



SOLOMON
SCHECHTER
SCHOOL of
MANHATTAN

SOLOMON SCHECHTER SCHOOL OF MANHATTAN

TZEDAKAH ROUNDTABLE ACTIVITY BOOKLET

5776 – 2016



פְּתַח תְּפִתַּח אֶת יָדְךָ לְאָחִיךָ לְעֵנִיךָ וּלְאֶבְיֹנְךָ בְּאַרְצְךָ

You shall surely open your hand to your brother, to your poor one,
and to your needy one in your land

(D'varim 15:11)

Schechter Manhattan Tzedakah Roundtable Home Activity for Students and their Parents

Please allow 20-45 minutes for this family activity.

Welcome to the 2015-16 Schechter Manhattan Tzedakah Roundtable! This is the part of the school year where each class takes the tzedakah money they have collected each Friday and decides, as a group, where the money should go. In this way, each class is its own “giving circle.” Schechter Manhattan is proud to be in the vanguard of this growing movement of giving circles in the Jewish community.

In order to deepen this experience, **we hope that each student and his/her parent(s) will spend 20-45 minutes together going through this activity** to help think about why we give and to make choices among worthy organizations.

We offer you four different organizations from which to choose. Please read through the texts and guiding questions below to help determine each student’s top choice and why.

*We intend this activity to be suitable for all of our students. **Depending on the student’s age, we expect that parents will “interpret” or paraphrase certain concepts for younger children.** We’ve made sure to include ideas that all of our students can grasp, though they might need adult help. **Thank you for your help and partnership!** We hope that this is a meaningful activity, and perhaps one that you can also use in any discussions you may have about your family’s priorities around tzedakah.*

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Julie Sissman (mom of Talia in 3rd grade and Orli in 1st) at jsissman@yahoo.com or Amy Martin (Kitah Gimel teacher) at amymartin@sssm.org. If you’d like additional resources on intentional giving or the broader Jewish Giving Circle movement, please reach out to Julie Sissman or check out amplifiergiving.org.



ASSUMPTIONS WE MAKE:
RECOMMENDED TIME: 10-15 MINUTES

For this year's Tzedakah Roundtable, we want to talk together about how assumptions can affect someone's giving and receiving.

We are offering two versions of the story "Loosening the Stopper." For children in grades 3-8, please use version 1. For children in grades K-2, please use version 2, with thanks to Rachel Mann for creating version 2.

Adapted from "Loosening the Stopper"¹ - ***VERSION 1 – For 3rd-8th grades***

Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev's grandchild married the grandchild of the famous rebbe, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. "Now that we are related by this marriage," said Rabbi Schneur Zalman, "let us join in performing a good deed. An innocent Jew is being held by the local authorities. Let us take up a collection, to give the officials the sum they demand for his release."

"Excellent idea," said Rabbi Levi Yitzhak. "But I ask one condition. Let us accept whatever donation is offered to us, no matter how small."

The two men went door to door. Two such distinguished rabbis seldom visited these townspeople together, so most gave generously. At last, the two rabbis came to the home of a wealthy woman. She greeted them politely, then reached in her pocket, drawing out a mere half-penny. To Rabbi Schneur Zalman's horror, Rabbi Levi Yitzhak thanked the woman warmly, blessed her, and turned to leave.

When Rabbi Schneur Zalman had followed his companion outside, he could contain himself no longer. "Why should we accept that insultingly small amount from one who has so much!"

Rabbi Levi Yitzhak said, as they walked on, "I asked you to accept whatever we were given. Please be patient."

Some time later, the rich woman strode up behind them. "I am sorry," she said. "Please accept more from me." She gave them a silver coin, then turned and left.

Rabbi Levi Yitzhak called after her, "You are a good and generous person!"

Rabbi Schneur Zalman fumed at Rabbi Levi Yitzhak. "She could afford a hundred times as much! Why must we bless this stinginess?"

¹ This version based on the story at <http://www.learningtogive.org/materials/folktales/LooseningStopper.asp>

“Please bear with me, honored relative.” They continued walking.

