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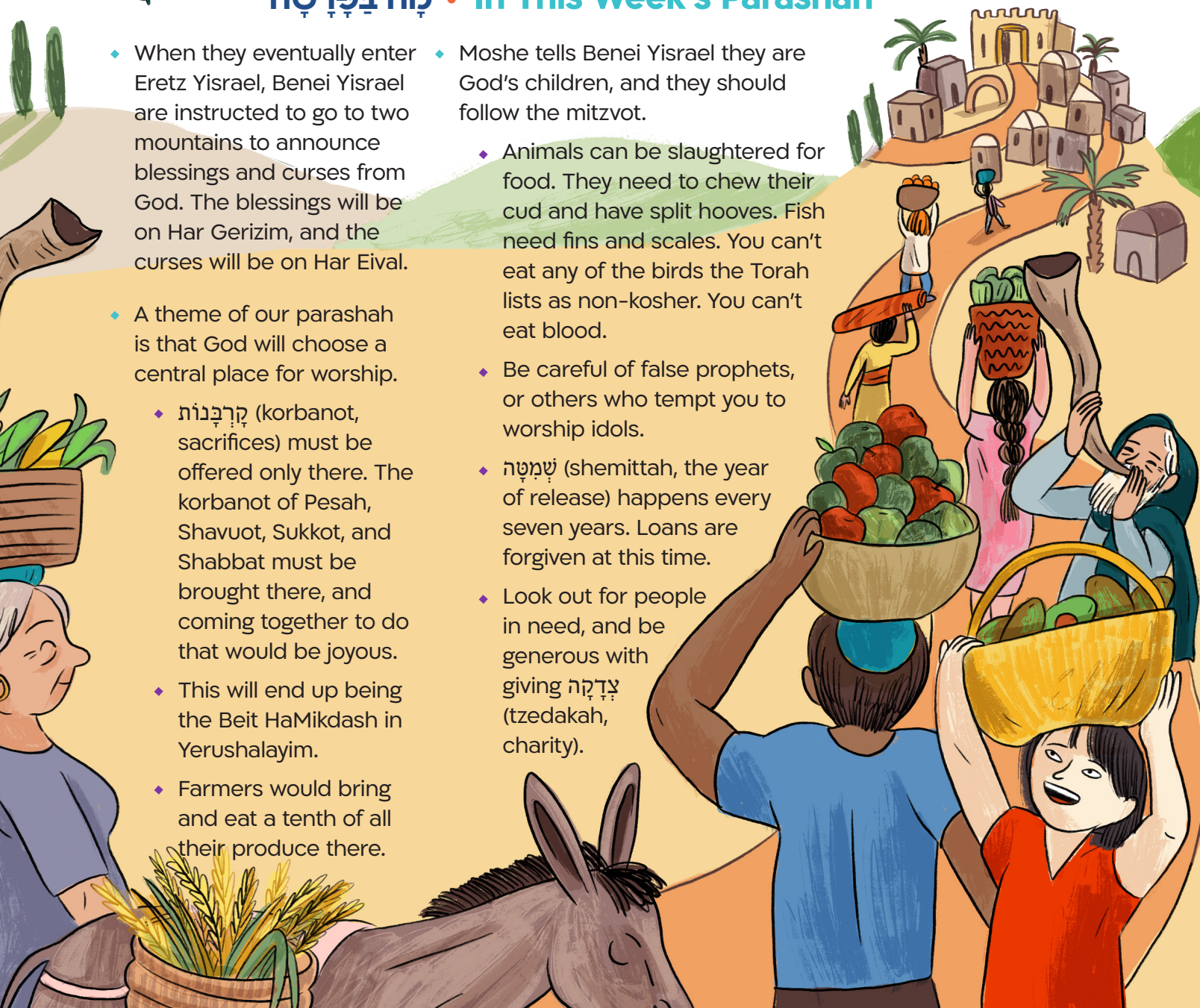
Because learning Torah is sweet




