





# Tzedakah (תְּדָקָה) Facts


 *Tzedakah* (תְּדָקָה) comes from the Hebrew root *tzedeq* (צַדִּיק) which means justice and righteousness. Therefore, *tzedakah* is not defined as charity, but rather those things we do because we have a sense of responsibility towards God and our fellow human beings.

 *Tzedakah* is required of everyone, even the poorest person, so that we all can enjoy the satisfaction of fulfilling this *mitzvah*.


 The Jewish ideals of *Tzedakah* were summarized and taught by Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (Nicknames: Maimonides and RaMBaM), a great teacher in the 12th century who lived in Spain and then Egypt. Maimonides believed that *Tzedakah* is like a ladder. It has eight rungs, with #8 being the highest level of giving:

1. The person who gives reluctantly and with regret.
2. The person who gives graciously, but less than one should.
3. The person who gives what one should, but only after being asked.
4. The person who gives before being asked.
5. The person who gives without knowing to whom he or she gives, although the recipient knows the identity of the donor.
6. The person who gives without making his or her identity known.
7. The person who gives without knowing to whom he or she gives. The recipient does not know from whom he or she receives.
8. The person who helps another to become self-supporting by a gift or a loan or by finding employment for the recipient.

 The Torah tells us that we are required give 10% of our income for *tzedakah*.

 We are required to give both to non-Jewish people in need as well as Jewish people in need.

 It is traditional to donate *tzedakah* just before Shabbat or a holiday.

 If we are unable to contribute money to those in need, we can also donate our time or talents.