A short while later, the rich woman caught up to them again. Out of breath, she said, “Will you forgive me for how little I gave you?” She held out a sack bulging with a hundred silver coins.

Rabbi Levi Yitzhak smiled. “Yes, with all my heart,” he said. The rich woman gave the coins and left, obviously relieved.

Now Levi Yitzhak turned to Rabbi Schneur Zalman. “May I tell you the story of that wealthy person?”

“She has always given generously to those in need. But a week ago, a beggar approached her while she was meeting with a group of people. Reluctant to interrupt the others to get her purse, the wealthy woman reached into her pocket and gave the beggar the only coin she found there, a half-penny.

“The beggar was furious. This rich woman was famous for giving silver coins. Why had she slighted him? The beggar threw the coin at the rich woman, striking her in the face. In her pain, the wealthy woman vowed to stop being so generous. From now on, she would give everyone a half-penny—no more!

“It is said that each step downward leads to another, honored relative. She was within her rights to offer the beggar only what she had. But she erred when she treated others the same way. Since that day, every one who approached her has angrily refused her paltry half-penny gifts. She found herself unable to offer more.

“It is also said that each step upward leads to another. Once we accepted her half-penny, we loosened the stopper on her generosity. Each gift she gave made the next one possible. Now, our willingness to receive has restored her to her goodness.”

Please discuss the story:

1. What reactions do you have to the story? Did anything surprise you?
2. What assumptions did Rabbi Schneur Zalman make about the rich woman? How would those assumptions have driven his actions if Rabbi Levi Yitzhak hadn't been with him? With what results, would you imagine?
3. What assumptions did the beggar make about the rich person? Did those assumptions serve him or get in the way? How?
4. When the rich woman ran after the two rabbis to give them a silver coin, Rabbi Levi Yitzhak called after her, “You are a good and generous person!” What purpose did this comment serve? What do you think of this idea that “each step downward leads to another” and “each step upward leads to another”? How might those ideas shape your own giving, volunteering, or way of being in the world?



For grades 3-8, please skip ahead to Page 7, “How can we prioritize among worthy organizations?”

Adapted from Loosening the Stopper - **VERSION 2 – For K-2nd grades**

A Jewish Tale: A pair of rabbis set out to raise some money for a worthy cause. They approach a wealthy woman who was having trouble being generous, and one of the rabbis knew how to help her be more giving.

We’ll explore: How is receiving just as important as giving? How do we make sure that we, and the people around us, are able to be “givers”?

Here’s the story:

Two important rabbis decided to work together to perform a good deed.

Rabbi Schneur said, “A poor man needs our help. He did not do anything wrong, but he is in jail. The jailers won’t let him go unless he gives them a lot of money. Let’s go together to ask people to give money to help free the man.”

Rabbi Levi said, “Great idea. But just one thing: we will take whatever people give to us, no matter how small.”

The two rabbis knocked on every door, asking people to give money to help the poor man. Most people gave very generously. Finally, they came to the door of very rich woman.

The rich woman gave them only a half-penny. Rabbi Levi said, “Thank you, and bless you.”

As they walked away, Rabbi Schneur said, “But...but...she’s a very rich person! She could have given much more!”

Rabbi Levi replied, “Remember what I said? We will take whatever people give to us, no matter how small. Be patient.”

The rabbis walked on. Later, the rich woman came up behind them. She said, “I am sorry. Please take this silver coin.”

Rabbi Levi said, “You are a good and generous person!”

But Rabbi Schneur said, “Again, she gave only one coin, when she has so much more to give! Why should we bless her?”

Rabbi Levi said, “Remember what I said. Be patient.”

A while later, the rich woman came to them again. This time, she said, “I am sorry for how little I gave before,” and gave them a big sack with one hundred silver coins in it.

