**Peula: Tzedaka and Eretz Yisrael**

**Goal:** This peula has a two-part goal. The first part is to have the chanichim understand the mitzvot of peah, leket, and shichicha, and how they are different forms of giving tzedakah, and why that is important. The second part is to learn about and discuss the concept of tzedakah in general and different ways in which we can give it.

**Part 1: Learning about the Mitzvot**

**Mitzvah #1: Peah**

**Torah Source:**

[ויקרא י״ט:ט׳](file:////Leviticus%2019:9)

 וּֽבְקֻצְרְכֶם֙ אֶת־קְצִ֣יר אַרְצְכֶ֔ם לֹ֧א תְכַלֶּ֛ה פְּאַ֥ת שָׂדְךָ֖

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field

* Ask the chanichim if anyone has heard of the mitzvah of peah and if they know what it is
* Explain the general concept from the pasuk above – that a corner of the field is left for the poor

**Game: Four Corners (variation)**

* Four corners of a room are designated with the numbers 1 to 4
* One chanich/a is chosen to be “it” or the “farmer”
* The farmer sits in the middle of the room and closes his/her eyes or leaves the room and counts to ten
* The other chanichim are “crops” and choose one of the corners and quietly go and stand in that area
* Each round, one corner is assigned as the “peah corner” with a different chanich/a standing there as the “poor person”
* When the farmer has finished counting, he/she calls out a corner of the room to be “harvested”
* If you are a crop and the number of your corner has been called, you have been harvested and are out of the game
* If the farmer calls a corner with no chanichim in it, the round restarts and the chanichim rotate to a new corner
* If the farmer chooses the peah corner, he/she loses, and the poor person becomes the next farmer
* If the farmer gets everyone out besides for the poor person, then he/she wins and plays another round

**Mitzvah #2: Leket**

**Torah Source** (second part of the pasuk for peah)**:**

[ויקרא י״ט:ט׳](file:////Leviticus%2019:9)

וְלֶ֥קֶט קְצִֽירְךָ֖ לֹ֥א תְלַקֵּֽט׃

[you shall not]… gather the gleanings of your harvest

* As above, ask the chanichim what they know about the mitzvah
* Explain that gleanings are dropped crops, which must be left for the needy. If, while harvesting, the farmer drops one or two ears of grain, those are considered leket and may not be picked up. If he drops three or more, it’s not leket and he may pick them up.

Article Retrieved from <https://www.breakingisraelnews.com/115707/knesset-passes-food-donation-act/>:

# Israel is Fifth Country Worldwide to Pass National Food Rescue Law

By [Tsivya Fox](https://www.breakingisraelnews.com/author/tsivyafox/)  [October 24, 2018 , 11:42 am](https://www.breakingisraelnews.com/115707/knesset-passes-food-donation-act/)

After ten years of debate, Israel has now become the fifth nation in the world to pass a national food rescue law. “The Food Donation Act” protects food donors, non-profit organization, staff and volunteers from criminal and civil liability should donated food cause any negative consequences to the receivers.

The act, which was led by Member of Knesset (MK) Uri Maklev with support from MK Eli Elalouf, MKs Moshe Gafni, Yechiel ‘Hilik’ Bar, Orly Levi Abekasis, Shuli Mualem and Mordechai Yogev, and in cooperation with **Leket Israel** hopes to change the face of hunger in the Holy Land.

The law is meant to protect those who donate food in good faith from being responsible should a person end up eating tainted food. Therefore, only where there is clear criminal activity or obvious and intentional negligence will food donors now be liable.

“In Israel, every third child suffers from hunger and every fourth person from poverty,” Maklev stated, “We have to make an effort to find a solution. There are solutions. Restaurant owners, hotels and organizations should not be throwing away food since destroying food is like destroying the soul.”

Judaism maintains a basic ethical principle, based on Deuteronomy 20:19-20, that one should not destroy wastefully:

*“When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down.”*

Known as *ba’al tashchit* (בל תשחית), the sages extended the concept to various other dictates including not destroying or wasting of food.

“The passing of the Food Donation Act is so important to Israel’s impoverished citizens; it benefits organizations like *Meir Panim* that strive to feed those who are hungry with quality food,” said Danielle Rubin, Project Director of [American Friends of *Meir Panim*](https://www.meirpanim.org/donate/?ref=bin_10_24_18&utm_source=breaking_israel_news&utm_medium=website&utm_campaign=food_donation_act&utm_content=10_24_18)*,*to *Breaking Israel News*. “It’s exciting that this bill passed on the heels of World Food Day. We congratulate **Leket** for encouraging this bill, as they regularly donate their food surplus to *Meir Panim*’s soup kitchens located throughout Israel.”

