



Correct Way To Give Tzedakah For Rabbi Meir Ba'al HaNes

(as well as what to say when losing an object)

[#73]

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Today we're going to be speaking about the halacha of giving tzedakah, when it comes to giving to the tzedakah of "Rabbi Meir Ba'al HaNes". Maybe not everybody knows, but many people are accustomed, that if they lose something or they're in a distressful situation, or an emergency, or something like that, they make a *neder*/pledge to the tzedakah of "Rabbi Meir Ba'al HaNes". As well, in many shuls, you'll see that there's a "Rabbi Meir Ba'al HaNes tzedakah box" and some people have tzedakah boxes of Rabbi Meir Ba'al HaNes in their homes. Today I want to discuss what exactly is going on and how it is properly done, in the proper way.

Today we're using a *sefer* called *The Laws of Tzedakah and Maaser*, by Rabbi Shimon Taub. He brings over here that there is a custom to make a vow, a *neder*, of tzedakah to the tzedakah of Rabbi Meir Ba'al HaNes. It has its roots from the *Gemara* in *Mesechet Avodah Zarah*. He says that what happened was, before Rabbi Meir Ba'al HaNes passed away, he saw that there was a very bad situation of hunger in Eretz Yisrael. He said that he would intercede in prayer on behalf of anybody who would give tzedakah for his *neshamah* and the money should be distributed to the poor people of Eretz Yisrael. Now, I'm going to get back to that part about Eretz Yisrael in a second.

When one donates tzedakah for this Rabbi Meir Ba'al HaNes, so he should first give the money and then afterwards say three words, *Elaka d'Meir aneini*, which translated means, the "G-d of Meir should answer me". He says here in the *sefer* that you say it one time, but there are those who have the *minhag*/tradition to say it three times, *Elaka d'Meir aneini, Elaka d'Meir aneini, Elaka d'Meir aneini*. But whatever you want, even one time should be fine.

Most people know about this Rabbi Meir Ba'al HaNes *segula*, that when they lose something, they give money for Rabbi Meir Ba'al HaNes in the merit of finding what was lost.

It says over here that it should be done immediately after losing the item, because if something happens to the item, such as it changes form, or it gets spent (if actual money was lost) it will not work. So it's always good to immediately give the tzedakah, right away, and say that it's for Rabbi Meir Ba'al HaNes and say the *Elaka d'Meir aneini*.

Going back to what we said before, about the money needing to go to Eretz Yisrael, he says over here that a person should make sure the money goes to help the poor people in Eretz Yisrael because that's what Rabbi Meir Ba'al HaNes intended should be done. He brings sources/*mekoros* for this. Many people are unaware of this condition and they just give random tzedakah and they say, it should be for Rabbi Meir Ba'al HaNes. From here, we see specifically that the money is supposed to go to the poor people or *yeshivos* in Eretz Yisrael, to help with the situation in Eretz Yisrael, to support those people. That was the intention of Rabbi Meir Ba'al HaNes.

I'm also going to add another thing people add when they lose things. It's not in this *sefer*, but I'm bringing it here for convenience. It comes from the Midrash Bereishis (43:14) to say a special *pasuk* from *Chumash* along with a quote. Those who wish to do this and add in the *segula* for R' Meir Ba'al HaNes should say the following, "*Amar Rabi Binyamin hakol b'chezkas sumin ad sheHaKadosh Baruch Hu me'ir es eineihem min hacha vayifkach Elokim es eineha ... vatelech vatimaleh hachamas, Elaka d'Meir aneini Elaka d'Meir aneini Elaka d'Meir aneini.*"

אמר רבי בנימין הכל בחזקת סומין עד שהקדוש ברוך הוא מאיר את עיניהם, מן הכא ויפקח אלוקים את עיניה, ותלך ותמלא החמת. אלהא דמאיר ענבי, אלהא דמאיר ענבי, אלהא דמאיר ענבי. בזכות הצדקה שאני נודב לעילוי נשמת רבי מאיר בעל הנס, זכותו יגן עלינו למצוא את האבדה שאיבדתי

It's talking about the *pesukim* when Hagar left Avraham and Sara, when she was with *Yishmael* in the desert without water, the *pasuk* says that Hashem opened her eyes and she found the well of water. In reality, the well was in front of her eyes the whole time, just she didn't see it. Hashem just "opened" her eyes. The word "ויפקח" is similarly used when we say each morning the bracha of *pokei'ach ivrim*, that Hashem gives sight to the blind. Hashem opened her eyes and she saw what was in front of her face the whole time. So too, we ask that Hashem should reveal to us the lost item. It's not lost; we just can't see or find it until Hashem reveals it to us.

Also, some people erroneously say the *pasuk* as "*vayiftach Elokim es eineha...*" which is incorrect. The *pasuk* is in *Bereishis* (21:19). The *pasuk* says, "*vayifkach Elokim es eineiha...*"

In summary, for the *tzedakah* for Rabbi Meir Ba'al HaNes, a person takes the money and says *Elaka d'Meir aneini*, and then gives it. He can additionally say the phrase of "Amar Rabi Binyamin..." followed by the *pasuk* in *Bereishis*. And also, that the money should go to the poor people (or a *yeshiva*) in *Eretz Yisrael*.

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