Rabbi Levi thanked and blessed the woman again. Then he said to Rabbi Schneur: “Let me tell you about the rich woman. She always gave a lot of tzedakah. But last week, a beggar asked her for money while she was out without her wallet. She gave the man a half-penny that she found in her pocket. The beggar was angry, because the rich woman had given him silver coins before. The beggar threw the half-penny in the rich woman’s face. After that, the rich woman said she wouldn’t be generous anymore. She would only give a half-penny, to whoever asked.”

Rabbi Schneur said, “So then why did she come back to us with a silver coin, and then a whole bag of silver coins?”

Rabbi Levi said, “The beggar made the rich woman feel bad about giving. But when the rich woman gave us a half-penny, we thanked her. Our thanks made her feel better about giving. It made her want to give again. So she did. And then she couldn’t stop giving. Because we were thankful for any small amount from her, she was happy to give more. We helped make her feel good about giving.”

Please discuss the story:

- In the story, what did they mean when they said “We will take whatever people give us, no matter how small”? Why is it important to be thankful, even if you think someone can give even more than they do?
- What makes you feel good about giving?
- The rich woman ended up giving her money many times, and it took her a while before she felt comfortable to give a large chunk of his money. What is special about giving to the same organization many times? When does it mean to make a promise to contribute to the same people many times?



Please continue on the next page...

HOW CAN WE PRIORITIZE AMONG WORTHY ORGANIZATIONS?

RECOMMENDED TIME: 5-15 MINUTES

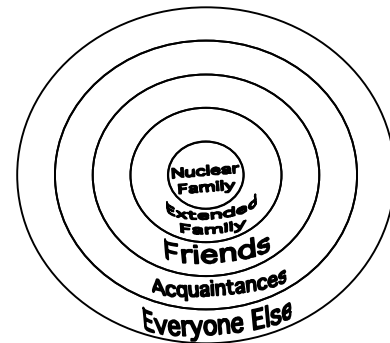
We may want our tzedakah to be an expression of our values and so we seek out organizations that are working to create the kind of world we want to live in. At the same time, we may feel some sense of responsibility or obligation to care for those in need and experience tzedakah as an obligation to help the poorest among us. Or we may have other reasons that we want to give tzedakah. Our different approaches are likely in play when we are making decisions about what causes to support and what populations to donate to.

To further complicate matters, there are many ways of prioritizing where to give our tzedakah. One useful model may be to represent our priorities as concentric circles in which the inner circle represents the group we feel most strongly connected to or inclined to support, and the outer circle represents the group we feel least connected to or inclined to support.

Here are a few examples of how some people may choose to prioritize:

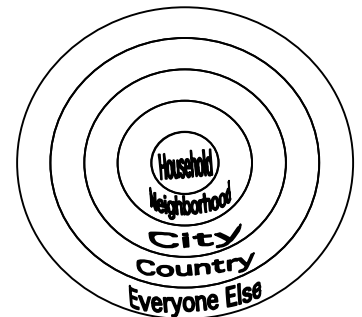
Model #1 – Prioritizing based on relationship

What are your reactions to this model?



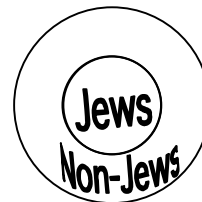
Model #2 – Prioritizing based on geography – proximity (as illustrated in the concentric circles) OR Israel compared with other places in the world

What are your reactions to this model?



Model #3 – Prioritizing based on religious affiliation

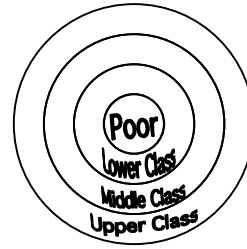
What are your reactions to this model?



Another model is to focus on need or on type of organization:

Model #4 – Prioritizing based on need

What are your reactions to this model?



Model #5 – Prioritizing based on type of organization

Type of Organization	
Direct Service	Advocacy/Public Policy
Large budget	Small budget
Etc...	

What are your reactions to this model?

Obviously, we never embrace one of these models exclusively - and there are other models.

