

## If your brother becomes impoverished and his hand falters in your proximity. (25:35)

Concerning this *pasuk*, which enjoins us to reach out to our fellow man who has sadly fallen on hard times, David Hamelech says in *Tehillim* 41:2, *Ashrei maskil el dal, b'yom raah yimalteihu Hashem*, "Praiseworthy is he who contemplates the needy; on the day of evil, Hashem will liberate him." Why is this *pasuk* specifically selected by *Chazal* as the paradigm for giving *tzedakah*, charity? Can something special, a unique lesson/message regarding charitable giving, be derived herein? Simply, we are being enjoined to add some *seichal*, common sense, to our emotion upon giving the poor man a check. We should "think," take into consideration that this is a human being whose dignity we must preserve. The *pasuk* is teaching us that, not only must we give, but there is a method, a manner in which the giving should be carried out. We must be considerate of the poor man's feelings; since he has to stand with his hand out, pleading for alms; we must reach out with *seichal*, coupled with compassion. Thus, on the day on which we are judged, when others who were not so caring might suffer as part of the collective punishment, we will be spared. Hashem will take into consideration the *seichal* we applied when we assisted others.

In an alternative exposition, **Horav Yoshiahu Yosef Pinto, Shlita**, *Rosh Yeshivah, Shuvah Yisrael*, explains that this *pasuk* contains an allusion to another proper manner of charitable giving. Some individuals are kind-hearted, and they assist by addressing the economic needs of their less fortunate brethren. They do this, however, only at a time when the sun, so to speak, is shining in their lives: they are healthy; their children are well physically, emotionally and spiritually; their business is financially on the up and up. In short, their lives are filled with good fortune. When things are going "their" way, they do not hesitate to worry about others. After all, if one must worry, it is so much more "convenient" to worry about others than to be anxious about oneself.

When these same people, however, fall on hard times, when issues arise in their personal lives which occupy their mind-, at such stressful times they have no time or patience to listen to the needs of others. It is all about them – not about others. When these individuals are experiencing their own personal *yom raah*, day of evil, they are likewise unable to come to the assistance of others. They sadly have a good excuse, "I, too, am having a bad day. I cannot deal with other people's problems."

While one may justify his indifference to others as the result of his own problems, the *tzaddik*, righteous person, does not use personal adversity as a reason to turn others away. Thus, the Psalmist writes in support of the *maskil el dal*, (Praiseworthy is the) one who contemplates the needy. Such a person, who reaches out to others, despite himself being the subject of financial and personal adversity, will be liberated by Hashem.

**Horav Meir Abuchatzzeira, zl**, suffered greatly during the twilight years of his life. He experienced excruciating pain that debilitated him. Yet, his countenance never attested to his pain. A smile was

always on his lips, as he encouraged others to have hope. He was a *maskil el dal*.