

If Not Now, When? Today & Tomorrow
אם לא עכשו, אימתי? היום ומחר

The first in the "Jewish Giving" study series...Print or copy this "instant lesson" and start a discussion around your Shabbat dinner table – appropriate for ALL ages!

In a recent letter mailed to your home, we said that we would engage you in educational opportunities – ones that embrace conversations from a Jewish perspective. There are many ways this will occur – in print, via conversations (both individually and in groups), on our website and by using social media. We hope these engagements will allow you and your loved ones to have meaningful conversations and allow your participation in philanthropy, tzedakah and mitzvot at a comfortable level.

Our first educational piece discusses □□□□ (Tzedakah) – its roots vs. those of the words charity and philanthropy. In addition, we share a Talmudic thought.

Roots...

Sometimes the origins of a word can teach us a lot. The English word which is closest to "tzedakah" is "justice," but when we talk about giving money to help those who are in need, the words "charity" and "philanthropy" are often used. See if you can find the difference in their meaning.

TZEDAKAH	comes from the Hebrew root TZEDEK meaning justice, righteousness
CHARITY	comes from the Latin word CARITAS meaning love or fondness
PHILANTHROPY	comes from the Greek word PHILIA meaning love and ANTHROPOS meaning people

Based on their "root meanings" what is the difference between the Jewish mitzvah of giving Tzedakah and the practices of giving "charity" or "philanthropy?"

Source: Torah Aura Productions An Instant Lesson, *Rambam's Rungs*. 1990

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Two Talmudic Thoughts: People Need Tzedakah

Rabbi Akiba had a Roman friend named Tinnius Rufus. One time, the two of them talked about the mitzvah of Tzedakah. We find their conversation in the Talmud (Baba Batra 10a).

**Tinnius Rufus:** You have a G-d who loves people and who cares for their needs. Your G-d wants the hungry to be fed and the homeless to be sheltered. G-d has the power to

take care of all human needs. Why does G-d command you to share your wealth to take care of the poor rather than just making it good for all?

***If you were Akiba, how would you answer your friend?***

**Akiba:** The giving of tzedakah lets money become a means of creating holiness. G-d is the creator of both the rich and the poor. G-d wants all his children to help each other. The giving of tzedakah makes the whole world into one loving household.

***If you were Tinnius Rufus, what would you learn from Akiba's answer?***

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To enhance your conversations, we will be sharing congregant reflections. Look for these in the Chronicle plus – **coming soon** – more educational materials, stories and resources on the web at www.nevehshalom.org and other social media sites.

Congregant Reflections...by Joan Sher

Neveh Shalom was there with a daily minyan when I wanted to say Kaddish for my father when he passed away almost two years ago now. I had promised my Dad as he was nearing the end of his life that I would say Kaddish for him for the prescribed eleven months which made him very happy. I am one of four daughters and my Dad was always there to say Kaddish for his family members. Saying Kaddish was very important to him as was synagogue life (he was raised and lived most of his long life in Rock Island, Illinois). My husband and I had not been a member of a synagogue since we moved to Portland in 1994, we were semi-retired with grown children and didn't see the need. However, when the need arose to say Kaddish for my Dad, Neveh Shalom was the perfect place to go. We (my husband decided to come to minyan as support for me and out of respect for my dad) started coming on a daily basis and before long, we chose to join the synagogue as the minyannaires and the clergy were so welcoming. Even once the eleven months were over, we continued to attend minyan at least two times a week, as we now want to support others. We cannot imagine our lives now without Neveh Shalom and wonder why it took us so long to recognize that being a member of Neveh Shalom would enrich our lives and satisfy our needs.

The process making our Congregation financially strong takes financial resources beyond our Dues. We highlight stories of our synagogue – one that has lives that are touched by what we do in so many ways...And, we'd like to share yours, too! Email your story to Wendy Kahn, Development Director @ rifkashira@comcast.net.