

Tzedakah Salon: January/February 2011
Money, Moses and Me: An Examination of the Role of Money and Giving in our Lives
FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Welcome to the facilitator's guide for the first Tzedakah Salon! We are thrilled that you will be leading this session. In this guide you will find the following resources:

- a) An introduction to the session, its goals and format.
- b) A step by step guide to leading the session.
- c) Source sheets to be printed out and handed out to session participants.

Feel free to follow the guide to the letter or use it as a basis for the session. The most important aspect of the session and this series is to start the important conversations around tzedakah within our communities.

Session Title: Money, Moses and Me: An Examination of the Role of Money and Giving in our Lives

Duration: 1 Hour (not including shmoozing time)

a) INTRODUCTION:

Format: This session will be divided into three separate activities:

- 1) An “Ice-Breaker” activity where participants will be asked to reflect on a meaningful experience they have had with giving tzedakah in their lives.
- 2) A text study examining rabbinic perspectives on money.
- 3) A “personal inventory” worksheet to help reflect on the ways we think about money and tzedakah.

Goals:

- 1) Participants will experience a sense of community where issues of tzedakah and money are openly discussed.
- 2) Participants will gain insight into both Jewish approaches to money, and their own approaches to tzedakah and money.

b) STEP BY STEP GUIDE

Activity 1: Welcome, Intro and “Ice-Breaker”

Duration: 20 minutes

Activity Outline:

- **Welcome and Intro:**

Welcome participants to the session, provide background to the Tzedakah Salon series and a rough outline to what this session will entail.

- *Background:* The Tzedakah Salons are sponsored by HEKDESH and grew out of information we got from HEKDESH members that they wanted to connect more with other Dorotnikim, wanted to learn about and reflect on tzedakah, and wanted to be held accountable for being more intentional with their tzedakah
- *Session outline:* Short ice-breaker, followed by text study and discussion, followed by personal reflection and discussion

• **Ice-Breaker:**

- 1) Ask participants to think of an early experience they remember giving tzedakah or a particularly meaningful experience they have had with tzedakah. Then have participants say their name and briefly share the experience. (Depending on the number of participants, the descriptions may need to be very brief to keep to the 20 minutes allotted.)
- 2) Once all participants have shared, ask if there are any reactions to the experiences shared, or if there are any patterns or similarities among the experiences.

Activity 2: Text Study-Moses and Money

Duration: 20 minutes

Background:

This text study looks at the origins of Moses' wealth and asks deeper questions about the nature of money, the connections between power, leadership and money and how we relate to money.

The two texts on the source sheet play off Exodus 34:1 where Moses is commanded to make a new set of tablets containing the ten commandments after smashing the first set. The pasuk reads:

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| לַחַת אֲבָנִים - לְךָ שְׁנֵי-מִשֶּׁה, פָּסֶל-וַיֹּאמֶר יְיָ אֵל הַדְּבָרִים, אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ -הַלַּחַת, אֶת-פְּרָאשִׁימִים; וְכַתַּבְתִּי, עַל תְּהַלַּחַת הַרְּאִשִּׁים אֲשֶׁר שָׁבַר-עַל | And the LORD said to Moses: 'Carve for yourself, two tablets of stone like the first; and I will write upon the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you did break.' |
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The rabbis interpret the word “לְךָ” or “for yourself” to mean that Moses should keep the shards of stone left over from the carving for himself.

Activity Outline:

- These texts can be studied either in chevrotot or as a group, depending on the number of participants. If more than 6 people attend the session, we recommend putting participants in chevrotot
- Use this facilitator’s guide to give a brief overview of the topic and texts. (See details of the texts below.)
- Hand out the source sheet found at the end of this guide and have participants learn the texts

with the framing questions in mind.

