wish they could visit every station and try out every activity. You will need to decide how much time to allot to each rotation - balancing the desires of students to stay on the move and the needs of the leaders to introduce important concepts.

DOING VS. DISCUSSING

During discussion periods, it should be anticipated that only a few students may wish to contribute. But the discussion periods are important for putting the activity into its Jewish context. Encourage leaders to find a good balance between talk and action at their station.

BEGINNING TOGETHER

You may wish to design an opening for your program, where students might learn a song about tikun olam (such as "al shelosha devarim" or "Peace by Piece" - Safam) and hear a short, inspirational welcome by the Rabbi or the Principal. Advantages: helps set the scene and get everyone in the mood for the program. Disadvantages: if that starts late, the whole program will run late; you will need another large space; it will take more time than you might think to dismiss groups to their first station.

TOTAL LENGTH OF THE PROGRAM

The Fair of Repair presented here is a two hour program. Students visit 4 stations for 25 minutes each (100 minutes) and, during the last 20 minutes, they decorate tzedakah boxes. It is difficult for students to be attentive for longer periods of time. If you have less time, you may distribute tzedakah boxes and encourage them to be decorated at home or program for three rotations instead of four.

ENDING TOGETHER

The Fair of Repair ends with everyone together decorating the tzedakah boxes. During this work time, someone can speak briefly to the participants, summarizing the theme of the program and thanking all the volunteers who helped out. Advantages: Although students and classes were split during the event, everyone comes back to the same place at the end; dismissal is easier; it is nice to give volunteers public recognition; it is important to state clearly what you hoped the students learned and what they can do to follow-up; because the students have a project to do, they have something to occupy their hands while they try to listen. Disadvantages: the students are tired at the end of the program and would rather do the arts & crafts than listen to anyone; do not expect a lot of attention from the students but the parents will listen; students may have had other opportunities to decorate tzedakah boxes.

SYNAGOGUE VOLUNTEERS OR COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

If you are able to recruit members of your synagogue who are involved in activities that put *tikun olam* concepts to work, you will be providing your students with role models who are immediately accessible to them. You will help them see parents, teachers, synagogue leaders, and teens from new perspectives. Anyone wishing to become more involved in *hesed* projects will know who to contact from your synagogue.

By using volunteers from community based organizations, you will help your students learn about the organizations whose mission it is to act upon the values of *tikun olam*. Students will learn about Jewish values and about community organizations.

Ideally, try to find volunteers who are members of your synagogue who are involved with community organizations. If that is not possible, you may want to use a mix of volunteers.

TEENS AS STATION LEADERS

Teens from your youth group and religious school should certainly be called upon to serve as assistants at all stations. They can help the leaders by distributing handouts, giving individual help with the activities, cleaning up between stations, and leading groups from one station to the next. It is, however, a big responsibility to be a station leader. If you decide to use teens as station leaders, make certain: that they are well oriented and familiar with the activity plan, that they have proven leadership ability, that they seem comfortable with younger children and ready to discipline when necessary, that they are comfortable with the Jewish/Hebrew vocabulary that they will teach.

VOLUNTEERS OR STAFF AS LEADERS

This is a program about *Tikun Olam* and one of its objectives is to encourage students and their families to become involved, as volunteers, in some aspect of *tikun olam*. Volunteers are excellent role models for this. However, it is also important that station leaders be effective in their ability to relate to the students without too much lecturing and that leaders be able to integrate the Jewish perspective into the presentation and activity. You may be more comfortable assigning some of your religious school faculty or professional youth staff to serve as leaders of certain stations, if you are unable to find qualified volunteers.

FOCUS ON JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS ONLY

The Fair of Repair stresses Jewish concepts and their execution in Jewish communal activities. One of the objectives of the Fair of Repair is to introduce students to the work of Jewish organizations. There are secular organizations whose work exemplifies these Jewish values as well. Members of your synagogue may be active in these organizations. You will need to decide whether you want to broaden the scope to include secular organizations.

HANDOUTS, PRIZES, AND GIVE AWAYS

It is important to have something for students to take away from each station. If they will be playing a game, have prizes for winners and prizes for all participants. Balloons, magnets, folders, pencils with organizational names or tzedakah vocabulary are some suggestions.

USE OF HEBREW TERMINOLOGY

The Jewish values that are part of the Fair of Repair are called by their Hebrew names throughout this guide. The Hebrew terms are important vocabulary with which students should become comfortable. The Hebrew terms suggest much more than their English translations can and these vocabulary words help unite Jews across the world and throughout the ages. Station leaders (and students) must be encouraged to use these values terms as much as possible. If your students cannot read Hebrew, give them the terms in transliteration. An example: When students know the term, *bal tashchit*, they understand that a Jewish view of the environment starts with the idea that no natural resources should be wasted or used wantonly and that we have an obligation to protect nature but not to worship it. This term makes us think about biblical and rabbinic laws.

Admittedly, the Jewish value term cannot take on its full meaning at the moment it is first learned; it will need to be built upon throughout the students education. The term *bal tashchit* has many more layers of meaning than its English equivalent: caring for the environment.

FAIR OF REPAIR AS A FAMILY PROGRAM

Most of the activities included in this plan can be easily adapted as a family education program. Advantages: students will need support of their parents to become involved in any type of *tikun olam* work; parents and students together learn about important Jewish values and about the organizations that put these values to work; there will be more motivation for parents and students to continue learning about these ideas after the event. Disadvantages: Including parents means that there will be more participants and increases some of the logistical requirements for the program; when program is targeted to one grade level, the program can become part of the curriculum and repeated each year.

USE OF FAMILY TZEDAKAH SHEETS AS FOLLOW UP

The Fair of Repair can only introduce these important Jewish values to the students. The Family Tzedakah work sheets are designed to encourage the learning to continue at home, with parents and students learning more together. It can be a good way to involve parents, especially if you decide not to make the Fair a family education event. Certificates can be awarded to families that complete the study. (Contact Ina Lerman at the BJE, 301-984-4455 to get certificates for your families. You will need a calligrapher to fill in the family names.) These worksheets should be completed at home (never in school) and should not be graded. Teachers should review the responses and make comments or suggestions for further learning.

IF YOU CREATE SOME NEW STATIONS, SHARE IDEAS WITH BJE

Contact Ina Lerman, Director of Experiential Education.