The Food Donation Act is similar to the Bill Emerson Act in the United States that absolves food donors, non-profit organizations, staff and volunteers at non-profit organizations from criminal and civil liability, provided they adhere to the Ministry of Health’s food safety requirements. Similar acts are maintained in Canada, New Zealand and Italy, making Israel only the fifth to pass such a bill.

The new law’s explanatory notes highlight the fact that more and more of Israel’s population suffer from food insecurity, including many children. “1.8 million Israelis suffer from food insecurity while 2.3 million tons of food at a value of NIS 19.5 billion (5+ billion USD) is thrown away annually,” stated Gidi Kroch, **Leket** Israel’s CEO. “The Food Donation Act opens the door to hundreds of organizations and businesses that have quality and substantial amounts of surplus food but do not currently donate out of fear from liability.”

Restaurants, banquet halls, corporate dining rooms, retail chains and hotels, until now, have avoided donating their excess food to people and organizations for fear of civil or criminal liability should their food cause someone to become sick.

According to estimates, this law will triple the scope of food donations and will expand food rescue on a national level. “Food insecurity is a serious problem which, among other issues, increases the social gaps between people, especially children,” continued Rubin to *Breaking Israel News*. “The new law will help provide nutritious food for those in need and also significantly reduce food waste and cost.”

With nearly one fifth of Israelis living with [food insecurity](https://www.meirpanim.org/donate/?ref=bin_10_24_18&utm_source=breaking_israel_news&utm_medium=website&utm_campaign=food_donation_act&utm_content=10_24_18) and half of all food still fit for consumption thrown out, it is estimated that by rescuing annually just 20 percent of the wasted food in Israel, food insecurity for most people would disappear. Additionally, a recent poll of hotels by the Israel Hotel Association found that some 80 percent of hotels were interested in participating in a food rescue program but withheld doing so for fear of lawsuits.

While trying to push this bill through, Maklev noted, “We see a reality where those with plenty do not know those without. There are many organizations that are interested in donating surplus food, but due to their concerns and fears of liability, they destroy the food rather than donate it to the people who need it most. It is our obligation to help and encourage anyone who wants to [donate](https://www.meirpanim.org/donate/?ref=bin_10_24_18&utm_source=breaking_israel_news&utm_medium=website&utm_campaign=food_donation_act&utm_content=10_24_18) and not to prevent it.”

“The bill is a clear example of the situation in which disadvantaged populations and children under the poverty line can be assisted by the civil society that wants to help them,” said MK Orly Levi Abekasis. “There is no reason to destroy good quality food when there are hungry families in Israel.”

The report explained that each shekel invested in food rescue provides NIS 3.6 worth of food. Adding in factors such as environmental benefits, this figure doubles to NIS 7.2 for every shekel invested.

Surplus food in the retail and distribution sectors is “inevitable,” the report stated, as retailers are required to ensure a constant availability of food to consumers who will not tolerate a shortage of the food items they want to buy.

“I bless everyone who participated in promoting this law,” shared MK Eli Elalouf, Chairman of the Labor, Welfare and Health Committee. “It is a huge milestone and I am proud to be a partner in this initiative.”

**Discussion Points:**

* \*It is not necessary to read the whole article, unless the chanichim say they wish to do so. Highlight the important points and give the chanichim specific portions to read out loud
* This act was accomplished with the support of Leket Israel. If you go to their website and click “About Us” this is what is written:

Leket Israel, the National Food Bank, is the leading food rescue organization in Israel. Unique among all other organizations that serve the poor in Israel and food banks worldwide, [Leket Israel’s sole focus is rescuing healthy, surplus food](https://www.leket.org/en/on-food-rescue/) and delivering it to those in need through partner nonprofit organizations.

## The Vision

An Israel where all surplus, nutritious food is rescued and directed to those who need it.

## The Mission

To lead the safe, effective and efficient collection and distribution of surplus nutritious food in Israel, to those who need it.

* + Have a chanich/a read this out loud
* Why do you think Israel’s national food bank was chosen to be named with the term “leket” specifically?
* Is it significant that the term/concept of leket comes from the Torah? Does that send a message? If so, what is that message?
* What does the fact that only 5 countries have passed a bill of this nature tell you about Israel and its priorities?