י"ט – כ"ה אָב תשפ"ו August 2–8, 2026

## מָה בְּפָרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- When they eventually enter Eretz Yisrael, Benei Yisrael are instructed to go to two mountains to announce blessings and curses from God. The blessings will be on Har Gerizim, and the curses will be on Har Eival.
- A theme of our parashah is that God will choose a central place for worship.
  - קָרְבָּנוֹת (korbanot, sacrifices) must be offered only there. The korbanot of Pesah, Shavuot, Sukkot, and Shabbat must be brought there, and coming together to do that would be joyous.
  - This will end up being the Beit HaMikdash in Yerushalayim.
  - Farmers would bring and eat a tenth of all their produce there.
- Moshe tells Benei Yisrael they are God's children, and they should follow the mitzvot.
  - Animals can be slaughtered for food. They need to chew their cud and have split hooves. Fish need fins and scales. You can't eat any of the birds the Torah lists as non-kosher. You can't eat blood.
  - Be careful of false prophets, or others who tempt you to worship idols.
  - שְׁמִטָּה (shemittah, the year of release) happens every seven years. Loans are forgiven at this time.
  - Look out for people in need, and be generous with giving צְדָקָה (tzedakah, charity).



## פְּשַׁט הַפְּסוּקִים • Understanding the Verses

**Devarim 15:7-8**

If there is a needy person among you, one of your family,
in any of your settlements in the land that God your Lord is giving you,
do not harden your heart
and do not shut your hand
against your needy family member.

You must open your hand to them
and lend them enough for whatever they need.

**דברים טו:ז-ח**

כִּי יִהְיֶה בְךָ אֶבְיוֹן מֵאַחַד אַחֶיךָ
בְּאַחַד שְׁעָרֶיךָ בְּאַרְצְךָ אֲשֶׁר ה'
אֱלֹקֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ
לֹא תְאַמֵּץ אֶת לְבָבְךָ
וְלֹא תִקְפֹּץ אֶת יָדְךָ
מֵאָחִיךָ הָאֶבְיוֹן:

כִּי פָתֹחַ תִּפְתַּח אֶת יָדְךָ לוֹ
וְהַעֲבֵט תַּעֲבִיטֶנּוּ דֵּי מַחְסֹרוֹ
אֲשֶׁר יֶחְסַר לוֹ:

- What do you notice and wonder about?
- What words or ideas are repeated? Why?
- Why do you think the Torah describes the needy person as being in your family? Is it only talking about helping people who are related to you?
- What could be the difference between hardening your heart and shutting your hand? Why might the Torah prohibit both of these actions? What are we supposed to learn from this?
- How much are you supposed to give to a person who is poor? What does "enough for whatever they need" mean?





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## הֲלָכָה • Halakhah

Learn one way the parashah practically impacts our lives

Hazal say tzedakah is so important that it's equal to all the mitzvot combined! (Bava Batra 9a)

A lot of our halakhot about tzedakah come from Parashat Re'eh. For example, from the first pasuk quoted on p. 2 (Devarim 15:7), we learn about how to prioritize our giving (Shulhan Arukh Yoreh Deah 251:3):

1

כִּי יִהְיֶה בְךָ אֶבְיוֹן – "If there is a needy person among you"

We first give tzedakah to people who are most in need.

2

מֵאַחַד אַחֶיךָ – "one of your family"

We give to relatives and close friends before others (if they are all in the same amount of need).

3

בְּאַחַד שְׁעָרֶיךָ – "in any of your settlements"

We support people in the community where we live before sending our tzedakah far away.

MY CITY

ANOTHER CITY

### Ways to give

Rambam (Matenot Aniyyim 10:8–11) teaches that there are eight levels of giving tzedakah. The best way is to give someone a job or teach them how to make a living on their own. That way, they no longer need to rely on

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tzedakah. The lowest level of giving is when your heart isn't in it and you give the least amount just in order to fulfill your obligation.

Rambam also emphasizes to be careful not to embarrass people who receive tzedakah. He thinks it's best for the person giving not to know who's receiving it, and for the person receiving not to know who's giving the tzedakah. That way, no one will feel embarrassed, or like they owe something back.

**How much?**

Based on ma'aser, the target is to give to tzedakah 10% of what we have. Rambam says a higher level is to give 20% (Matenot Aniyyim 4:5). This amount is considered the upper limit; we aren't allowed to give more than 20% of our property because then we might become poor (Shulhan Arukh Yoreh Deah 249:1).

However, some say that even after you've given 20% of your property away, if a person asks you for tzedakah, you should still give something. This is based on the words in the pesukim on p. 2 (Devarim 15:7): "do not harden your heart and do not shut your hand." This teaches us that if someone asks, you're never allowed to say "no" - you have to give at least something small (Rashba Shevuot 25a).