TARGET PROGRAM TO ONE GRADE - INVOLVE OTHER SCHOOLS

By targeting the program to a specific grade, the event can become part of the curriculum for that grade and repeated every year. If your school is small, consider inviting other schools (especially from other branches of Judaism) to participate with you. This helps teach the idea of *ahavat yisrael* - a value very important for *tikun olam*!

USE ACTIVITIES IN THE CLASSROOM INSTEAD OF SPECIAL EVENT

If a special event is not an appropriate alternative for your school, look at the activities presented here as the basis of a unit about Tikun Olam. Each activity can become a classroom lesson. Please contact Ina Lerman 301-984-4455, if you would like guidance selecting other *tikun olam* materials for your class.

CONGREGATIONAL PARTNERS

The Fair of Repair: Tikun Olam Festival can be an excellent way to involve the total congregation in an educational activity. Try to involve your congregation's Sisterhood, Brotherhood, youth groups, Social Action committee, Singles or Young Adult groups, etc. Almost every committee that is part of your congregation can be invited to make a contribution to the event.

ADJUNCT TO A MITZVAH DAY IN YOUR CONGREGATION

Many congregations hold "Mitzvah Day" programs, where members complete various community service projects in the community. The Fair of Repair can become an excellent introduction to such a program because it can provide a Jewish context for the community service.

VALUES EDUCATION VS COMMUNITY SERVICE

The primary goals of the Fair of Repair are to introduce the students to the ways they can make the world a better place, from a Jewish perspective. Most of the activities included in this guide are designed to teach students about a specific Jewish value.

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**FAIR OF REPAIR: TIKUN OLAM FESTIVAL
PLANNER'S MANUAL**

**RESOURCE #3
PLANNING TIME-LINE**

Set the date, find a place for the event and put together your committee. Now you are ready to start:

Two to Three Months Before...

1. Select the concepts you would like to include in the Fair of Repair. Pair each concept with an organization that puts that idea into action.
2. Choose an inter-active, age-appropriate activity for each selected concept. Refer to the Program Overview (Resource #1) and to the individual activity packets.
3. Contact volunteers from your synagogue or from community organizations to be the station leader for each concept/activity.
4. Contact youth group or other synagogue groups that might be able to assist at the event.
5. Decide upon: your target group, the schedule of the day (how long will each rotation be, will you have an opening or a closing), ties to congregational mitzvah day or other congregational groups. (Refer to Resource #2)
6. Give teachers a copy of the "Teacher's Guide" so that they can plan how to prepare their students.

Four to Six Weeks Before...

1. Send letter of confirmation to each station leader, volunteer, organizational representative that will be involved with the event. In writing, finalize: date, time, location, directions, activity (send lesson plan and copies of handouts or worksheets).

2. Finalize schedule of event. Arrange order of rotation and location of each station. Prepare schedules or "tickets" for each group, so that they will know where to go for each rotation.
3. Begin to recruit additional teen or adult volunteers to serve as assistants.
4. Arrange for publicity, invitations, flyers, etc - as appropriate.
5. Prepare list of supplies and set up requirements for each stations. If you are ordering any supplies or audio visual materials, plan to do this as early as possible.
6. Decide upon a special tzedakah campaign for that day. Examples: Ask each participant to bring housewares for New Americans to be distributed through the UJAF Resettlement Program. Hold a canned food or non-perishable Passover food drive. Collect old winter coats and boots in good condition. Decide upon a recipient of your items and convey any special requests of that group to your participants. How will you get collected items to the donee in time for the donations to be most useful? Will you encourage the entire school or congregation to participate; if so, how?

Three to Four Weeks Before...

1. Purchase supplies for all activities.
2. Duplicate all handouts, work sheets. Remember to include a "master list" of all participating organizations and volunteer opportunities.
3. Begin to collate a "welcome kit" or folder for each participant. Include: pencil, name tag, the master list of participating organizations, explanation of the parent / student worksheets, schedule of the day and a map, and any source materials you wish to give to all participants.
4. Follow up on program registration. Begin to divide participants into specific groups. If possible, notify participants of their group assignment. Also encourage participation in the tzedakah drive.
5. Make or confirm logistical arrangements to set up stations.
6. Arrange to train / orient teen leaders.
7. In-class preparation of students for the event begins.

One to Two Weeks Before...

1. Telephone every volunteer, organizational representative, station leader to confirm their participation and answer any questions they may have about their activity or about the program in general.
2. Finish collating "welcome kits," purchasing supplies, and duplicating handouts.
3. Finalize registration and group assignments. Continue publicity, if necessary.
4. Create signs: station concepts, organizations, room numbers, direction arrows, welcome signs for entrance, group signs, etc.
5. Make name tags for your leaders and volunteers. Prepare rotation schedules for leaders, so they know which groups to expect when.
6. Write your opening or closing remarks (see Activity #15).
7. Box supplies and handouts according to the station where they will be needed.
8. Finish in-class student preparation.

Day of the Fair of Repair: Tikun Olam Festival...

1. Arrive early to check set up of each station and area of building to be used for program. Post all signs in appropriate places. Test all AV equipment ahead of time. Review set up, make sure: you have trash cans where you need them, there are enough tables and chairs where you need them, all program supplies are in place, lights and heat / a.c. are turned on, bathrooms are open, there is a place for the tzedakah collection items near the entrance, etc.
2. Ask all leaders and volunteers to arrive 30 - 60 minutes prior to the event, depending upon whether they need to set up their stations or whether you plan to meet them for an orientation.
3. Make sure you have plan for:
 - * Arrival of participants (parking lot issues, signs of welcome, coat room, etc)
 - * Efficient way to divide participants into groups of 20 - 24.
 - * Distribution of "welcome kits" to each participant, including pencil & kippah.
 - * Collection of tzedakah items.
 - * Start of program.
 - * End of program and dismissal.
 - * Public thanks to volunteers and other participants in event.

4. How will you encourage families to complete further study about tikun olam, using the parent / student worksheets?

One Week After...

1. Send written letter of thanks to all volunteers. Arrange to pay any staff.
2. Deliver tzedakah items.
3. Write down any suggestions or evaluation comments. Keep records of everything!

Two Weeks to One Month After...

1. Continue to encourage families to complete further study. Arrange to recognize those families that do - an award ceremony or a listing in the synagogue newsletter.
2. Write an article about the event for your school or congregational newsletter.
3. Contact Ina Lerman at the BJE if you would like to order "award" certificates.
4. Organize all correspondence, telephone lists, supply lists, set up sheets, invoices, etc. so that you will have the record for the future.

