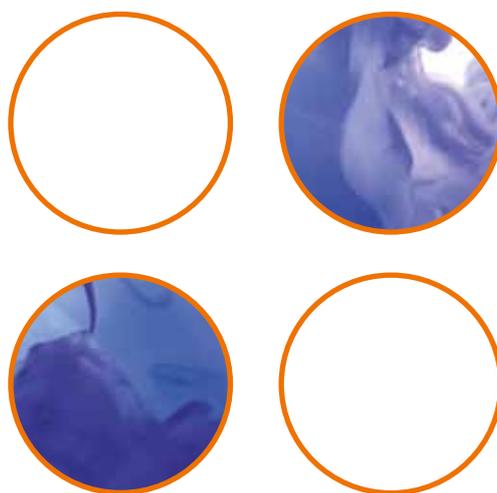


TZEDAKAH
צדקה



Learning Tzedakah

Chavruta is celebrating its twentieth year, and to mark this momentous milestone we are reissuing our first book, Tzedakah. The value of tzedakah is timeless in Jewish thought, and many of the questions that make it such a vibrant area of discussion remain unchanged. Will poverty ever cease? Is it up to society as a whole to combat poverty? Is it up to the individual? How much should a person give? To whom should they give it? And with what sort of attitude? The conversations contained in this book are as relevant as ever and inspire a vibrant discussion rooted in our tradition. Though often written hundreds, or even thousands of years ago, these texts have a huge amount to add to our contemporary debates on the topic. The questions we seek to ask are tough, and don't expect the answers to be any simpler. This book presents complex ideas and on occasion our texts suggest solutions that are hard to accept.

Though the questions driving the discussions in the book have stayed broadly similar since the first publication, many other things have been changed and updated in this reissue. In revamping the book, we have endeavoured to keep the Hebrew sources largely untouched; they are truly the heart of the book. Seasoned Chavrutaniks will notice this in a few areas, particularly at the beginning of each section, as they begin with the same verse from Deuteronomy, unlike more recent Chavruta books that use a wider range of key sources. Where we have seen the most significant change is in the left-hand side (LHS)

sources, as well as in the layout of the book. The LHS sources are all completely new, and have been collected by our wonderful team of volunteers.

There is a vast body of Jewish material about Tzedakah. The bulk of this book is made up of traditional Jewish sources (on the right-hand pages) and other, non-traditional or non-Jewish sources (on the left-hand pages). We have included Points to Consider as starting points for discussion, and suggested paths through the book, via the Connections. However, there are myriad ways to study with this book, and if our questions or connections aren't your cup of tea, feel free to ignore them!

For this reissue, we have kept most of the original right-hand texts, which were assembled in 1996 by Jonnie Cohen, Paul Dinkin, Paul Glantz, Jamie Salter, Sybil Sheridan, Jeremy Wanderer and Raphael Zarum. New texts for the left-hand pages were contributed by a team of volunteers from London and New York: Ellen Flax (Section One), Beth Levy (Section Two), Ben Winton (Section Three), and Janine Stein (Section Four). The format was overhauled and expanded to match more recent Chavruta book style.

Section One, 'Who Comes First?', looks at who takes precedence in receiving tzedakah.

Section Two, 'How to Give', questions the appropriate attitude involved in giving tzedakah.

Section Three, 'How Much?', delves into how much tzedakah we should give.

Section Four, 'Is There an End?', explores the possibility of eradicating poverty.

In addition to the team members listed above, I would like to thank Lindsey Taylor-Guthartz for all her advice, not only proofreading the English text but keeping this project on track in its final weeks; Yuval Keren for setting and proofreading the Hebrew text; David Biton for his thoughts and guidance; Jacqueline Nicholls for her gorgeous artwork; and Uri Berkowitz of Maven Design for the graphic design of this book and invaluable guidance. Special thanks go to Robin Moss and Mikhael Reuven, the Limmud Publications co-chairs, for their confidence and trust in me throughout the process of producing this book. Last but not least, I would like to thank all the wonderful people who agreed to present and facilitate Chavruta sessions at Limmud Conference 2016, as well as all of you who came along to learn. Limmud exists because of all the amazing participants and volunteers!

The aim of the Limmud Chavruta project is to present Jewish perspectives on a topic that will capture the imagination of all Jews. We hope that the theme of Tzedakah will both inspire and encourage people to learn, and provide the space and energy for discussions that are truly *leshem shamayim* (for the sake of heaven).

Hannah Skolnick
Chair, Chavruta Project 2016

What is Limmud?

Based in the UK and founded over 30 years ago, Limmud (the Hebrew word for 'learning') is a global leader in innovative, inclusive Jewish education.

The widely acclaimed winter Limmud Conference is one of the largest international gatherings of Jewish people. Over two and a half thousand people take part in over a thousand sessions over five intense, fun-filled, intellectually-challenging and unforgettable days. As at every Limmud event, presenters give their time and share their knowledge freely.

Limmud events and programmes also include Regional Day Limmuds across the UK, a summer festival Limmud in the Woods, emails, podcasts, a Shabbat book and the Chavruta Project.

Limmud International

Limmud is now very much an international movement with volunteer teams planning and running events in over 80 communities around the world.

Limmud set up Limmud International as the body to develop and provide training, mentoring and support for groups around the world. Its vision is that every Jew, wherever they are, will be taken one step further on their Jewish journey.

With shared principles and values, Limmud International encourages and creates common spaces between the different Limmud groups around the world. We are proud that this year's Chavruta Project is again an international collaboration by volunteers from so many Limmud communities. It shows what we can all achieve by working together.

www.limmudinternational.org

The Chavruta Project and Limmud's core values

Chavruta is something that all Limmud events are encouraged to include because it is such a clear example of Limmud's values:

- Chavruta is a model of **learning** which changes people, inspires action and opens new worlds. It is the only model where every participant can be a teacher and a student *at the same time*. This creates a learning environment in which people are able to reflect and grow.
- Chavruta is part of the Limmud community of learning, and embraces its **commitment to community and mutual responsibility**. Chavruta is also a collective experience, through which participants strengthen and develop their Jewish identity, and is therefore a prime example of how Limmud is **expanding Jewish horizons**.
- Chavruta relies on **empowerment**, giving every participant a forum to teach as well as to learn, and **participation**, encouraging participants to play an exceptionally active role in the session. Chavruta is the ultimate form of participatory learning.
- Chavruta is a cross-communal and cross-generational experience, which aims to be accessible to all who want to learn. Chavruta embraces **diversity** and harnesses its power to create profound experiences. In this way, Chavruta is enabling **connections** to be made between individuals from all streams of our community. Chavruta provides a space where participants connect spiritually, emotionally and intellectually.

The real power of Chavruta is that participants can not only take their experiences home but also use the resources and learning model in their own lives and introduce it to the lives of others.



For the full text of Limmud's mission, values and principles, visit: limmud.org/home/mission

Chavruta at Limmud Conference in the UK

The starting point for many learners are the Chavruta sessions at Limmud Conference.

There are two study modes available:

- **Guided:** a hands-on facilitator guides participants through a selection of sources by means of group discussion punctuated by opportunities to explore a new text with your chavruta partner;
- **Traditional:** the original Limmud Chavruta experience – beginning and concluding with a facilitated group discussion and plenty of time in between to learn with your partner, creating your own journey through the texts.