If you have $100 to give away, it is better to give it away all at once, or to give $10 to 10 people? The Rambam says: Better to give more times rather than all at once. This is because the more times we give, the more we teach ourselves to be giving people, and that shapes our personalities and behaviors in important ways.

Because giving tzedakah has such a powerful impact on the giver, the mitzvah to give tzedakah even applies to people who are poor, and who are themselves supported by tzedakah! (Bavli Gittin 7b, Shulhan Arukh Yoreh Deah 248:1)



## רֶגַע שֶׁל עִבְרִית • A Moment of Hebrew

**Devarim 13:11**

Stone them with rocks, for they **tried** to make you stray from God your Lord, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

**דברים יג:יא**

וּסְקַלְתּוֹ בָאֲבָנִים וָמֵת כִּי בִקֵּשׁ
לְהַדִּיחֲךָ מֵעַל ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ הַמּוֹצִיאֲךָ
מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים:

**לְבַקֵּשׁ (שֹׁרֶשׁ ב.ק.ש)**

- To request or ask
- To demand
- To seek

(levakesh)




מְבֻקָּשׁ =
Wanted
(mevukash)

בְּבַקָּשָׁה =
Please
(bevakashah)

בִּקּוּשׁ =
Demand (how much people want something) (bikush)

## *Find the Word!*

When Yosef is sent to find his brothers, he encounters a man who asks what Yosef is seeking. Both the question and Yosef's response use this שֹׁרֶשׁ (shoresh, root). Can you find them both? (Hint: Look at Bereishit 37.)

**aliyot:**
**1)** Devarim 11:26 to 12:10
**2)** 12:11 to 12:28
**3)** 12:29 to 13:19
**4)** 14:1 to 14:21
**5)** 14:22 to 14:29
**6)** 15:1 to 15:18
**7)** 15:19 to 16:17

**haftarah:** Yeshayahu 54:11 to 55:5

# שְׁאֵלוֹת הַשָּׁבוּעַ • Parashah Scavenger Hunt

The answers to the first seven questions can be found in the matching numbered aliyah in the Torah reading. The answers to questions 8 and 9 are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah. The answer to question 10 is in this week's haftarah.

Good luck!



1. What should Benei Yisrael destroy?
2. When are we supposed to be happy, according to this aliyah?
3. Which family members might try to tempt a person into worshiping idols?
4. Why isn't a pig kosher?



5. Check out all the different kinds of מַעֲשֵׂר (ma'aser, tithing) that are listed on p. 10–11. Which two kinds of ma'aser appear in this aliyah?
6. When might a person not want to lend money?
7. What is another name for matzah?
8. Will there always be people who are poor? What two answers to this question appear in our parashah?
9. How many times does the warning not to eat blood appear in Parashat Re'eh?
10. **From the haftarah:** What three drinks are mentioned in this haftarah?

* Look for the answers on page 11!

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## פֵּרוּשִׁים • Commentary

Our parashah contains laws about how to eat meat in a kosher way. It includes this warning:

**Devarim 12:16**

But the blood you should not eat. On the ground you shall pour it out like water.

**דברים יב:טז**

רַק הַדָּם לֹא תֹאכֵלוּ עַל הָאָרֶץ תִּשְׁפְּכֶנּוּ כַּמָּיִם׃

**What does it mean to pour out blood like you pour out water?**

R. Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg gives us two answers, one wrong and one right:

**Ha-Ketav Ve-Ha-Kabbalah (Germany, 200 years ago)**

You should not think of this pouring out as pouring out something gross, that a person wouldn't want to eat. Rather, you should think of it as water, clear and pure, that is life for the world.

**הכתב והקבלה**

לֹא תִּהְיֶה שְׁפִיכָה זוֹ בְּעֵינֶיךָ כְּשׁוֹפֵךְ דָּבָר נִמְאָס וְשֶׁאֵין חֵפֶץ לְאָדָם בַּאֲכִילָתָם, אֶלָּא יִהְיֶה בְּעֵינֶיךָ כְּמַיִם זַכִּים וּטְהוֹרִים שֶׁהֵם חַיִּים לְעוֹלָם.

It might be tempting to make sense of a mitzvah by imagining that it's something you would do anyhow. For instance, you might say something like: "Of course I would never eat non-kosher food—because that stuff is gross!"