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FAIR OF REPAIR: TIKUN OLAM FESTIVAL
INTRODUCTION TO STUDENT / CLASS PREPARATION

Even as you prepare for the event itself, it is important that students be adequately prepared for the Fair Of Repair: Tikun Olam Festival. The concepts of *tikun olam*, *tzedakah*, and *gemilus chasadim* are Jewish giants. They cannot be conveyed at a single, special event or during a single unit of study. The Fair of Repair, however, can be a good catalyst to integrate these concepts into your year-long curriculum and to reach the families of your students.

Review the enclosed "TEACHERS GUIDE".

A sample Teachers Guide is included. You may copy it or adapt it to your specific needs. Distribute the guide to teachers of participating classes about six weeks before the event.

Encourage teachers to implement the suggested lessons about three weeks before the event. It is important that students have time to think about the meaning of *tikun olam* before they participate in the special event. Adequate classroom preparation is as important to the success of the Fair of Repair as the activities at the event itself.

Teachers are asked to complete four tasks with their students:

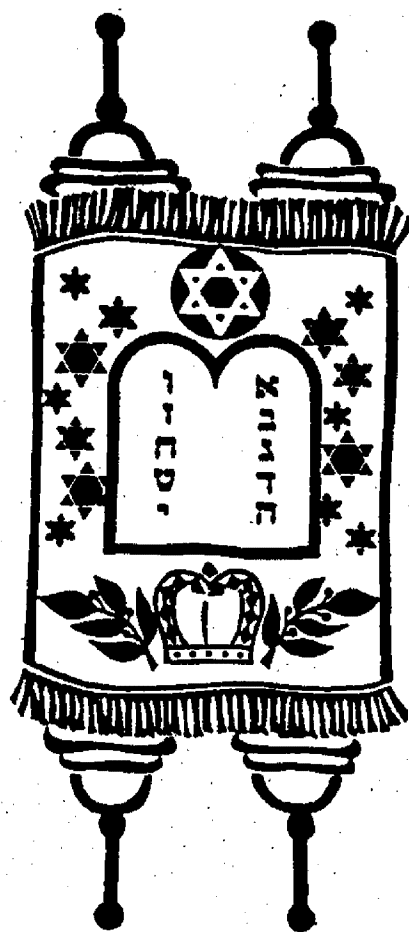
- * Review Rambam's "8 levels of giving" presented in the *Mishneh Torah*.
- * Explore the meaning of the event title and develop a definition of *tikun olam*.
- * Encourage and organize students' participation in a special *tzedakah* collection.
- * There are also various administrative responsibilities (distributing invitations/publicity, name tags, group assignments, recruiting chaperons, etc.).

You will need to customize the Teachers Guide in the following ways:

- * Add event date, time, location, coordinator's name and telephone numbers.
- * Provide teacher with information about the *tzedakah* collection project: guidelines & suggestions on what to collect; information about where the items will be used; letter to parents explaining *tzedakah* project as part of Fair of Repair. A model is included.
- * Devise a winter storm contingency plan and inform teachers and parents.
- * Explain how you plan to encourage and recognize family participation in the *tikun olam* family study project. Make sure your teachers have a master set of the worksheets.

Appendix II

SHA'AREI KEHILAH
שַׁעְרֵי קְהִילָה
GATES OF COMMUNITY
B'NAI MITZVAH
PROGRAM



K. K. BNAI YESHURUN /
ISAAC M. WISE TEMPLE

Welcome to the Isaac M. Wise Temple's B'nai Mitzvah Program - קהילה
שערי (Sha'arei K'hilah - Gates of Community). As you prepare for your
Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, it is important that you begin to participate in all the
different activities which are so much a part of being Jewish and leading a good
and meaningful life. These are the joyful obligations for every Jew that makes
being Jewish so relevant to the way we live. Now as you prepare to take your
place as a responsible Jew, this entire Mitzvot program will allow you to
experience their power. Here is what you should do:

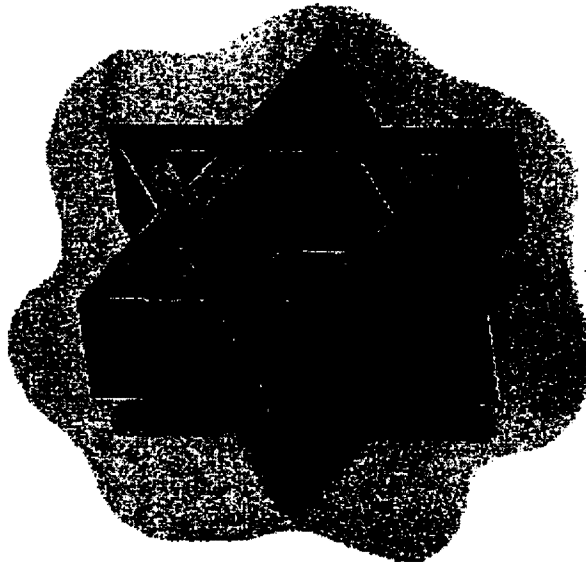
STEP ONE: Sit down with your parent(s) and read through this booklet together.
You will notice that the booklet is divided into two (2) sections. The first section
(yellow color pages) contains four required mitzvot selected from those on the
previous page. It includes a journal to describe your response to these mitzvot.
The second section (blue color pages) contains all ten categories of mitzvot that
you see listed on the previous page. this about them, select one activity from
each category and begin working to complete them between now and two
months before your Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. These mitzvot are relevant to the
ways in which one is part of a family, the way in which one is a friend, a student,
a citizen and simply a good human being. These are mitzvot that we do all the
time, but in becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, we see these acts are part of our
Jewish life, which is our everyday life. These little deeds are part of our
Covenant, our personal relationship with ourselves, our community and our God.

STEP TWO: As you perform each mitzvah, keep a record of what you did and
how you felt about it. Complete each page of both journal sections – the
required mitzvah activities and the personal choice activities of mitzvot from
which you will choose one activity per category.

STEP THREE: Bring your completed Sha'arei Kehilah to your first meeting with
the Rabbis or the Cantor (approximately ten weeks before your service) for
review. The rabbis, Cantor, and Educator are interested in what you did and will
read your Sha'arei Kehilah to learn how you responded to the experience of each
of these mitzvot – our obligations and our joyful responsibilities as Jews.

