

When you shall enter the Land that I give you and you reap its harvest, you shall bring an Omer from your first harvest to the Kohen. (23:10)

The Torah commences with, “And you reap its harvest,” implying that the harvest belongs to the Land, and concludes with, “You shall bring an *omer* from your harvest to the *Kohen*.” The question is: To whom does the harvest belong – to the Land or to the harvester? The answer is obvious: The harvester thinks he is the owner. Hashem is reminding him that a Jew does not live for himself. He is not to lose sight of the spiritual nature of his worldly possessions. They are all here to serve one purpose: to help others. Working in the trenches can be physically demanding. This might bring a person to think that it is all about “him.” Well, it is not. The only way he may claim ownership of the land is by sharing it with others.

This idea is reiterated constantly, but we do not always pick up on it, by assimilating it into our mindset and incorporating it into our daily endeavor. I write this on *Shushan Purim*, the day following the greatest *tzedakah* day of the year. Everyone gives; the money is flowing, as well as the drinks. When a Jew is happy, he gives freely of his money, because he realizes that, after all is said and done, the money is not his.

Perhaps this might be alluded to by the *pasuk* at the end of *Megillas Esther*. *V'yemei haPurim he'eileh lo yaavru mitoch haYehudim*, “And these days of Purim should never cease among the Jews” (9:28). Simply, this means that the festival of *Purim* will accompany us throughout time. We might supplement this idea with the notion that the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*, which the Jewish People fulfill more so than other people, will always be with us. On *Purim* we give *tzedakah* with a flowing heart and “pen.” We hold nothing back, as we share our *matanos l'evyonim*. It is activities such as these that have remained with us and continued to sustain us throughout time.

To those who feel that *tzedakah* decreases their financial portfolio, perhaps the following story will shed some light on their concerns. A father went with his son to purchase bread at the bakery. They left the store with the boy carrying ten loaves of bread. The father turned to his son and asked, “How many loaves do you have?” “Ten loaves,” the boy replied. A few moments later, they met a poor man who pleaded with him to share some bread with him: “I have nothing for Shabbos. Will you please help?” he begged. The father readily gave the man three loaves of bread.

The father now asked his son, “How many breads remain?” The boy replied, “Seven.” “Are you certain?” the father asked. “Seven,” the boy emphatically declared.

“My son, let me explain something to you. We are going home, where we will eat this bread. After a short while, nothing will be left. The three breads which we gave the poor man – those are the fruits of *Olam Habba*, the World to Come. They will always be there for us! End of story.