Please discuss:

1. Would you assign priority to one prioritization model? If so, which one and why?
2. How do these different prioritization models interact in your own giving, if at all? What other ideas factor into your own decisions about giving?

Section 3. Determining the top choice. Recommended time: 10-15 minutes



Now that you've discussed how you might prioritize among organizations, let's apply it to this year's Schechter Manhattan Tzedakah Roundtable choices. Please read about the four organizations, and choose your top two choices for receiving your class's tzedakah money this year.

TZEDAKAH ROUNDTABLE PRIORITY SHEET



INSTRUCTIONS: Please review the non-profit organizations on the following pages (which we've presented in alphabetical order) and complete this form with your chosen top two priorities.

Please RETURN by FRIDAY, MARCH 18th

Name _____

Choice A: _____

Reasons:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Choice B: _____

Reasons:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Tzedakah Roundtable 2015-16

List of Organizations

Please review the non-profit organizations on the following pages (which we've presented in alphabetical order) and complete the TZEDAKAH ROUNDTABLE PRIORITY SHEET with your top two priorities.



Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.



BRINGING
ISRAELI INNOVATION
TO AFRICAN
VILLAGES.



Kaima
Social and Environmental Action
Learning for Youth-at-Risk



New York
Public
Library

Information about HIAS



Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

HIAS, founded in 1881 on the Lower East Side of Manhattan and currently the oldest refugee organization in the world, is committed to helping refugees find ways to live in safety and with dignity. In HIAS' earliest days, as Jews fled from Tsarist Russia, Nazi-occupied Europe, Egypt, Iran, Cuba, and the former Soviet Union, HIAS helped them start new lives and adapt to and become part of American culture. At the turn of the 21st century, after the last waves of Jewish refugees came to the U.S., HIAS began to serve refugees of all religious and ethnic backgrounds. Today HIAS works in 10 countries providing legal support, psychosocial services, and livelihood training to the most vulnerable refugees in both camps and urban settings. HIAS also works with 22 affiliates to resettle refugees across the U.S. In short, HIAS likes to say, "We used to help refugees because they were Jewish; now we help refugees because we are Jewish." Guided by Jewish values and history, they bring more than 130 years of expertise to their work with refugees.

More about HIAS' Work

As of June 2015, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, or UNHCR, identified 19.5 million refugees worldwide.

HIAS helps refugees find safety and freedom and regain control of their lives. A refugee is a person who has been forced to flee their home country due to persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group (e.g., members of the LGBTQ community). The persecution a refugee experiences may include harassment, threats, abduction or torture. A refugee is often afforded some sort of legal protection, either by their host country's government, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or both.

Refugee advocates often refer to durable solutions for refugees. These durable solutions include local integration (for refugees who can safely rebuild their lives in the country to which they fled), resettlement (for the most vulnerable refugees for whom life is not safe in the country to which they fled and so require permanent resettlement in a 3rd country), and repatriation (for refugees for whom circumstances in their homeland change significantly enough that it is safe to return). In the United States, refugees who are designated for resettlement are hand-selected by the U.S. government and are screened in advance. They are subject to background checks and security screenings by multiple U.S. agencies. Only after everything is approved are they brought to the U.S. to reside permanently. Of the total global refugee population, less than 1% are resettled each year; in Fiscal Year 2014, 0.42% were resettled in the United States. For the vast majority, the only viable option is to remain in the country to which they first fled, living for years and even decades on the margins of foreign cities or in refugee camps. HIAS works to ensure that these people are not sent back into harm's way, and fosters a safe environment in which they can heal, stabilize, and rebuild their lives. HIAS provides legal representation, psychosocial assistance, and avenues to self-sufficiency by helping refugees build livelihoods.

HIAS has seen time and again that when refugees are provided with a welcoming environment and adequate support, they can be tremendous assets to their neighborhoods and societies, boosting local economies, and excelling at entrepreneurship. This is especially true in the U.S., where starting over offers not just safety but promise and opportunity.

HIAS is also dedicated to leading the American Jewish community to push for needed reforms in American and international policies that protect all refugees.