**Mitzvah #3: Shichicha**

**Scenario/Trigger:**

* Tell the chanichim to imagine that they lost something that they really care about
* Go around and ask chanichim to give personal examples of objects that are valuable to them to make the content more relatable/interactive
* Ask the chanichim how they would feel and react in such a situation
* They will presumably give answers such as “upset,” “frustrated,” “sad”
* Then tell the chanichim that although they couldn’t get said object back, they somehow found out that someone else received their object and benefitted greatly from it
* Ask the chanichim:
* Would this fact change the way you react to the situation? Why or why not?
* Would you be able to justify your loss by saying it happened for a good reason?
* Should we try to have this type of reaction (as opposed to the first) all of the time when we lose something, regardless of the outcome? If so, why?

**Torah Source:**

[דברים כ״ד:י״ט](file:////Deuteronomy%2024:19)

כִּ֣י תִקְצֹר֩ קְצִֽירְךָ֨ בְשָׂדֶ֜ךָ וְשָֽׁכַחְתָּ֧ עֹ֣מֶר בַּשָּׂדֶ֗ה לֹ֤א תָשׁוּב֙ לְקַחְתּ֔וֹ לַגֵּ֛ר לַיָּת֥וֹם וְלָאַלְמָנָ֖ה יִהְיֶ֑ה לְמַ֤עַן יְבָרֶכְךָ֙ יקוק אֱלֹקֶ֔יךָ בְּכֹ֖ל מַעֲשֵׂ֥ה יָדֶֽיךָ׃

When you reap the harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, do not turn back to get it; it shall go to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow—in order that Hashem your God may bless you in all your undertakings.

* Explain that in the case of shichicha, you are the farmer and the crops forgotten in the field are the lost valuable objects
* Even though the farmer loses some of his crops, which is unfortunate as an isolated situation, you must see it in the bigger picture that someone who really needed was able to gain from it

**Overall Discussion Points/Bringing it all Together:**

* “More than what the rich man does for the poor man, is what the poor man does for the rich man” (Midrash Rabba: Rut: 5:9) – why do you think chazal said this?
* What is the common theme/message among these mitzvot?
* Potential points to bring up:
  + The very purpose of creation is the reason why giving is so important. Hashem is the ultimate giver, and man is supposed to emulate God’s actions in this world.
  + By giving up these crops, land-owners are acknowledging that nothing truly belongs to them in this world and are recognizing owning crops as an opportunity from Hashem to give to those who need it
  + Hashem created the world with people of different kinds, such as rich and poor, to allow people the opportunity to use their strengths, resources, and situations for the better.
  + The obligation to perform these mitzvot are imbedded into the act itself of living in Eretz Yisrael, meaning if you live in Israel, you must do them. This shows how important of a value giving tzedakah is to the Jewish people (can tie back to the article and how even in Israel today this fact shows through).

**Part 2: Types of Tzedakah**

**Activity:**

* Split the chanichim into two groups
* Present each group with the cut-up pieces of paper of the different levels of tedakah, out of order
* Tell them to put the papers in order from worst to best forms of giving tzedakah
* When they are done, have the groups present their order and why they chose to do it that way
* After both groups present, show them the list of Rambam’s levels of tzedakah that he compiled based off of the Talmud

**Discussion Points:**

* Why is this the order supported by the Talmud/Rambam? I.e., what constitutes good forms of giving and less good forms of giving and why? \*don’t need to rehash if this was already discussed in depth during the activity
* Is there such a thing as bad giving? If so, would it be better to give nothing at all or give in a bad way?
* How do you think the mitzvot we covered in this peulah (peah, leket, and shichicha) could fit into this list?
* Potential points to bring up:
  + The field-owner must not involve himself at all in giving crops. He must completely remove himself from the picture and leave it for the poor to take themselves.
  + Can contrast these mitzvot to giving tzedakahdirectly wherein the giver may feel an inevitable sense of pride for being the giver and seeing those he is giving to
  + These mitzvot provide a constant source of stability to poor people because there is no timeline or set amount restricting them

**Materials**

Rambam’s 8 levels of Tzedakah (in order from worst to best):

|  |
| --- |
| **Giving begrudgingly and making the recipient feel disgraced or embarrassed.** |
| **Giving cheerfully but giving too little.** |
| **Giving cheerfully and adequately but only after being asked.** |
| **Giving before being asked.** |
| **Giving when you do not know who is the individual benefiting, but the recipient knows your identity.** |
| **Giving when you know who is the individual benefiting, but the recipient does not know your identity.** |
| **Giving when neither the donor nor the recipient is aware of the other's identity.** |
| **Giving money, a loan, your time or whatever else it takes to enable an individual to be self-reliant.** |