That's all there is to it. Of course, you are welcome to do more than the minimum
one activity for each of the ten mitzvot, depending on your interest. You must,
however, complete at least one activity for each of the ten mitzvot. If you have
any questions, just ask. Your parent(s), your tutor, your teachers, the Educator,
Cantor, and your Rabbis are all here to help you. Mazel Tov as you prepare for
such a special experience and a wonderful moment in your life – not only for the
Bar/Bat Mitzvah service itself, but the many moments of discovery and insight –
the kind of moments of which great Jewish memories are made!

SECTION 1



REQUIRED MITZVOT ACTIVITIES

All of these activities are required

REQUIRED MITZVOT

1. To Attend the House of Study Regularly

Fulfill your religious studies requirements which include:

- a. Attend Religious School.
- b. Attend Hebrew School for three (3) consecutive years - or the equivalent.
- c. Attend the B'nai Mitzvah Class.
- d. Attend individual B'nai Mitzvah tutoring beginning six months before your service, and individual study with the Rabbis and Cantor for two and one half months before becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

2. To Pray With Sincerity

Attend three (3) Shabbat services with a parent(s) and/or your whole family, paying careful attention to the prayers and their meaning, so that you can lead them with sincerity and better understanding. Discuss some of the ideas and themes in the prayer book with your parent(s) following each service.

3. To Perform Acts of Love and Kindness

Choose to extend yourself to the needs of others by:

- a. Contributing money to the charity of your choice. In Judaism this is one of the acts known as tzedakah. If you receive money as Bar/Bat presents you may want to contribute a certain percentage to tzedakah. Decide on the percentage or you may decide to choose to use some amount of your own money. Then decide which cause(s) and organization(s) mean the most to you.

or

- b. Contribute money to MAZON. This Jewish organization is a response to hunger. MAZON takes contributions for happy occasions and honors the celebration by distributing tzedakah to organizations involved with hunger in America and throughout the world. MAZON suggests that families donate at least 3% of the cost of the celebration as their Jewish responsibility to tzedakah.

4. Study of Judaism

The most important mitzvah is the study of Judaism, because our study leads us to do the mitzvot. Studying can help you grow to become a "mensch", a person of goodness. Therefore, make a personal commitment to continue your religious education at least through Confirmation (conclusion of the tenth grade) but preferably through high school graduation.

ATTENDING THE HOUSE OF STUDY REGULARLY

השקמת בית המדרש שחרית וערבית

The first of your required mitzvot deals with Attending the House of Study Regularly.

Fulfill your religious studies requirements which include:

- a. Attend Religious School.
- b. Attend Hebrew School for three (3) consecutive years - or the equivalent.
- c. Attend the B'nai Mitzvah Class.
- d. Attend individual B'nai Mitzvah tutoring beginning six months before your service, and individual study with the Rabbis and Cantor for two and a half months before becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

a. **RELIGIOUS SCHOOL:**

What is the most important thing that you have learned so far in Religious School?

In what ways do you apply that learning to your life?

b. **HEBREW STUDIES (3 years):**

What does the Hebrew language do for the Jewish people?

c. **B'NAI MITZVAH CLASS:**

Why is it important for Jews to participate in their Jewish community?

d. **STUDYING WITH YOUR TUTOR:**

What has this process taught you about yourself and the Jewish value of learning?

PRAYING WITH SINCERITY

עיון תפילה

The second of your required mitzvot deals with Praying with Sincerity. Attend three (3) Shabbat services with a parent(s) and/or your whole family, paying careful attention to the prayers and their meaning, so that you can lead them with sincerity and better understanding. Discuss some of the ideas you realized are in the prayer book with your parent(s) following each service.

Please attach your completed service attendance card on this page.

What did you expect to feel before you came to services?

How did you feel after services and what did you learn about yourself in services?

Discuss one idea that you found in the prayer book that you had not seen there before, as a result of your careful listening and full participation in the service.

Why do you think prayer is important to the Jewish people?

Describe a time when you prayed. For what reason did you pray?

THE STUDY OF JUDAISM

תלמוד תורה פנגד פלם

The fourth of your required mitzvot deals with the Study of Judaism which is the most important mitzvah, because our study leads us to do the mitzvot. Studying can help you grow to become a "mensch", a person of goodness. Therefore, today you make a personal commitment to continue your religious education at least through Confirmation (conclusion of the tenth grade) but preferably through high school graduation.

Every B'nai Mitzvah student makes a personal commitment to continue their religious education after B'nai Mitzvah through the completion of Confirmation. What, do you believe, is the reason for this policy both from your perspective as an individual student and from the perspective of the Jewish community?

What part of Judaism and yourself do you still want to learn about?

How will the decision to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah and to complete Confirmation affect you and others?

Which aspect of Judaism do you feel proud enough to teach to someone else?

PERFORMING ACTS OF LOVE AND KINDNESS

גְּמִילוּת חֶסֶדִים

Choose to extend yourself to the needs of others by:

a. Contributing money to the charity of your choice. In Judaism this is one of the acts known as tzedakah. If you receive money as Bar/Bat presents you may want to contribute a certain percentage to tzedakah. Decide on the percentage or you may decide to choose to use some amount of your own money. Then decide which cause(s) and organization(s) mean the most to you.

or

b. Contribute money to MAZON. This Jewish organization is a response to hunger. MAZON takes contributions for happy occasions and honors the celebration by distributing tzedakah to organizations involved with hunger in America and throughout the world. MAZON suggests that families donate at least 3% of the cost of the celebration as their Jewish responsibility to tzedakah.

In what activity did you participate for your act of tzedakah, or your personal deed of love and kindness?

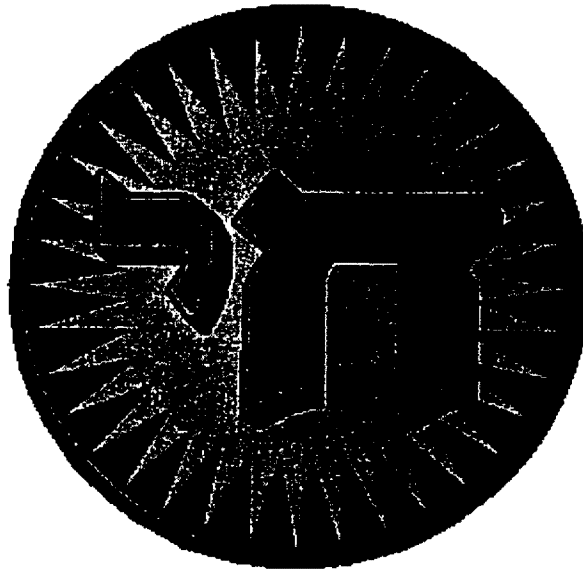
Describe how you chose to perform this mitzvah; what lead to your decision to choose this cause?

