

Therefore, I am commanding you, saying, open your hand to the needy and poor brethren in your land. (15:11)

Generally, the word "*leimor*," saying, is used when the speaker wishes to have his words conveyed to others. This approach creates a problem in regard to this *pasuk's* translation. It would seem that Hashem is saying, "I command you to say - you shall open your hand to the needy and poor." This does not translate smoothly. Why would Hashem instruct us to say, "You should open your hand to the needy and poor"? To whom should we say this? The *Vorker Rebbe, zl*, explains that the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah* consists of two aspects. First and foremost is the actual "giving" of material support to the person in need. There is another facet to *tzedakah* that is often overlooked. It is important to realize what the poor man must experience before he approaches us for assistance. It is humiliating and devastating to ask for help. Thus, giving is not sufficient. We must make every attempt to appreciate his shame and try to lift his spirits as we provide him with material support. How does one make a poor man feel good? How do we encourage one who is in distress and give him hope?

We do this by explaining that he, too, might one day have the ability to support himself and others. Many people have been blessed with good fortune. He might become one of the fortunate ones. By giving him words of encouragement, we give him hope - a commodity that is more important than the money he receives. This is the meaning of the *pasuk*: When a poor man comes to you for assistance, say to him, you too will one day have the opportunity to open your hand to the poor. One day your fortune will change and you will be able to help others.