R. Mecklenburg suggests that we shouldn't say or imagine those things. In fact, lots of people think some non-kosher food is delicious. So why don't we eat it then? Not because it's gross, but because God said so.



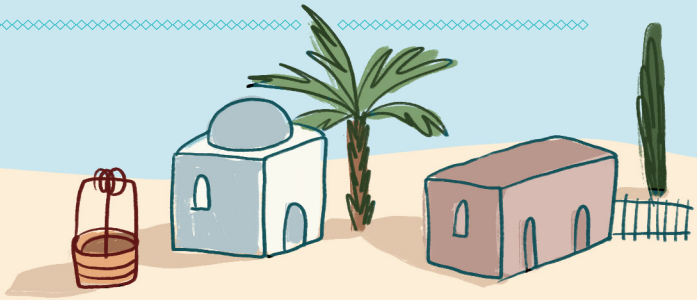


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- **Consider the rejected interpretation:** If it's not because blood is gross, why might the Torah tell us to throw out the blood? Could there be another reason? Does there have to be?
- **Consider the preferred interpretation:** What can we learn from comparing blood to water? How are we supposed to think about the blood of these animals? If you had pure, life-giving water and there was a mitzvah to pour it on the ground, would you do that in a way that shows disgust or in a way that shows respect and care? What does that teach us about the respect that should be shown to the blood?
- In what way is blood, like water, a source of life?
- How do you generally treat water? Are you careful with it like something pure and life-giving? If not, how can you?





## מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

The Torah describes how to treat people who are poor.

**Devarim 15:8**

You must open your hand to them
and lend them enough for their needs
whatever they need.

**דברים טו:ח**

כִּי פָתֹחַ תִּפְתַּח אֶת יָדְךָ לוֹ
וְהַעֲבֵט תַּעֲבִיטֶנּוּ דֵּי מַחְסֹרוֹ
אֲשֶׁר יֶחְסַר לוֹ׃



What does it mean that we're supposed to give both דֵּי מַחְסֹרוֹ (day mahsoro, enough for their needs) **and** אֲשֶׁר יֶחְסַר לוֹ (asher yeh'sar lo, whatever they need)? These two phrases seem to be saying the same thing!

Bzzzz
A lot of midrashim are **bugged** by something unusual in the Torah text



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**Talmud Bavli Ketubot 67b**

The Sages taught: The words "enough for their needs" teach that you are commanded to support a person, but you are not commanded to make them rich.

The words "whatever they need" expand this to include even a horse to ride on and a servant to run in front of them.