What was your reaction to performing this mitzvah; how did it make you feel?

How did others react to you as you performed this mitzvah?

Describe ways in which you will follow-up or continue your act of love and kindness.

SECTION 2



PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVOT ACTIVITIES

**Select at least one activity
from each category**

HONOR MOTHER AND FATHER

כְּבוֹד אָב וְאִם

Honoring Father and Mother is not only among the Ten Commandments, it is an essential Jewish value. In fact, Judaism has always emphasized the importance of family. The home and the family is known as the "mikdash me-at," a miniature sanctuary to give us strength, love, understanding, and a sense of purpose in life. For that reason, working toward wholeness in the circle of family is not only a nice thing, it is a Jewish responsibility. Activities to consider for this mitzvah:

Suggestions:

- Ask your parent(s) to teach you something about Judaism that you do not know.
- Do something that you would not ordinarily do to be helpful to a member of your family.
- Twice each month, call, write or visit with a grandparent whom you do not ordinarily see.
- Help your mother or father in doing a large household chore.
- Create a family history or genealogy.
- Bring flowers to your parents and give them a note telling them why you are grateful they are your parents.
- Create a prayer about your mother and father that you can say at the Shabbat table.
- Ask your parent(s) to teach you something you do not know about your family.
- Go through family album or video with your parent(s) and have them share stories about the people you do not know.

Student's suggestion:

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH #1

MITZVAH: TO HONOR MOTHER AND FATHER...

כבוד אב ואם.

ACTIVITY: _____

1. What made you choose this mitzvah? _____

2. What was your reaction and the reaction of others as you performed this mitzvah?

3. What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this mitzvah?

4. In time, when you perform another mitzvah on this list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments: _____

PERFORMING ACTS OF LOVE AND KINDNESS

גְּמִילוּת חֶסֶדִים

This Mitzvah is about caring for others beyond the circles of ourselves, our friends, and our family. It is about our caring involvement in the world of which we are a part. Often these deeds of love and kindness are things for which we cannot be "repaid". And yet, we find that we may get even more out of what we do for others than they get by our deed, because of the "reward that is without measure." This is that sense of fulfillment and of goodness that we feel for giving something of ourselves to others beyond our own narrow circles.

Suggestions:

- Visit a retirement home.
- Do something special that you would not ordinarily do for someone you love.
- Break one bad habit that has a negative effect on others.
- Volunteer at the Soup Kitchen or the Interfaith Hospitality Network (Homeless shelter).
- Volunteer your time at a social service agency.
- Ask your Bar or Bat Mitzvah guests to bring canned goods to the service, which you and your family will deliver to a local hunger shelter.
- Donate your centerpieces to a senior citizen's home.
- Clean out your drawers and closets and donate the old clothing.
- Support a local recycling project by taking at least one month's of your family's glass bottles or cans to an appropriate drop off center.
- Go with your parents to volunteer at the Free Store for a few hours.
- Ask the rabbis for the name of one elderly person that you can visit and spend time with periodically.
- Instead of flower centerpieces, create centerpieces out of Jewish books which will be donated to our Temple library. Ask our Librarian for book suggestions.
- Give the leftovers from a restaurant to a homeless person.
- Do something special that you would not ordinarily do for someone you do not necessarily like.
- Organize your family or friends to bring Chanukah and/or Purim gifts for those less fortunate.

Student's Suggestions: _____

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH #2

MITZVAH: PERFORM ACTS OF LOVE AND KINDNESS.....גמילות חסדים

ACTIVITY: _____

1. What made you choose this mitzvah? _____

2. What was your reaction and the reaction of others as you performed this mitzvah?

3. What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this mitzvah?

4. In time, when you perform another mitzvah on this list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments: _____

ATTEND THE HOUSE OF STUDY REGULARLY

שְׂכֵמַת בֵּית הַמִּדְרָשׁ שְׁחֵרִית וְעֶרְבִית

This Mitzvah is about the many reasons we come to the synagogue to nourish our Jewish lives beyond those that you might already understand such as prayer and religious school. The synagogue has three essential purposes: it is a "House of Study," a "House of Prayer," and a "House of Assembly or Community." Participation in all three of these areas of synagogue life is what enriches us as Jews: intellectually (study), spiritually (prayer), and emotionally (friendship and community). Activities to consider for this mitzvah can relate to any purpose for which you may not usually come to Wise Temple, so that you might come to have a better understanding of the synagogue as the center of your Jewish life now and through your adult years, as well.

Suggestions:

- Come to a holiday service you have never attended (Sukkot, Passover, Shavuot, S'lichot, etc.).
- Fast for a full day on Yom Kippur.
- Volunteer two hours of service to the Temple. Ask the rabbis for suggestions.
- Participate in two Wise-U.P. events.
- Participate in three "Wise Guys" activities.
- Volunteer to help at a WISETYKES service for young children.
- Come to at least two Saturday morning Torah Study discussions.
- Come to two Outreach Programs.
- Come to a R'fu-at Ha-nefesh Service; Service of Healing and Strength of the Soul.
- Volunteer at the Soup Kitchen or the Interfaith Hospitality Network (homeless shelter).

Student's suggestion:

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH #3

MITZVAH: ATTEND HOUSE OF STUDY REGULARLY..... וערבית
השקמת בית המדרש שחרית

ACTIVITY: _____

1. What made you choose this mitzvah? _____

2. What was your reaction and the reaction of others as you performed this mitzvah?

3. What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this mitzvah?

4. In time, when you perform another mitzvah on this list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments: _____

WELCOME THE STRANGER

הַכִּנְסֵת אֲוֶרְחִים

This Mitzvah is about our hospitality and the way we welcome others. The Torah teaches that all human beings are created in the image of God. Therefore, we show respect to God through this religious responsibility of welcoming even those whom we may not know. Abraham was a model for this in his hospitality to the strangers he greeted at his tent. And as Jews have often been considered "the strangers" in different lands and ages throughout history, we know what it means to feel the loneliness of exclusion by others. Our tradition teaches: "Remember, you were strangers in the land of Egypt." For that reason, Jews should be welcoming, warm, and hospitable to individuals in our homes and in our synagogue. We should help other groups of people who feel like outsiders in this land or in any land. That is why Jews have always been involved in the causes of securing rights for others, as well as for ourselves.

