**If I Were a Rich Man**



**#1**

**Today’s Learning Material**

After a miraculous victory in war against four kings, Avraham gives a tenth of all he has to the priest Malchi Tzedek. This is the first time that the giving of a tenth is mentioned in the Torah:

**Torah Bereishis 14:20**

*… and he gave him one-tenth from all.*

Later, Yaakov promises G-d that he will too give a tenth to charity:

**Torah Bereishis 28:22**

*And all that You will give me, I shall surely tithe for You.*

**#2**

The Jewish Staten Island Family Foundation is a charity trust that hands out $1,000,000 a year to non-profit organizations and individuals.

Adam and Bertha Fox’s three grandchildren, Lexi, Zach and Justin, were given full power over the Foundation last year by their parents, Cliff and Suzy Fox. Each year they meet to discuss the requests for charity and determine the amounts, if any, each organization or individual will receive and the order of priority.

**It is YOUR Foundation!**

**Your group needs to come to a unanimous list of priorities.**

**Explain the rationale behind your decisions.**

**Good luck!**

1. **THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK CITY**

Request: $75,000 Corporate Sponsorship for the exhibition "Lee Bontecou: A Retrospective".

This will be the first in-depth retrospective of the American artist Lee Bontecou, presenting not only her celebrated welded-steel sculptures from the 1960s and 1970s but also her lesser-known later work—including drawings and large-scale suspended pieces, painstakingly crafted by hand—most of it on view for the first time.

1. **THE JEWISH NATIONAL FUND**

Request: Build three new playgrounds in Southern Israel.

Life in Israel is intense for both children and adults. Support of JNF playground development makes a real and unique contribution to the quality of life for Israel's citizens. $100,000 per playground.

1. **THE EAST EUROPEAN JEWISH LIFE PROJECT**

Request: We are seeking to establish the following critical projects:

a. Medical clinic and visiting doctor in Minsk and other cities -- $175,000

b. Prescription medicines in emergencies and for the indigent -- $100,000

c. Hospice care for children -- $200,000

1. **CLIFF AND SUZY FOX**

A year after Cliff and Suzy Fox handed over the reins of the family foundation to their children, expecting to live off their savings and investments, and enjoy their retirement years, the stock market crashed, the real estate market shriveled up and they suffered an enormous, sudden financial setback, losing vast amounts of their fortune. Their only recourse in amassing sufficient funds is to sell their 24-room mansion and Rolls Royce. This sudden change in lifestyle will be extremely difficult for both Cliff and Suzy, and Cliff is gravely concerned about Suzy's ability to cope with the reversal of fortune.

Request: $350,000 from the Fox Family Foundation as immediate assistance to allow them to keep their home and luxury car.

1. **THE NATIONAL SOUP KITCHEN AND SHELTER OF AMERICA**

Request: We need your support to keep the effort going and to expand in 15 new cities. About 75% of all support comes from private contributions and 91 cents of every dollar goes directly to programs of the National Soup Kitchen and Shelter. National budget: $25 million. To sponsor a new city: $500,000.

1. **EXHIBIT J**

Exhibit J is a non-profit apolitical center providing opportunities for Jews of all backgrounds to discover the wisdom and beauty of their heritage in an atmosphere of open inquiry and mutual respect.

Request: $250,000 seed money to start new division “EJ Young Professionals” and $100,000 seed money to start running their own trips to Israel and Europe.

1. **PETER FOX**

Peter is Lexi's 19-year-old son. He was recently accepted into Harvard Business School. There is no way Peter can afford the tuition fees to Harvard and he is uncomfortable about taking out student loans. His parents cannot afford to pay for the 4-year tuition from their personal funds; therefore Peter is requesting from the family Foundation a grant for $120,000.

**#3**

**Talmud Bava Basra 9a**

*Charity weighs against all other Mitzvos of the Torah.*

**Question: Why is charity so central in Judaism?**

**#4**

Someone once asked Baron Edmond Rothschild about his net worth. He turned to his personal assistant to come up with a calculation. The assistant returned with a number based on his real estate holdings, investments, cash, etc. Rothschild turned to her and said, “That isn’t my worth. The markets could crash, the assets could be seized and I could lose it all in an instant.” He then opened his desk drawer, removed his charity ledger and said, “This is my real worth. What I have given to charity nobody could ever take away from me.”

**Question: How wealthy do you need to be to become charitable?**

**#5**

**Bava Basra 9a**

*One who causes others to give is greater than one who gives himself.*

**Question: What could be the reason for this?**

**#6**

**Midrash Vayikra Rabbah 34:10**

*The blessing of charity is greater for the person who gives than for the person who receives.*

**Talmud, Taanis 9a**

Concerning the tithing of one’s produce that one must donate to a Levite, the Torah states *‘aser taaser’*, “you shall surely tithe.” Sages make an interpretation: *“You shall surely tithe - tithe, so you become wealthy.”*

Indeed, we find that Yaakov achieved great wealth in the merit of his vow to tithe everything he receives, as the verse writes (Torah, Bereishis 30:43), *“The man spread out exceedingly, and he had great herds of cattle, and maid servants and servants, and camels and donkeys.”*

**Questions:**

* **How do you understand these statements?**
* **Why should it be this way?**

**#7**

**Pirkei Avos 5:16**

*There are four types of contributors to charity.*

*One who wants to give but does not want others to give - is begrudging of others.*

*One who wants that others should give but does not want to give - begrudges himself.*

*One who wants that he as well as others should give, is a chassid.*

*One who wants neither himself nor others to give, is wicked.*

*Rina’s Edit:*

*Begrudge (verb):*

*1. envy (someone) the possession or enjoyment of (something).*

*"she begrudged Martin his affluence"*

*2. give reluctantly or resentfully.*

*"nobody begrudges a single penny spent on health"*

**Questions:**

* **How do you understand the four types of contributors to charity?**
* **What prevents people from being more charitable?**
* **What attitudes would help people become more charitable?**
* **What charitable acts can you presently plan on doing?**

**#8**

**Question: What's your takeaway from today's discussion?**