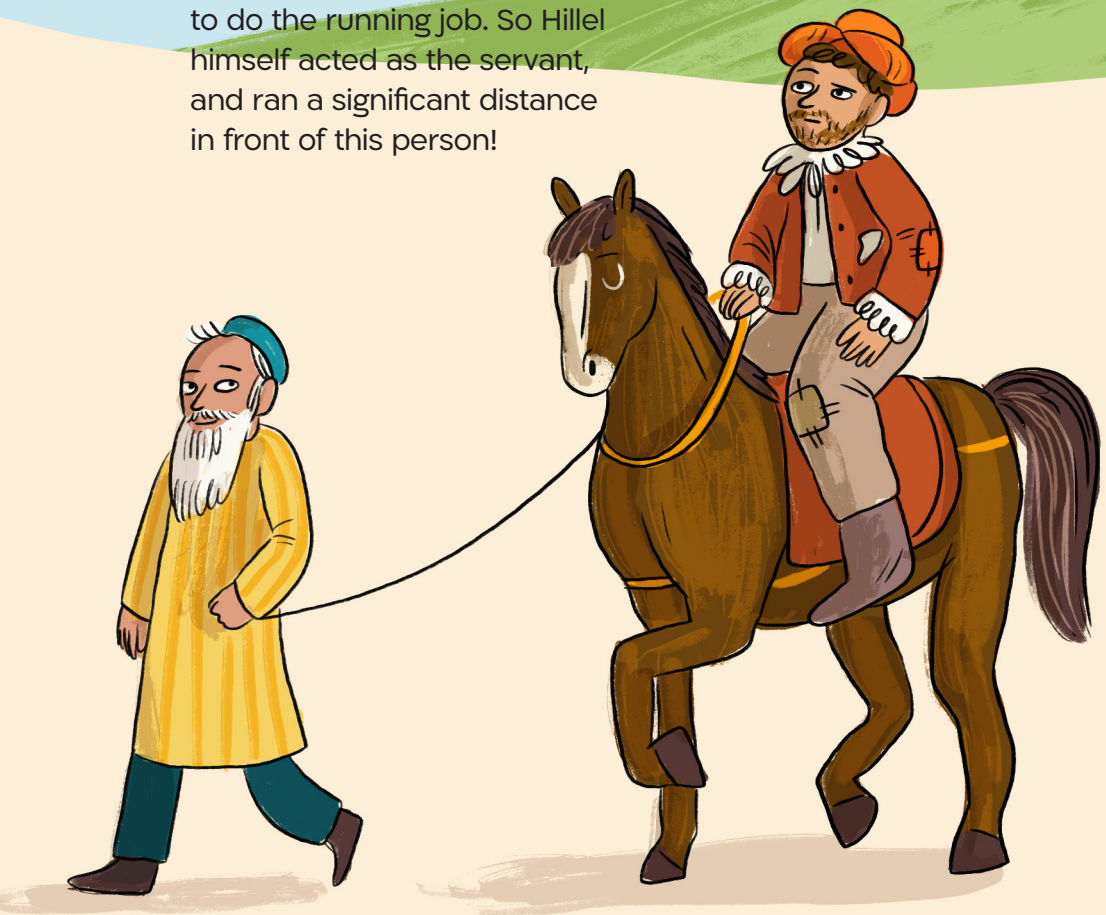
**תלמוד בבלי מסכת כתובות דף סז עמוד ב**

תָּנוּ רַבָּנַן: ״דֵּי מַחְסוֹרוֹ״ – אַתָּה מְצֻוֶּה עָלָיו לְפַרְנְסוֹ, וְאִי אַתָּה מְצֻוֶּה עָלָיו לְעַשְׁרוֹ. ״אֲשֶׁר יֶחְסַר לוֹ״ – אֲפִילּוּ סוּס לִרְכּוֹב עָלָיו וְעֶבֶד לָרוּץ לְפָנָיו.

The Sages explain that the language in our pasuk teaches something specific: Not all people's needs are the same. When we are giving to people who are poor we must focus on the dignity of the receiver, and give to them based on their personal situation.

In the continuation of this Gemara, there's a story about Hillel the Elder.

Hillel wanted to help a person who was poor, who had grown up in a wealthy family. So Hillel got a horse for this person to ride on, and hired a servant to run in front of this person. (This was a sign of respect for wealthy people.) Once, Hillel wasn't able to hire a servant to do the running job. So Hillel himself acted as the servant, and ran a significant distance in front of this person!



- Why do you think Hillel was willing to play the part of the servant? What can this teach us about protecting people from embarrassment?
- How far do you think we should go in order to ensure that someone who is poor can keep their dignity?

## דַּקָּה שֶׁל דִּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate

The Torah describes a situation where a very close relative or friend tries to convince you to worship other gods (13:7-10).

**Debate: It's hard to trust anyone these days.**

***How to play:***

Here are some arguments to get you started, but try to come up with your own. Then debate someone!

For a true one-minute debate, give each side 30 seconds to make its best case.





### *Agree!*

- Other people may not have your best interests at heart, like in our parashah when even family or friends might tell you to worship idols.
- You always have to be on the lookout for people (like trouble-making siblings) trying to trick you.
- It's too easy for people to get things wrong, so you can't just follow people blindly. You have to figure things out for yourself and make your own decisions.



### *Disagree!*

- Some friends are better than others. If you are thoughtful about who you choose for friends, then you can trust them.
- If you can't trust anyone, you'll be too lonely in life. Sometimes you have to have a little faith.
- Trust, but verify. That means you can take people's advice and also look into things for yourself. It's nice to consider other opinions and not make every decision all by yourself.



## בּוֹאוּ נְדַבֵּר עַל זֶה • Tell Me More About This!

**Ma'aser**

Our parashah talks about מַעֲשֵׂר (ma'aser, tithing), which refers to farmers giving away one tenth of their crops. The mitzvah of ma'aser appears a few times in the Torah, and each place refers to a different kind.

