

MAZON Hunger Shabbat - Text Study

ויקרא י"ט:ט'-י'

(ט) וּבְקִצְרְכֶם אֶת־קִצִּיר אֲרֻצְכֶם לֹא תִכְלֶה
פֶּאֶת שְׂדֵךְ לְקִצֹר וְלִקֵּט קִצִּירָהּ לֹא תִלְקֹט:

(י) וְכִרְמֶךָ לֹא תַעֲזֹלֵל וּפְרֹט כִּרְמֶךָ לֹא תִלְקֹט
לְעַנִּי וְלִגֵּר תַּעֲזֹב אֹתָם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

Leviticus 19:9-10

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I, Adonai, am your God.

Questions to Consider:

- What is the significance of leaving food for the poor to collect rather than bringing the harvest to the market or delivering it in person?
- What is the significance of leaving food for the stranger?
- How can we live out this commandment today?
 - › How might we understand this teaching in the context of advocacy rather than food donation?

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ספרא, בהר, פרשה ה' א'

(א) [א] "וכי ימוך אחיך ומטה ידו עמך" – אל תניחהו לירד. הא למה זה דומה? למשא על גבי החמור. עודנו במקומו – אחד תופס בו ומעמידו. נפל לארץ – חמשה אין מעמידין אותו. ומנין אם החזקת, אפילו ארבעה או חמשה פעמים, חזור והחזק? תלמוד לומר "והחזקת בו".

Sifra, Behar, Section 5 1 (on Leviticus 25:35)

"If your brother grows poor, and his hand falls with you, you should uphold him... and he shall live": Do not allow him to drop. To what may this be compared? To a (slipping) burden upon a donkey. So long as it is still in its place, you can grab onto it and set it aright. Once it has fallen to the ground, not even five can get it back again. And whence is it derived that even if you upheld him even four or five times you must, if necessary, continue doing so? From "then you shall uphold him" (connoting continuity) ... and he shall live."

Questions to Consider:

- What is the significance of saying "if your brother" becomes poor rather than "if a person" becomes poor? How does this influence your understanding of the text?
 - › Does this linguistic choice narrow the scope of your responsibility or does it create a connection/relationship with those who need assistance?
- What can the story about the donkey's slipping burden teach us about our responsibility to help people experiencing poverty today?
- How does this text address whether or not there are limits to the help we might offer?
 - › How many times are we required to help?