What Your Tzedakah Money Can Do

\$7.50 will help 1 person be transported to a psychologist for counseling for 12 weeks

\$53.33 will feed one single woman and her family for 1 month while she finds work

\$128.16 will provide 1 child with backpack, shoes, books, pens, uniforms, school fees, and lockers for 1 month

Other Information

Does your organization serve Jews, non-Jews or both? Both

What kinds of activities do you engage in? Direct Service and Advocacy

What is your organizational budget? Around \$35 million

What geographic area does your organization serve? 10 countries throughout Latin America, Africa, Eurasia and the Middle East, and also the United States

For Additional Information:

Contact: Rabbi Rachel Grant Meyer, HIAS Educator for Community Engagement

Phone number: 212.613.1363; **Email:** Rachel.Grant.Meyer@hias.org; **Website:** www.hias.org

Video: www.hias.org/hias-refugee



Innovation: Africa

Innovation: Africa brings Israeli innovation to rural African villages, using solar energy to address the electricity needs of rural villages in 7 African countries. Their installations provide schools and medical clinics with solar power that allows them to offer evening study, well-lit nighttime medical care and refrigeration for medicines and vaccines. They also use solar energy to pump clean water from deep below ground, and Israeli drip irrigation systems to provide a source of food and income for farmers and their families

Since their founding in 2008, IA has completed over 100 solar and agricultural projects in Tanzania, Malawi, Ethiopia, South Africa, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Senegal, impacting over 750,000 people.

More about the work:

Innovation: Africa's approach of using Israeli solar, pump, and drip irrigation technology to create positive change is unique. Their work transforms people's lives because:

- Without electricity, rural clinics cannot offer effective medical care. They use kerosene lamps to light nighttime surgeries, and have no power to store medicines and vaccines.
- Without access to electricity in rural schools, there is no energy for late-in-the day study or IT education.
- Without access to electricity, there is no way to pump clean water from below ground. As a result, women and children spend hours each day looking for water (preventing children from going to school). And when they reach the water source, it is a polluted well of dirt and disease, and it makes them sick.

Innovation: Africa's goal isn't only to bring solar energy to rural communities, but to transform rural healthcare and education, and provide rural communities with tools they need to lift themselves out of poverty. They use a unique approach that includes Local teams, Community Partnerships, Microenterprise, and Remote Monitoring.

What your Tzedakah money can do:

- \$25= 5 Light Bulbs
- \$50= One lock to prevent our systems against theft
- \$60= Water tap
- \$250= 1 Battery
- \$350= Solar panel
- \$2,500= 1 Solar Powered Refrigerator
- \$4,500= Water Pump

Other Information:

Does your organization serve Jews, non-Jews or both? The solar and water projects serve non-Jews. The organization also raises positive awareness about Israel and Israeli innovation, among American Jews, American non-Jews, and African non-Jews.

What kinds of activities do you engage in? Direct service / Capacity building.

What is your organizational budget? Around \$1 million

What geographic area does your organization serve? Africa, with volunteers all over the US

For additional information:

Innovation: Africa – www.innoafrica.org; 646.472.5380; info@innoafrica.org

Video - https://www.facebook.com/innoafrica/videos?ref=page_internal



Kaima Farm

Social, Business, and Environmental Action Learning for Israeli Youth who have Dropped out of School

(January 2016)

Background: Kaima, or "sustainability" in Aramaic, is a word which embodies society's collective obligation to preserve the environment and sustain this generation of youth well into the future. Kaima operates according to a unique outreach approach based on a hybrid of commerce, vocational training, and non-profit modalities to help dropout youth turn their lives around. Our main initiative, Kaima Farm, nestled in a pastoral terraced valley just outside of Jerusalem works by synthesizing education, environmental stewardship and social business into one cohesive model based on the following principles:

- ✿ Every person has the inner capacity for self improvement.
- ✿ Even the most disenfranchised, including those who have been expelled from school and other programs, are worthy and must be both encouraged and equipped to start anew.
- ✿ For some, effective learning is the result of interactive experience, not classroom lessons.
- ✿ The healing power of nature can be harnessed as part of a sustained program to transform individual lives and move people from isolation to engagement

More about the work: It's hard to believe but in Israel there are more than 30,000 Israeli boys and girls, some as young as 15-years-old, who have dropped out of school. Kaima helps these young kids turn their lives around, through a multi-layered educational process which combines hands-on organic farming, leadership development, business learning, and community development. In late 2012, a group of young Israelis established Kaima as a way to apply their passion for organic farming to improve the lives of high school dropouts, particularly those unable to adapt to conventional indoor learning and adult-driven frameworks. Recognizing the many important programs within Israel's non-profit and government sectors already providing critical support for this population, Kaima offers a unique approach built around an entirely different concept which connects skill acquisition, hands-on learning, hard work, self-determination, and, notably, income to bring home the message that anything is possible. We support ourselves through income generated through the sale of our harvest and with the generous help of our donors.

What your *tzedekah* money can do:

- ✿ \$18 will help us by two sets of gloves for working in the fields.
- ✿ \$36 will enable us to buy two sets of secateurs for pruning hard branches, trees, and shrubs
- ✿ \$100 will allow us to donate five veggie baskets to the needy in our midst
- ✿ \$180 will help underwrite the costs of feeding/housing/caring for one of our goats for a month
- ✿ \$425 will enable us to pay a one-month stipend to one of our young farmers
- ✿ \$750 will help us organize our annual survival desert course for participants

FAQ:

- ✿ *Does your organization serve Jews, non-Jews or both?* Both
- ✿ *What kinds of activities do you engage in?* Education, youth entrepreneurship, and social business
- ✿ *What is your organizational budget?* 2016 Target = \$1million
- ✿ *What geographic area does your organization serve?* Jerusalem and environs * We are also in the process of adding three new farms around the country!

More: Website: www.kaima.org.il Email: kaima.office@gmail.com Phone: [+972.58.444.7793](tel:+972.58.444.7793)
Video: <http://www.kaima.org.il/#!/videos/c144s>



NYPL FY15 Stats

- 18 million in-person visits
- 30.9 million visits to nypl.org
- 23.3 million items circulated
- 2.9 million e-books circulated
- 3.2 million computer reservations



Storytime at the Bronx's Mott Haven Library



Federal naturalization ceremony on July 2 at the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, where 75 immigrants became U.S. citizens

For more than a century The New York Public Library (NYPL) has provided communities throughout the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island with free and open access to information, education, and ideas. The vision that inspired philanthropist Andrew Carnegie to build a public library within walking distance of every New Yorker is the same mission that drives NYPL's 88 neighborhood branches and four research libraries today. In a knowledge-based economy, the Library provides its users with a viable currency in the form of books, programs, classes, research materials, and access to technology. Last year, 1.5 million people attended nearly 80,000 public programs at their local libraries, and over 18 million people visited NYPL to borrow more than 23 million items.

More about our work:

- Provide patrons with free access to books, study materials, and resources for job-hunting and sharpening professional skills.
- Offer underserved students tutoring services outside of school free of cost.
- Ensuring that non-English speakers have the opportunity to learn English as a second language at no cost to them.

Other Information:

- The NYPL serves all patrons regardless of gender, religion, or socio-economic background.
- The NYPL is focused on providing resources and opportunities to foster educational and professional advancement
- The Library's General Operating budget is \$323,700,000.
- The NYPL serves the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island

What your Tzedakah money can do:

- \$55 can add three books for our Job Search collection, helping prepare New Yorkers with interview skills, resume writing and finding positions
- \$115 can add one reference volume to our renowned research collection
- \$250 can buy 11 e-book licenses for easy electronic borrowing
- \$500 can put 26 brand-new books on Library shelves for readers to check out for years to come

Contact us: www.nypl.org/ask-nypl or phone: 917.275.6975