Suggestions:

- Invite others to a Shabbat dinner in your home.
- Contribute time or money to a Jewish Family Service Resettlement Program.
- Make a special effort for three days to be friendly to a new student in your class at school or religious school, showing him/her around, introducing him/her to friends, etc.
- Work with the "Wise Guys" to plan a program for new members.
- Help Sisterhood members create welcome baskets for new Temple members.
- Join with a friend to create a welcome present/greeting for new students to the religious school.
- Invite a college student to your home for a Shabbat or holiday dinner. Contact the Rabbis' office for names.
- Invite a new Temple member, or someone new to Cincinnati to join you and your family for a Shabbat/holiday meal and services. Contact the Rabbi's office for names.
- Invite a person or family who have no place to go for a Passover Seder to join your family for Seder.

Student's suggestion: _____

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH #4

MITZVAH: WELCOME THE STRANGER.....הַקְנֵסֶת אֲוֶרְחִים

ACTIVITY: _____

1. What made you choose this mitzvah? _____

2. What was your reaction and the reaction of others as you performed this mitzvah?

3. What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this mitzvah?

4. In time, when you perform another mitzvah on this list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments: _____

VISIT THE SICK

בְּקֻר חוֹלִים

This Mitzvah is about what we can do to help someone who is suffering an illness. Often such times are not only about the physical problems a patient experiences, but also the feelings of loneliness, isolation from friends, or worry about the future. Our ancient rabbis teach us that taking the time to visit those who are sick, telling them about the news of the world, of friends, of school, etc. is an important part of the healing and recovery process. It helps them feel connected to their world from which they feel separated. It reminds them of all the things they can look forward to when they are better, and therefore helps lift their spirits and actually speeds their return to health. "Bikur Cholim," visiting the sick, is more than doing a good deed, it is an essential recognition of how important it is to connect our lives to those of others around us.

Suggestions:

- Entertain at a hospital.
- Light Shabbat candles at a nursing home.
- Visit a nursing home or assisted living facility.
- Cook meals for someone who is ill.
- Clean house for someone who cannot do so for himself or herself.
- Help a classmate who is ill. Bring homework, library books, messages, etc., between home and school.
- Make cards or bring a game for a patient at Children's Hospital.
- Come to a R'fu-at Ha-nefesh Service with a friend who is recovering.
- Check a tape out of the Library of the R'fu-at Ha-nefesh Service and bring it to a friend or relative who is ill.
- Create a written prayer for someone who is ill, and go and visit them, as well as read the prayer you have made. You can also contact the rabbi's office and ask that their name be read that week for the prayer for recovery, the "MiShebeirach" that we offer each Friday evening.

Student's suggestion: _____

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH #5

MITZVAH: VISIT THE SICK.....בְּקוֹר חוֹלִים

ACTIVITY: _____

1. What made you choose this mitzvah? _____

2. What was your reaction and the reaction of others as you performed this mitzvah?

3. What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this mitzvah?

4. In time, when you perform another mitzvah on this list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments: _____

REJOICE WITH BRIDE AND GROOM

הַכְנָסַת פֶּלֶא

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah is about the importance of celebrating life's happiest moments. More than about weddings, it is about the responsibility of recognizing those special times in people's lives and giving thanks to God. Living with joy is a mitzvah, a holy expression of gratitude. In Judaism, we understand that life is not always easy, but it also comes with its deepest moments of joy, goodness, and wonder. It is our responsibility to embrace these moments as something sacred, and therefore to celebrate them with family, friends and community. In many ways, becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an expression of that religious obligation to mark the passage of time with celebration, to give thanks for the joy of living and of growth. Activities for this mitzvah should focus on ways that we can share someone's celebration.

Suggestions:

Ask your parent(s) to share the feeling they experienced at your Brit Milah or Baby Naming ceremony.

Write a paragraph on what you remember from Consecration.

Describe in a paragraph the greatest celebration you have ever experienced.

Write a letter of congratulations to a Temple couple who is soon to be married. (Check with rabbi's office for names.) Even if you don't know them, explain that your letter is written because of the mitzvah of rejoicing with the bride and groom.

Discuss with your parents or grandparents the kind of marriage ceremony that they had.

Look at a wedding album or video of a friend or family member. Ask the couple to talk about their memories and impressions of their special day.

Get a copy of the seven wedding blessings from your teacher or the Rabbis and read them carefully. Add an eighth blessing of your own. Attach it to this booklet.

Talk to a couple recently married and ask them to share with you the three most important promises they have made to each other. Write them below.

Interview an older sibling, relative or Jewish friend about their memories of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Ask them what they felt like with everybody they loved being present at the service to celebrate with them.

Parent's suggestion: _____

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH #6

MITZVAH: REJOICE WITH BRIDE AND GROOM.....הַכֵּנֶסֶת פֶּלֶה

ACTIVITY: _____

1. What made you choose this mitzvah? _____

2. What was your reaction and the reaction of others as you performed this mitzvah?

3. What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this mitzvah?

4. In time, when you perform another mitzvah on this list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments: _____

COMFORT THE MOURNER

לְנִיחַת הַמֵּית

This Mitzvah is about the religious responsibility to be with someone in their time of sadness. For it is often at times of loss that people feel most lonely, and the need is great for friends to show them the way back to the circles of life and living. In fact, mourning is all about learning to accept the loss of someone we love, and yet find the way to live again without them. Mourning is not something we do alone. Judaism teaches that we need people around us to help us find the path of life once again. It is difficult to know what to say or do when we are with someone who is mourning. But it is not what we say that really matters, but simply that we are there to listen, to hold a hand, to reassure them they are not alone. Activities for this mitzvah should focus on things you can do to help someone who has lost someone they love.

Suggestions:

- Attend a minyan service at a house of mourning.
- Help cook a meal for a family in mourning.
- Write a condolence note to someone your family knows who has recently lost a loved one. Discuss with your parents or with the rabbis, what one says in offering condolences.
- Make a contribution to the Temple in memory of someone you knew who is no longer living, as a meaningful way of expressing your condolences to the deceased's family.
- Ask your parent(s) if they have a ritual object passed down to your family. Ask your parent(s) to talk about the object and the person who passed it down.
- Ask your parent(s) to talk about the relative for whom you are named.
- Ask your parent(s) for your family's Yahrzeit dates and be sure to come to Temple on those days to honor those who have died and comfort those who are mourning or remembering.