- If learning in chevrotot, once conversation around the texts seems to be dying down (10-15 minutes) bring the group back together.
- Facilitate a debrief conversation using questions such as these: (Note: You will not have time for all of these questions. They're provided as suggestions. Please use ones that are of interest to you and the participants):
 - What in these texts stuck out to you?
 - Was anything surprising?
 - In the first text: Why does Rabbi Yochanan choose to connect wealth with the Divine Presence, the Divine Presence in this case being synonymous with prophecy? Are we to believe that money changes the nature of a person, making them a better vessel for channeling God?
 - In the first text: Moses' wealth comes from the tablets. What do you think of the idea of spiritual wealth versus or in addition to material/fiscal wealth?
 - In the second text: The rabbis gave two different views of wealth – one portraying jealousy and resentment, and one associating wealth with righteousness and goodness. What does it mean that the Talmud includes these two different views?
- Try to transition the conversation from the texts on Moses to participants' personal perspectives on wealth and money with questions like:
 - Do you agree with the assumptions these texts make about wealth and money?
 - Do you see your approach/attitudes to wealth in these texts? If not, how does yours differ?
 - How does your approach to and emotions about money and wealth impact your tzedakah – your motivations for giving, how much you give, where you give? How does it impact your volunteering?

Guide to Text 1 for facilitators:

Text 1 comes from the Babylonian Talmud in the context of the rabbinic discussion about the lavishness of the Mishkan, the mobile temple used by the Israelites in the desert. In the middle of this discussion the topic shifts from the details of the Mishkan to the question of whether or not Moses was wealthy. The rabbis are worried about Moses' wealth because he was responsible for the Israelites' donations of gold, silver and other valuables to the building of the Mishkan. If Moses was independently wealthy he could be more trusted to handle the donations, or so the rabbis reasoned.

In studying this short text, some interesting ideas emerge that might make good fodder for your salon. First, why does Rabbi Yochanan choose to connect wealth with the Divine Presence, the Divine Presence in this case being synonymous with prophecy? Are we to believe that money changes the nature of a person, making them a better vessel for channeling God?

The subtext of this passage also presents an interesting idea about the nature of money. It is not through gold, silver or other traditionally precious metals that Moses gained his wealth. Rather,

according to the Talmud, Moses became rich by possessing the shavings left over from the carving of the second tablets. Moses' wealth was derived from regular stone that had been elevated by the power of God's command. In this sense, Moses' wealth was just as spiritual as it was material. This leads to the question of how might we embody this aspect of Moses' wealth. How might we look at our own possessions and talents in terms of spiritual as well as material/fiscal wealth? Might this understanding of what it means to be rich affect the way we think about money or giving?

Text 1: Babylonian Talmud Nedarim 33a

Questions to Consider:

What assumption about wealth does this text make?

Why is it of note that Moses' wealth comes from the chipping of the tablets?

Why was it important for Moses to be wealthy?

How might you look at your own possessions and talents in terms of “spiritual” as well as material/fiscal wealth?

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| <p>אמר רבי חמא בר' חנינא לא העשיר משה אלא מפסולתן של לוחות שנאמר (שמות לד) פסל לך ראשונים פסולתן שלך יהאשני לוחות אבנים כ אמר ר' יוחנן אין הקב"ה משרה שכינתו אלא על גבור ועשיר וחכם ועניו וכולן ממשה</p> | <p>Rabbi Chama the son of Rabbi Hanina said: Moses became wealthy from the chippings of the tablets, for it is written, Carve yourself two tablets of stone like unto the first: their carvings will be yours....</p> <p>Rabbi Yohanan said: The Holy One, blessed be He, causes His Divine Presence to rest only upon him who is strong, wealthy, wise and meek; and all these [qualifications] are deduced from Moses.</p> |
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Guide to Text 2 [for facilitators]::

Text 2 tells a parallel narrative to Text 1 but is from the Palestinian Talmud (interestingly, Mesechet Shkalim is the only portion of the Palestinian Talmud in the Daf Yomi cycle). This passage begins with the same discussion over the origins of Moses' wealth as found in Text 1, but provides two explanations, the first being that Moses become wealthy by owning the fragments of the tablets, while the second explanation states that God created a reservoir of pearls inside Moses' tent. While these two explanations disagree about where Moses derived his wealth, they both seem to indicate that Moses' wealth was an important quality.

