

## Maharal on the Sedra

### **The Difference between Tzedaka and Gemilut Chasadim**

**Netiv Gemilut Chasadim 2:154** - The rabbis learned that in three ways tzedaka [charity] differs from gemilut chasadim [acts of kindness] [Sukka 49b].

Charity is done with money, but chesed is done with money or bodily assistance.

Charity is for the needy, but chesed can be done for poor or rich.

Charity is given to the living, while chesed can be for the living or the departed.

In the case of acts of kindness, the giver does good whether or not the recipient makes a request for help, while the recipient of charity is in need whether or not he expresses it.

Chesed is giver-driven while charity is driven by the needs of the recipient.

Because chesed comes out of the good of the doer, it is certainly on a higher level, as it is written, "Sow your seed for charity and harvest with kindness", which means if one sows, he may or not eat of the subsequent crop, but when he harvests, he will eat of it. Charity is not rewarded but for the kindness in it, which means to say kindness is the provider's aspect and charity is from the receiver's aspect. If the

provider gives charity but the recipient is not worthy or fitting, there is no charity, but acts of kindness that a good person provides for another are rewarded irrespective of the recipient. If the charity is given in a stingy manner it has no kindness in it. The charity given full heartedly [ayin tov] is rewarded according to its chesed content.

Understand this well.

*Column prepared by Dr. Moshe Kuhr*