Student's suggestion: _____

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH #7

MITZVAH: COMFORT THE MOURNER.....לְנִיחַת הַמֵּת

ACTIVITY: _____

1. What made you choose this mitzvah? _____

2. What was your reaction and the reaction of others as you performed this mitzvah?

3. What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this mitzvah?

4. In time, when you perform another mitzvah on this list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments: _____

PRAY WITH SINCERITY

עֵינִן תְּפִלָּה

This Mitzvah is about making prayer meaningful to us. Prayer is not only the words on the pages of the prayer book. It is about the ways in which we connect the deep feelings of our heart and our souls to the presence of God in our lives. Prayer can be words of thanksgiving and gratitude when we realize just how fortunate we are, even for the little things. Prayer can be an expression of our need for strength, when we realize that we need help, when we are unsure of ourselves. Prayer can be the realization that we need a new perspective, a change in the way we see things, or think about people. Prayer is the first step to growing beyond ourselves, and growing toward God. It is something we need regularly, even daily. But it begins with learning to feel the words we say in prayer, and to have those words come from meaning within the soul.

Suggestions:

- Write an essay on the meaning of your favorite prayer. Share it with the Rabbi during your study session.
- Practice communicating (talking) with God each day. End your five minute session with the Sh'ma.
- Make the saying of Brachot (blessings) at every meal at home a daily routine (for at least two weeks). For copies of the blessings, call the Rabbi's study.
- Help the Educator lead services at Hebrew school.
- Create a new melody for a favorite prayer.
- Create a new version of a prayer from a traditional prayer found in the prayer book.
- Create a prayer about something important to you.
- Translate a Hebrew prayer into English (be sure to ask for help if needed).
- Make a mezuzah for your house. Obtain a copy of the prayer for hanging a mezuzah, and make it a family ritual.

Student's suggestions: _____

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH #8

MITZVAH: PRAY WITH SINCERITY.....עיון תפילה

ACTIVITY: _____

1. What made you choose this mitzvah? _____

2. What was your reaction and the reaction of others as you performed this mitzvah?

3. What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this mitzvah?

4. In time, when you perform another mitzvah on this list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments: _____

MAKE PEACE WHERE THERE IS STRIFE

הַבָּאָת שְׁלוֹם בֵּין אָדָם לַחֲבֵירוֹ

This Mitzvah is about the larger meaning of peace, for peace is not merely the absence of war. Shalom, peace, comes from the word Shalem for wholeness or completeness. For us as Jews, it is our responsibility to make things more complete, whether that is in our family, among our friends, in our community, or in our world. We are never content with the way things are, because they are not yet complete. Jews are involved in many causes, because making peace, or wholeness, is a religious mandate for us all. Making peace is not something for leaders of countries, it is a task for every person who is part of a family, who is a friend, who is part of a community, and who understands his/her role in being a partner with God in completing the work of Creation, by doing what we can to make things better.

Suggestions:

- Help someone who is in trouble.
- Listen to a friend who is upset.
- For two days, work on only speaking well of others, avoiding gossip, and getting others to follow your example.
- Become friendly with someone whom you did not like before.
- Help two enemies to become friends.
- Defend someone who is being teased.
- Include someone in your "group" who is usually excluded.
- Become involved in an organization that helps others on a regular basis.
- Learn about peer mediation. Look into becoming a peer mediator at your school.
- Write a letter to the President and Prime Minister of Israel about why peace in Israel is important to you.

Student's suggestions: _____

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH #9

הַבָּאָה שְׁלוֹם בֵּין אָדָם לְחֵבֶר

MITZVAH: MAKE PEACE WHERE THERE IS STRIFE.....

ACTIVITY:

1. What made you choose this mitzvah? _____

2. What was your reaction and the reaction of others as you performed this mitzvah?

3. What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this mitzvah?

4. In time, when you perform another mitzvah on this list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments: _____

**AND THE STUDY OF JUDAISM IS EQUAL TO THE MITZVOT,
BECAUSE OUR STUDY LEADS US TO DO THE MITZVOT.**

תלמוד תורה כנגד כלם

This Mitzvah is about the deep Jewish value of learning. We are known as "the people of the Book" because of our devotion to Torah and to learning more and more. For us as Jews, learning never ends -- not with Bar/Bat Mitzvah, not with Confirmation, not with Graduation, not with any stage in adulthood. We are always learning from our heritage and gaining new understanding about meaningful, joyous, purposeful ways to live, to become better persons, to become better partners with God. Therefore, lifelong study and learning is essential to what we do. For in continuing to learn, we come to understand more about mitzvot, about how to live as Jews. Activities for this mitzvah should focus on helping yourself to understand that learning is not only about what happens in religious school, it is about the Jewish learning that we acquire in so many ways throughout all our lives.

Suggestions:

- For three weeks, make it daily practice to read Jewish books for at least fifteen minutes each day.
- In order to begin to develop your own Jewish library, add at least one Jewish book to your personal collection. Read it.
- Research a topic, relating to Judaism and write a brief report or make a cassette tape of what you have learned. The rabbis can offer suggestions and the librarian can help guide you.
- Learn one new way of observing every holiday during the year.
- Teach a non-Jewish friend about a Jewish holiday.
- Read a Jewish magazine.
- Visit three Jewish Web sites.

Student's suggestions: _____

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH #10

MITZVAH: AND THE STUDY OF JUDAISM... **וְתִלְמוּד תּוֹרָה כְּנֶגֶד כָּלֶם**
IS EQUAL TO THE MITZVOT, BECAUSE OUR STUDY LEADS US
TO DO THE MITZVOT.....