After the two statements regarding the origins of Moses' wealth, Text 2 moves to consider the Israelites' feelings regarding the riches of their leader. Examining Exodus 33:8, “They gazed after Moses until he entered the tent,” the rabbis ask why the Israelites watched Moses actually enter his tent. One Talmudic sage says that they watched Moses so they could complain about his wealth, while another Talmudic sage says the Israelites watched him so they might see his righteousness.

Taken abstractly, these two comments might represent different approaches to money, or at the very least, different approaches to the wealthy. The first gives a rather negative valence to wealth and money. The emotions of the Israelites embedded in this statement run the gamut from resentment, to jealousy, to open hostility. It is important to remember that from the rabbinic perspective, all of the Israelites were rich in a conventional way after leaving Egypt as they took possession of the Egyptians' gold, silver and precious objects. The second statement (when read in the context of the entire passage), gives the opposite view of wealth, suggesting that it is somehow associated with righteousness and goodness.

When we think about our approach to tzedakah, it is important to think about what emotions money and wealth bring up in us. Are there negative valences in how we deal with or conceptualize money? Do we have overwhelmingly positive associations with being rich? What are other modes and emotions that emerge when we think about wealth? And importantly, how do the emotions we bring to the table affect how, when and why we give?

Text 2: Palestinian Talmud Shekalim 5:2

Questions to Consider:

Generally speaking, what are the different ways this text relates to wealth?

What are other ways of relating to wealth?

How do the ways in which you relate to wealth affect how, when and why you give tzedakah?

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| <p>אמר ר' <נחמיה> חמא בי רבי חנינא מפסולת של לוחות העשיר משה הדא הוא דכתיב (שמות ל) פסל לך שני לוחות אבנים פסל לך שתהא הפסולת שלך</p> <p>אמר ר' חנין מחצב של אבנים טובות ומרגליות <גילה> ברא לו הקב"ה מתוך אהלו וממנו העשיר משה</p> <p>כתיב (שמות לג) והביטו אחרי משה עד בואו והלה תרין אמוראין חד אמר לגנאי וח"א לשבחהא</p> <p>מאן דאמר לגנאי חמון שקין חמון כרעין חמון קופר אכיל מן דיהודאי ושתי מן דיהודאי כל מדליה מן דיהודאי</p> <p>ומ"ד לשבח מחמי צדיקיא ומזכי טוביא דזכת למיחמי יתיה</p> | <p>Rabbi Chama, the son of Rabbi Chanina said: Moses became wealthy from the fragments of the Tablets, as it is written: "Carve yourself two stone Tablets." (Exodus 34:1) "Carve yourself" - that the fragments (lit. carvings) should be yours.</p> <p>Rabbi Chanin said: The Holy One, Blessed be He, created for [Moses] a quarry of precious stones and pearls from within his tent, and from it Moses became wealthy.</p> <p>It is written "They gazed after Moses until he entered the tent." (Exodus 33:8). Two Amoraim [Talmudic Sages]: one interprets it as disparaging, the other as praiseworthy.</p> <p>The one who interprets it as disparaging: "Look at his thighs! Look at his legs! Look at his flesh! What he eats is from the Jews and what he drinks is from the Jews! All of his wealth is from the Jews!"</p> <p>And the one who interprets it as praiseworthy, "Would that we merit to see the righteous and</p> |
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| just! It is it good to have merited to see him.” |
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Activity 3: A Personal Inventory on Money

Duration: 20 minutes

Background:

This activity is meant to give participants a chance to reflect on their feelings surrounding money and tzedakah. The activity follows a “think-pair-share” format where participants first reflect privately, then in pairs, then come together as a larger group to discuss their reflections. Be sure to encourage participants to reflect in whatever way they like (i.e. in writing, silent reflection, meditation) and to note that while there will be a group debrief, no one is “required” to share.

Activity outline:

- Have participants spend about 5 minutes filling out the “personal inventory ” on the last page of the handout.
- Have participants discuss their inventory with a partner.
- Bring the group back together and have participants discuss what they wrote in their inventories.