In the time of the Beit Ha-Mikdash, after harvesting their crops, farmers would separate about one fiftieth as תְּרוּמָה (terumah), and give that to כֹּהֲנִים (kohanim, priests). Then the farmer would be ready to give these different kinds of ma'aser:






## Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. Any place where idols were worshiped; altars, pillars, posts, and figures used for idolatry (12:2-3)
2. When bringing ma'aser (one tenth of your produce) to eat it in Yerushalayim. This kind of ma'aser is ma'aser sheni (12:18 and see below).
3. Brother, son, daughter, wife (13:7)
4. Even though it has split hooves, it does not chew its cud (14:8)
5. Ma'aser sheni (14:22-27) and ma'aser ani (14:28-29)
6. When שְׁמִטָּה (shemittah, the year of release), which happens every seven years, is approaching (15:9)
7. לֶחֶם עֹנִי (lehem oni, the bread of affliction) (16:3)
8. There will be a time when no people are poor (15:4); There will always be people who are poor (15:11)
9. Three times! (12:16, 12:23, 15:23)
10. Water, wine, and milk (Yeshayahu 55:1)

**1** **מַעֲשֵׂר רִאשׁוֹן (ma'aser rishon, first ma'aser)**

Farmers separate one tenth of their remaining crops, and give that to לְוִיִּם (levi'im) (Bemidbar 18:21-24).

**2** **מַעֲשֵׂר שֵׁנִי (ma'aser sheni, second ma'aser)**

Another tenth of the remaining crops was taken, and this tenth is called ma'aser sheni. This time it isn't given to anyone; the farmer takes it to Yerushalayim and eats it there. If they live far from Yerushalayim, they can sell their ma'aser sheni crops and take the money to Yerushalayim. They spend it there on food and drinks. Ma'aser sheni appears in our parashah (Devarim 14:22-26).

**3** **מַעֲשֵׂר עָנִי (ma'aser ani, ma'aser for the poor)**

In some years, ma'aser sheni is replaced with ma'aser ani. This goes to people in the community who are poor. It also appears in our parashah (Devarim 14:28).

The different kinds of ma'aser are organized on a seven-year cycle (Rambam Matenot Aniyyim 6:4):

| YEAR | MA'ASER RISHON | MA'ASER SHENI | MA'ASER ANI |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 2 | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 3 | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 4 | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 5 | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 6 | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 7 | שמטה (shemittah, the year of release): No one works the land; so there's no ma'aser | | |

## תְּפִלָּה • Prayer in the Parashah

We learn a lot about tzedakah from Parashat Re'eh, and that's why tzedakah is a big theme of this week's Devash. Did you know that tzedakah is also part of the way we pray?

Rambam (Matenot Aniyyim 10:15) and the Shulhan Arukh (Yoreh Deah 249:14) say that it's a good idea to give some tzedakah before you start to pray.

A lot of communities also pass around a tzedakah box during weekday Shaharit, at the prayer called וַיְבָרֶךְ דָּוִיד (Vayevarekh David). This custom goes back to R. Yitzhak Luria, known as the Ar"i Za"l (Eretz Yisrael, 500 years ago).

Vayevarekh David is a quote from a blessing that King David gave to Benei Yisrael after they donated money for the construction of the Beit Ha-Mikdash. The full blessing appears in Divrei Hayamim Alef 29:10-19.

King David acknowledges that all wealth comes from God: וְהָעֹשֶׁר וְהַכָּבוֹד מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ("riches and honor are Yours to give out"). In the continuation of his speech, the part that doesn't appear in our tefillah, he really clarifies this idea:

**Divrei Hayamim Alef 29:14**

Who am I and who are my people,
that we should be able to make such a generous donation?
All is from You, and it is Your gift that we have given to You.

**דברי הימים א כט:יד**

וְכִי מִי אֲנִי וּמִי עַמִּי
כִּי נַעְצֹר כֹּחַ לְהִתְנַדֵּב כָּזֹאת
כִּי מִמְּךָ הַכֹּל וּמִיָּדְךָ נָתַנּוּ לָךְ׃

The bottom line is: The money we have doesn't really belong to us—it belongs to God! We're just holding onto it. So when it comes time to fulfill the mitzvah of giving tzedakah, we should know that we are simply giving the money that already belongs to God!

- Does this idea make it easier to give tzedakah? Why?
- What does giving tzedakah have to do with praying to God? What are some of the things we ask for when we pray, and what are we showing God by giving tzedakah first?
- Try it! Pair your tefillah with an act of tzedakah. How does giving before or during tefillah affect your focus on God, or your intention in prayer?