ACTIVITY: _____

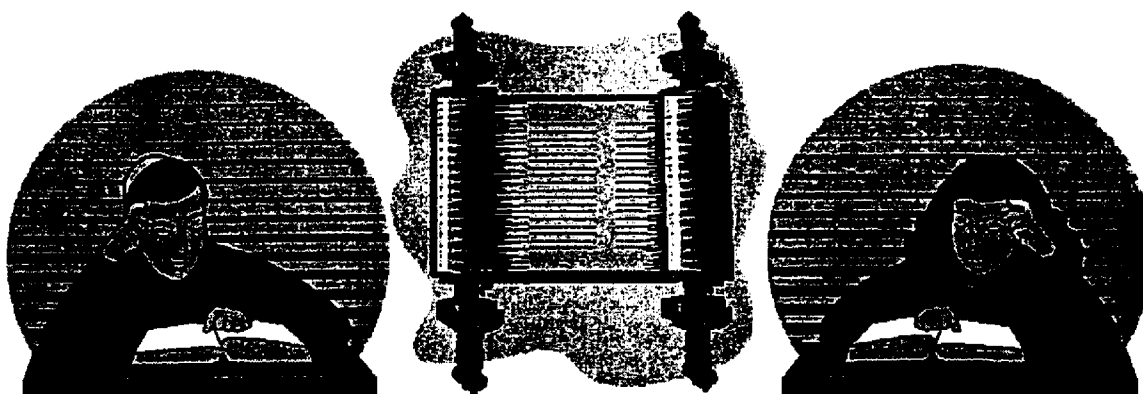
1. What made you choose this mitzvah? _____

2. What was your reaction and the reaction of others as you performed this mitzvah?

3. What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this mitzvah?

4. In time, when you perform another mitzvah on this list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments: _____



THE STUDY OF TORAH IS EQUAL TO THE
MITZVOT, BECAUSE OUR STUDY LEADS US TO
DO THE MITZVOT.

Sha'arei K'hilah / Gates of Community B'nai Mitzvah Program

Certificate of Completion

K.K. B'NAI YESHURUN/ ISAAC M. WISE TEMPLE

This certifies that _____ has successfully participated in the **Sha'arei K'hilah / Gates of Community B'nai Mitzvah Program** of K.K. B'nai Yeshurun / Isaac M. Wise Temple. The student has fulfilled this discovery of the joyful obligations of a Jew and will continue to study through the completion of Confirmation.

With congratulations and respect do we officially acknowledge this accomplishment.

Rabbi

Rabbi

Cantor



DATE _____

Conclusions

Conclusions

The primary purpose of this thesis was to create a model curriculum on the subject of *tzedakah* for use in Reform supplementary school. *Tzedakah* is an extremely vast and complex subject to discuss and to teach. My task as the writer of this thesis and curriculum was to take the best ideas and methods from the first four chapters and synthesize them into a curriculum that can be used by teachers and principals today. But while this thesis presents some answers—it has left me with even more questions.

The subject of *tzedakah* indeed has a multitude of facets—only a selection of these facets can be found in chapter one. After all, for almost two thousand years, Jewish scholars have been pondering its application and its place in Jewish life. While the value of *tzedakah* has virtually remained unchanged through this history, the practice of *tzedakah* has evolved greatly throughout our history both in time and place. As a result, the amount written on the topic fills hundreds of books, both ancient and modern. What began as a few verses from the Torah has grown significantly! Given more time, it would have been interesting to explore and compare the myriad of ways that communities around the world and throughout time have interpreted and adapted the values of *tzedakah* to real-life practice. This study could enlighten our own place in history as we deal with many of the same questions asked for centuries.

In contrast to our traditional sources, as I began to research the educational components of this thesis, I quickly found how little has been written on the instruction of *tzedakah*. While volumes exist on teaching Torah, Jewish history and Hebrew, comparably very little has been written on the instruction of Jewish values and ethics as a whole. Only recently, over the past few decades, have Jewish educators been especially

concerned with Jewish values education. Why is this the case? The answer to this question could fill another thesis. But I think it is safe to say that this has become a concern for educators only out of necessity. Many people have the attitude that our students must get this type of education from religious schools. They believe this is crucial because they are not getting this kind of education from anywhere else—not from the media, from home or from their secular schools. Is this a fair assessment? Do we really live in a society devoid of morals? If so, what are the ramifications of this with respect to the supplementary religious school?

I think the most fascinating aspect of this thesis process was examining the data from the survey. The principals who responded provided a great deal of insight into the programs in their schools and into the general educational philosophy toward *tzedakah* in Reform supplementary schools of today. It would have been useful, had time and money permitted, to survey students on the effectiveness of various schools' *tzedakah* programs. Much information could be gleaned from student survey conducted at various points during and after their formal religious school education. We could learn, for example, how well they grasped the concepts taught, whether they internalized the value of *tzedakah* or if they made the routine of *tzedakah* donation part of their lives. A similar survey could also be used to learn information from parents and teachers.

Finally, I would like to recommend three directions in *tzedakah* education that I hope to see develop in the near future. I firmly believe that these improvements would help strengthen the students' connection with the value of *tzedakah* while encouraging the habit of donating *tzedakah* in a meaningful way.

One of the most effective ways to deal with the complexities of *tzedakah* instruction is better teacher training and development. Teachers should be given the opportunity to explore the concept of *tzedakah* on a deeper level, beyond the simple collection of coins. Brainstorming ways to integrate *tzedakah* into their lessons will challenge the teachers to think of the topic in new ways. They will begin to see the infinite opportunities that exist to bring *tzedakah* into their class lessons. Teachers should also be encouraged to develop *tzedakah* programs unique to their community or to their congregation. When teachers are given individual ownership, their enthusiasm for and involvement in the program can only increase. In turn, this can serve as an excellent model for the students who will hopefully also share in that enthusiasm.

Another way to expand the *tzedakah* program and add more meaning is to engage in "parent development." In many of the same ways that teachers can be trained to think about *tzedakah* in different ways, parents too can become part of a similar process. We are all familiar with one of the central problems of supplementary schools: not enough instructional time. To help confront this critical issue, we can utilize parents to help the learning to continue at home. One of ways to do this is to give parents cues in the form of age-appropriate stories, discussion questions and project ideas. These materials are one step in trying to get the parents involved in learning. Another way to include parents is to invite them to workshops where they can discuss ways to integrate and continue *tzedakah* values and *tzedakah* behavior at home. Lastly, an easy way to engage parents is through consistent and informative communication. Perhaps the principal can revive the teaching tool used in the 1970's and before, the *tzedakah* newsletter. The newsletter can help coordinate participation by advertising current and future projects and by providing

information about organizations and past projects. Similarly, the newsletter can include the cues mentioned before for parents to continue the learning at home.

A third way to improve *tzedakah* instruction in a school is through creativity. According to the survey, schools overwhelmingly reported huge successes using special *tzedakah* programs. Programs such as these often generate more interest and enthusiasm than they everyday passing around of the *tzedakah* box. Programs with an informal style or that are large in scale have a greater ability to capture the attention of the students. The students' excitement can then be harnessed and used throughout the remainder of the school year and potentially beyond. Principals should invite ideas for programs from students, parents and teachers. They should look to other schools for new directions and methods of instruction.

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