

Sep 18-24, 2023

2 Corinthians 8–13

“GOD LOVETH A CHEERFUL GIVER”

Summary: *2 Corinthians 8. True Saints impart of their substance to the poor—Christ, out of His poverty, brought eternal riches.*

2 Corinthians 9. God loves and rewards a cheerful giver—Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.

2 Corinthians 10. Bring every thought into obedience—Paul glories in the Lord.

2 Corinthians 11. Maintain the simplicity that is in Christ—Satan sends forth false apostles—Paul glories in his sufferings for Christ.

2 Corinthians 12. Paul is caught up to the third heaven—The Lord gives men weaknesses that they may triumph over them—Paul manifests the signs of an Apostle.

2 Corinthians 13. Saints should test themselves as to righteousness—Be perfect and of one mind; live in peace.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

How may I improve my sense of giving?

In Hebrew the
closest word to

giving is *tzedakah*. While the word is also used for charity, *tzedakah* is seen as a form of providing by the donor as well as the receiver. Another word in Hebrew, “to give” is *Natan*, and in English, the word can be read forward and backward, so when we think about philanthropy and idea of “to give” it is also about “to receive.” More than a financial transaction, philanthropy in the spirit of *tzedakah* builds a trusting relationship and is considered a contribution of time, effort, and thoughtful insights. Since we have been blessed, we turn and bless others. At the end of every Jewish worship service, the *Aleinu* prayer states a goal of the Jewish people to “perfect the world under the sovereignty of God.” The term “perfect the world” in Hebrew is *tikkun olam*, which also means to fix or repair the world. The *Torah* claims “there will never cease to be needy ones in your land.” “For the poor shall never cease out

of the land: therefore, I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land (**Deuteronomy 15:11**).” (<https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/jewish-philanthropy-concept-tzedakah>)

What can I do to remind myself about the principle of giving?

“The rabbis of that generation enacted new laws whose purpose was to fulfill the biblical verse, “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem . . . ” (**Psalm 137**). They decreed that a corner of every house, a part of every meal, even some of every woman’s jewelry, be set aside --- in memory of the Temple. Special prayers were formulated to express the yearning of the people to return to Zion and to worship once again in the Temple of God . . . a glass was broken at every wedding, and the words “Next year in Jerusalem” were recited on Passover and at the end of the Day of Atonement --- all in memory of the Temple. Most historians believe that these prayers, customs, and hopes helped to unite the Jewish people and kept alive the

hope of returning to Zion, a hope fulfilled in our days.” “In addition to belief in God, one of the important articles of faith of the Jew is that God is good. Often human beings cannot appreciate God's goodness, because no human being can see the whole course of events as God does. A unique aspect of the Jewish faith is that although God rules the world with absolute justice, He is also merciful and forgives sins against Him. The doctrine of repentance is based on this belief.” “The exercise of mercy is an obligation for all Jews. By this it is meant that they must act with compassion and forgiveness towards all mankind, and perform deeds of charity and kindness. This quality is an essential characteristic of God who is known as *Rahum* ("Merciful") and, in accordance with the tradition which sets as man's goal the imitation of God: "As He is merciful, so be you merciful." Just as God is bound by His covenant of mercy with His people, so is the Jew bound by specific commandments to act mercifully to the oppressed, the alien, the orphan, the widow, and indeed, every living creature. (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

What is the result of living in peace?

In his writings, Paul reflects his Old Testament “Jewish” traditional way of thinking as reflected in the following. “Ecclesiastes or Kohelet, is one of the five *Megillot* (five short books of the Bible: Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther). It has won enduring popularity because of its wise maxims and its counsel on life. "Ecclesiastes" from the Greek and "Kohelet" in Hebrew, means leader or teacher of a group. The Book reveals the wisdom acquired by Kohelet on his journey through life. He experiences joy and sorrow, faith and doubt, vanity and humility, hypocrisy and truth. The struggle to find meaning and purpose in life was as baffling for him as it is for us today. Kohelet arrives at the conclusion that the true joy of life lies not in wealth nor in vain

pleasure but in spiritual riches of fulfilling *mitzvot*, (God's commandments). Love and reverence for the Almighty help man to accept his fate and to overcome the obstacles and temptation that continually beset him.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) Once reconciled to God, the adversity in life brings His peace, resulting in a spirit of fulfillment, completeness and serenity that enables us to comfort and bless others in their difficulties. “Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.” (2 Corinthians 13:11) “It is generally thought that the Hebrew word *shalom* means peace, but it is really much more than that. The main problem in understanding *shalom* is that there is no single word for it in English, and even many words when they are strung into deep philosophical theories, cannot capture the full meaning of the simple Hebrew. *Shalom* in Jewish thought has a positive connotation and, as such, is central to Judaism. Peace, on the other hand, is a negative concept; the absence of war, strife, and fighting. *Shalom* is more like fulfillment, completeness, serenity, or security. Its opposite is not only war and strife, but adversity, injustice, fragmentation or disunity.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

How do I express thankfulness – in humility?

“In Judaism, the *middah* (Jewish value) of *hakarat hatov* (gratitude) is used to emphasize the importance of recognizing the amazing things God has blessed us with in our lives . . . it is also about our attitude toward the world around us.” ([https://thebluedovefoundation.org/hakkarot-hatov-judaism-gratitude-and-you/#:~:text=In%20Judaism%2C%20the%20middah%20\(Jewish,toward%20the%20world%20around%20us\)](https://thebluedovefoundation.org/hakkarot-hatov-judaism-gratitude-and-you/#:~:text=In%20Judaism%2C%20the%20middah%20(Jewish,toward%20the%20world%20around%20us))) “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.” (2 Corinthians 13:14)