Conclusion

Duration: 3 minutes

- Thank everyone for coming and let them know that there will be other Tzedakah Salons in March and June.
- Ask if anyone is willing to host a Salon. If there are volunteers, please note their name and email with the info
- Confirm that all participants have signed the sign-in sheet with email, phone and Dorot year/affiliation
- Thanks to xx for putting together the materials for this Tzedakah Salon
- Let participants know that they’ll be receiving a very brief feedback survey, and we ask that they complete it. It’s especially helpful since the Tzedakah Salons are new this year and we want to make them even better

THANK YOU!!!

Tzedakah Salon Session One

Money, Moses and Me: An Examination of the Role of Money and Giving in our Lives

Introduction:

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The rabbis interpret the word “לֶךְ” or “for yourself” to mean that Moses should keep the shards of stone left over from the carving for himself.

Amidst the description of the lavish Mishkan found in the Talmud, the Rabbis debate whether or not Moses was rich, and if so, how he got his money.

Text 1: Babylonian Talmud Nedarim 33a

Questions to Consider:

What assumption about wealth does this text make?

Why is it of note that Moses' wealth comes from the chipping of the tablets?

Why was it important for Moses to be wealthy?

How might you look at your own possessions and talents in terms of “spiritual” as well as material/fiscal wealth?

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Text 2: Palestinian Talmud Shekalim 5:2

Questions to Consider:

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What are other ways of relating to wealth?

How do the ways in which you relate to wealth affect how, when and why you give tzedakah?

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| <p>אמר ר' <נחמיה> חמא בי רבי חנינא מפסולת של לוחות העשיר משה הדא הוא דכתיב (שמות ל) פסל לך שני לוחות אבנים פסל לך שתהא הפסולת שלך</p> <p>' חנין מחצב של אבנים טובות ומרגליות אמר ר <גילה> ברא לו הקב"ה מתוך אהלו וממנו העשיר משה</p> <p>כתיב (שמות לג) והביטו אחרי משה עד בואו האוהלה תרין אמוראין חד אמר לגנאי וח"א לשבח</p> <p>מאן דאמר לגנאי חמון שקין חמון כרעין חמון קופר אכיל מן דיהודאי ושתי מן דיהודאי כל מדליה מן דיהודאי</p> <p>ומ"ד לשבח מחמי צדיקיא ומזכי טוביא דזכת למיחמי יתיה</p> | <p>Rabbi Chama, the son of Rabbi Chanina said: Moses became wealthy from the fragments of the Tablets, as it is written: "Carve yourself two stone Tablets." (Exodus 34:1) "Carve yourself" - that the fragments (lit. carvings) should be yours.</p> <p>Rabbi Chanin said: The Holy One, Blessed be He, created for [Moses] a quarry of precious stones and pearls from within his tent, and from it Moses became wealthy.</p> <p>It is written "They gazed after Moses until he entered the tent." (Exodus 33:8). Two Amoraim [Talmudic Sages]: one interprets it as disparaging, the other as praiseworthy.</p> <p>The one who interprets it as disparaging: "Look at his thighs! Look at his legs! Look at his flesh! What he eats is from the Jews and what he drinks is from the Jews! All of his wealth is from the Jews!"</p> <p>And the one who interprets it as praiseworthy, "Would that we merit to see the righteous and just! It is it good to have merited to see him."</p> |
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A Personal Inventory on Money and Tzedakah

This worksheet is meant to spark thought and conversation about how you relate to money and tzedakah. Feel free to use this sheet to answer the questions, answer them on a separate piece of paper, or reflect about them on your own.

1) When I think about money I feel...

2) I wish I felt...

3) To move towards how I wish I felt about money, I would need to...

4) When I think about my giving of tzedakah, I feel...

5) I wish I felt...

6) To move towards how I wish I felt about tzedakah, I would need to...

7) My feelings about money impact my tzedakah because/by...

8) I commit to the following action or change in order to enhance my tzedakah giving and/or to help my approach/attitudes to money be more of a help to me, rather than a hindrance:

