

Today's class continues our exploration of the Biblical perception of charity, in contrast to that of the Talmudic sages. Last week through the study of Benny Porat we were able to see various types of social welfare that are found in the Torah. There were types of support that were meant to help the pauper to survive, to get through his/her tough times and in addition there were the laws whose purpose was to rehabilitate the poor (you should know which laws fall into which category!). I would just like to emphasize one of these laws that relate to rehabilitation that I do not think that Porat emphasized enough (although he does point in this direction). I am referring to the obligation to give interest-free loans. Such loans or credit are not meant to allow high-flying living but rather to allow the farmer to buy necessary things that will allow him to be productive again. This may be buying a horse or a cow, to buy seeds, a worker to help him plow the land. In short, a loan is part of the rehabilitative process, of helping the person to become self-sufficient. In contrast "Gleanings, forgotten produce, corners of the field" are the primary examples of aid that allow the poor to merely survive. You will be reading more about these obligations that are linked to the field's produce in today's reading by **Greg Gardner**. He calls this kind of assistance for the poor "**harvest-time allocations**".

What emerges from both of their treatments (Porat and Gardner) is that the social welfare approach as found in the Bible is very much linked to it being an agricultural society. When one comes, however, to the Talmudic Rabbis who were active in the urban centers, in the cities, they feel a need to supplement and even adapt these laws to a social reality that is not functioning in a purely agricultural context. We shall return to this later on in the semester but is already worth thinking about now.

Today's reading is from Greg Gardner who has written a book on Jewish charity in the ancient world. Today I will post from his introduction where he examines the word *Zeddakah or tsedaqah*, which is understood by all of us to mean "charity". Here he shows, and this is not his insight but the accepted scholarly one, that in most of the Bible the word is translated as general **righteousness** and no specific act of giving. He discusses other important aspects of charity as well such as the distinction between "charity" and "good deeds" and the conceptual difference between "harvest-time allocations" and the giving of charity.

Before we move onto the reading I need to introduce the two charitable institutions that the Talmudic Rabbi established *quppa* and *tamhui*. Without this knowledge it will be hard to understand the last 2 pages of the reading. For now it is sufficient to know that they created these organized institutions to help the poor, the local and the visiting poor, and I will cite from Gardner's book on the matter. Later on we will clarify the significance of these charitable institutions. I quote now from Gardner:

Rabbinic texts instruct that charity is best performed in a collective and organized way. "Just as in a coat of mail every small scale joins with the others to form one piece of armor," we read in the Babylonian Talmud, "so every little sum given to charity combines with the rest to form a large sum." *The rabbis envision that everyone in a community would contribute to their local tamhui or soup kitchen and quppa or charity fund. In turn, these institutions would distribute provisions to the poor.* Organized charity would become a hallmark of Jewish approaches to charity and, more broadly, Jewish life and

thought. “Never have we seen or heard of a Jewish community,” Maimonides wrote, “that does not have a *quppa*.” (Gardner, p. 2)

It is a short reading and easily understood.

Summary questions:

What is the difference between *tsedaqah* in the Bible and amongst the Rabbis of the Talmud?

Where can one see in the Rabbis’s teaching how they transformed the meaning of *tsedaqah*?

How do the Rabbis reformulate the obligation of giving a loan to the poor (even before the sabbatical year)?

What is the difference, according to Gardner, between *tsedaqah* and other acts of kindness?

What is *gemilut hasadim* and how does it differ from charity?

Is “charity” limited to giving money or does it include clothing and food?

How does Gardner distinguish between charity and “harvest-time allocations”?

In what way does Gardner’s treatment of “harvest-time allocations” differ from the way Porat treated them (last week’s reading)?

In what ways did the Rabbis, according to Gardner, expand the support for the poor?

What role did the “urban poor” play in the development of charity in the Talmudic period?

The second possibility is that the soup kitchen and charity fund are rabbinic inventions. This is based on the absence of extrarabbinic sources and the assessment that the problems of using rabbinic texts as sources for social history are too great to overcome. That is, we have no way of evaluating how *what ought to be* in the opinions of the rabbinic authors relates to *what is*.⁹¹ Rabbinic texts on the *tamhui* and *quppa* are read as part of an idealized rabbinic worldview on how society should care for the poor.

Whether the soup kitchen and charity fund are rabbinic inventions or Jewish inventions rabbinized, the evidence in either direction is far from overwhelming. We have, perhaps, reached what Hezser calls the “limits of interpretability.”⁹² In either case what we have in these texts are charity institutions as the rabbis wanted them to be. That is, the early rabbis develop a system of organized charity that, while in conversation with their contemporary world, is uniquely their own. It is laced with distinctly rabbinic features and addresses characteristically rabbinic concerns. And it is these distinctly Tannaitic versions of the soup kitchen and charity fund that would be carried forward in later rabbinic Judaism. They were drawn upon by the Talmuds and form the basis of poverty relief from the middle ages onwards. Thus, regardless of the reality at the time of the Tannaim, the versions of these institutions as they are set forth in the Tannaitic texts that are examined in this book constitute the foundations and origins of organized charity in rabbinic Judaism.

TSEDAQAH AND “CHARITY”: SOME DEFINITIONS

The term *tsedaqah* is found some 150 times in the Hebrew Bible, where it means “righteousness” – a broad concept, denoting right living or proper

heretics, etc.) are deeply ambiguous – at times they are inimical and advocate avoidance, at times they promote cooperation in varying degrees – so too their relationships with wealthy nonrabbinic Jews would have been highly complex. To be sure, the paucity and opaqueness of our sources cannot give us a clear indication of who controlled the *tamhui* and *quppa* (if they existed outside of the rabbinic mind) – let alone the Tannaim’s relationship to these individuals over this issue. On rabbis, nonrabbinic Jews, and the Tannaim’s lack of authority over broader Jewish society, see Cohen, “Rabbi in Second-Century,” 942–43, 956–77; Christine Hayes, “The ‘Other’ in Rabbinic Literature,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature* (ed. C. E. Fonrobert and M. S. Jaffee; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 257–63; Richard L. Kalmin, *The Sage in Jewish Society in Late Antiquity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 27–50; Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society*, 103–28.

⁹¹ Kraemer, “Food, Eating, and Meals,” 404.

⁹² Hezser, “Correlating,” 21.

behavior.⁹³ Nowhere in the Hebrew Bible does the Hebrew *tsedaqah* mean charity or almsgiving.⁹⁴ It is only in the Hellenistic era that we begin to find charity as a specific expression of righteous behavior. These include references in Tobit and the Dead Sea Scrolls, where charity/*tsedaqah* is understood as almsgiving.⁹⁵ These, however, amount to only a handful of instances and their significance should not be overstated, as *tsedaqah* predominantly denoted "righteousness" in prerabbinic texts. It is only in early rabbinic literature that "charity" becomes a common definition of *tsedaqah*. It would later become the predominant sense of the term and it remains so today.⁹⁶

Tannaitic texts mark a major turning point in the development of *tsedaqah* from righteousness to charity.⁹⁷ Following a thorough study of *tsedaqah* in Tannaitic compilations, Benno Przybylski concludes, "As a matter of fact, the primary meaning of the term *tsedaqah* in the Tannaitic literature is without doubt that of almsgiving as defined in T[osefta] *Pe'ah* 4:19."⁹⁸ Of the Tosefta's thirty-six "independent" uses of *tsedaqah* – where *tsedaqah* is not part of a quotation of Scripture – thirty-one refer to giving, receiving or administering alms. Of the Mishnah's six independent uses, four refer to charity.⁹⁹

The evolution of *tsedaqah* from "righteousness" to "charity" in early rabbinic texts is vividly illustrated in its "dependent" uses, where the word appears as part of citations of biblical verses. Here, we see Tannaitic texts interpreting

⁹³ The root *ts-d-q* occurs no less than 525 times in the Hebrew Bible, which includes over 150 instances of *tsedaqah* in particular.

⁹⁴ In later books of the Hebrew Bible, *tsedaqah* develops associations with material support for the needy, such as in Ps 37:21, 112:4–5; see Gary A. Anderson, "Redeem Your Sins by the Giving of Alms: Sin, Debt, and the 'Treasury of Merit' in Early Jewish and Christian Tradition," *Letter & Spirit* 3 (2007): 45–48; A. Hurvitz, "The Biblical Roots of a Talmudic Term: The Early History of the Concept of *tsedaqah* [= charity, alms] [Hebrew]," (1987): 155–60. To be sure, however, the only instance in which *tsedaqah* may denote charity is in Aramaic in Dan 4:24; see Ahuva Ho, *Sedeq and Sedaqah in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: P. Lang, 1991), 143; Franz Rosenthal, "Sedaka, Charity," *HUCA* 23 (1950/51): 411–30.

⁹⁵ 4Q424 or 4QWisd, and Qumran fragments of Tobit; see Anderson, "Redeem Your Sins," 45n. 28.

⁹⁶ On the history of the term *tsedaqah*, see the scholarship cited earlier and Eliezer Ben-Yehuda et al., *A Complete Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Hebrew: Thesaurus totius Hebraeitis et veteris et recentioris* [Hebrew] (8 vols.; New York and London: Thomas Yoseloff, 1960), s.v.; Avraham Even-Shoshan and Moshe Azar, *Milon Even-Shoshan: meḥudash u-me'udkan li-shenot ha-alpayim be-shishah kerakhim be-hishtatfut ḥever anshe mada'* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: ha-Milon he-ḥadash: Yorshe ha-meḥaber, 2003), 5:1571; Ya'akov Kena'ani, *Otsar ha-lashon ha-'Ivrit li-tekiufoteha ha-shonot* [Hebrew] (18 vols.; Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv: Masadah, 1960–1989), s.v.

⁹⁷ Benno Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew and his World of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 74–76. This is also noticed by Mauss, *The Gift*, 18.

⁹⁸ Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew*, 66.

⁹⁹ Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew*, 66–67.

tsedaqah in scripture as “charity.” We see this, for example, in *SifreDeut* 47, which posits that *those who lead many to righteousness* (root: *ts-d-q*) in Daniel 12:3 refers to the charity supervisors. Also illustrative is the Tannaitic commentary on Deut 33:21:

- A. *He executed the righteousness (tsidqat)*¹⁰⁰ *of the Lord* (Deut 33:21)
- B. What *tsedaqah* did Moses perform for Israel?
- C. Is it not true that all during those forty years that Israel was in the wilderness a well sprang up for them, manna came down for them, pheasants were available for them, and the clouds of glory encompassed them?
- D. Rather, this refers to what Moses said: *If there be among you a needy man* (Deut 15:7). (*SifreDeut* 355)¹⁰¹

The rabbis’ question in line C arises because they want to know what Moses could have possibly done if God had already provided for all of Israel’s needs in the desert.¹⁰² The rabbis indicate that they understand *tsedaqah* as material support for those in need, as God provides sustenance in manna and pheasants, and shelter with clouds. The answer, in line D, is that Moses performs *tsedaqah* by providing for the poor in accordance with Deuteronomy 15:7. This verse is couched as an imperative for one human to provide for another as opposed to God providing for all. It should be noted that *SifreDeut* quotes Deuteronomy 15:7 selectively, truncating the verse and taking it out of context. **Within Deuteronomy, the verse exhorts individuals to extend loans to the poor in the years leading up to the Sabbatical year, when all debts are canceled. Within its biblical context, Deuteronomy 15:7 does not constitute almsgiving or charity.**¹⁰³ In short, this passage from *SifreDeut* 355 projects late-antique concepts onto Deuteronomy, illustrating the principle that charity constitutes a specific way in which to perform righteousness. Likewise, numerous other texts from the Tannaitic corpus interpret *tsedaqah* in citations from the Hebrew Bible as “charity.”¹⁰⁴ The interpretation of *tsedaqah* in

¹⁰⁰ It is notable that the Venice ed. reads *tsedaqot*, i.e., “charities,” as the copyist projects the understanding of *tsedaqah* as charity onto the Hebrew of the biblical text itself. On the interpretation of this variant, see Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew*, 69; Hermann Leberecht Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (6 vols.; München: Beck, 1922), 3:163n. 1.

¹⁰¹ Translation based on Reuven Hammer, *Sifre: A Tannaitic Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986), 373, with my modifications.

¹⁰² As explained in Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew*, 69.

¹⁰³ Cf. Rosenfeld and Perlmutter, “Foundations of Charitable Organizations,” 51n. 5.

¹⁰⁴ E.g., *t. Pe’ah* 4:18; on this, see Gardner, “Giving to the Poor,” 163–200; Gardner, “Competitive Giving,” 81–92; for more examples, see Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew*, 39–76.

biblical passages as “charity” would steadily increase with time, as it becomes pervasive in the Babylonian Talmud.¹⁰⁵

By understanding *tsedaqah* as “charity,” the rabbis promote a finite and concrete way to fulfill the broader imperative to live a righteous life. It is critical, then, to gain an accurate understanding of what the rabbis mean by *tsedaqah* when they use it as “charity.” The early rabbinic concept of “charity” is far more specific and narrow than modern understandings of the term. Today, “charity” has a broad range of meanings, which have been heavily influenced by Christianity – it can be understood as love, kindness, affection, generosity, spontaneous goodness, a lenient disposition, and benevolence.¹⁰⁶ It follows that charity could mean giving to institutions considered to be altruistic, philanthropic, or that serve the common good, civic needs, or religious groups, such as synagogues, churches, hospitals, or other nonprofit organizations. Charity, moreover, can be carried out with either money or personal service, such as volunteering or visiting the sick. These modern understandings of “charity” have been misapplied by scholars and retrojected onto ancient sources. The confusion between the early Jewish and Christian conceptualizations of charity with modern connotations has hindered scholarship on the topic, as almost any text that addresses beneficent or generally philanthropic behavior has been mistakenly brought into discussions of charity in general and organized charity in particular.¹⁰⁷

In contrast to today’s broad understanding of “charity,” the late-antique rabbis had a narrower and more specific view. The key statement on charity, as noted by Przybylski in the earlier quotation, is *t. Pe’ah* 4:19. **Here the Tannaim define *tsedaqah* as monetary support for the living poor:**

Tsedaqah and *gemilut hasadim* are equal in weight to all the commandments in the Torah. Except that *tsedaqah* is for the living; *gemilut hasadim* is for the living and the dead. *Tsedaqah* is for poor people; *gemilut hasadim* is for poor

¹⁰⁵ See, e.g., the reinterpretation of *tsedaqah* in Prov 10:2 as “charity” in *b. Shabbat* 156b (see the discussion in Gregg Gardner, “Astrology in the Talmud: An Analysis of Bavli Shabbat 156,” in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity* [ed. E. Iricinschi and H. Zellentin; TSAJ 119; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008], 314–38). Likewise, Prov 10:2 (and similarly Prov 11:4, Isa 59:17) in *b. Bava Batra* 9b–10a; Prov 21:3 in *b. Sukkah* 49b; Gen 18:19 in *b. Yevamot* 79a. Biblical figures are also portrayed as carrying out acts of almsgiving as expressions of their righteousness. See, for example, *b. Yevamot* 79a where Abraham donates a small coin as an expression of his righteousness.

¹⁰⁶ *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), s.v. charity. In her study of pagan almsgiving, Parkin, “An Exploration,” 61, observes that the modern understandings of *alms* and *charity* are often “thoroughly imbued with Christian connotations.”

¹⁰⁷ E.g., Bergmann, *Ha-Tsedakah*; Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 126–34; see further Chapter 8.

people and rich people. *Tsedakah* is with one's money; *gemilut hasadim* is with one's money and body.¹⁰⁸ (*t. Pe'ah* 4:19)

The context of this passage, within the rabbis' expansive discussion of charity in *t. Pe'ah* 4:8–21, indicates that *tsedakah* can also be given in kind, including food, clothing, and shelter. Thus, the earliest conceptualization of charity in rabbinic Judaism defines *tsedakah* as *material provisions for the living poor*. Likewise, in this book, “charity” will denote only relief for the living poor, to correlate directly with the rabbinic understanding of *tsedakah*. I use terms and phrases such as *philanthropy*, *support for the poor*, and *beneficence* to denote acts that are altruistic, but do not qualify as *charity* per se.

Let us look closely at each aspect of Tannaitic texts' understanding of charity as *material provisions for the living poor*. **First, material support means that personal services**, such as visiting the sick, are excluded from the early rabbinic concept of *tsedakah*. Instead, the rabbis placed these philanthropic acts under a different heading, within the broader category of *gemilut hasadim* – acts of kindness or piety. Second, **charity is meant for the living**. Thus, burial of the dead was not considered an act of *tsedakah* in Tannaitic compilations.¹⁰⁹ **Third, charity is for the poor, specifically**. The rabbis understand the *poor* as adult men who lack the material resources to support themselves, maintain their household (which includes his wife, children, animals, and inanimate possessions), or both.¹¹⁰ Rabbinic discussions of support for the poor do not necessarily include assistance to widows, orphans, and other needy individuals – rather, aid to them is covered under other areas of rabbinic law.¹¹¹ Similarly, while slaves are impoverished of the most basic human rights, treatment of slaves likewise falls under other areas of rabbinic law.¹¹²

Because it is exclusively for poor males, the Tannaim do not consider contributions to synagogues, rabbis, or schools as charity. Rather, these types of contributions would only be considered “charity” by later rabbis, beginning

¹⁰⁸ That is, providing some kind of personal service.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Bergmann, *Ha-Tsedakah*, 23.

¹¹⁰ See Gardner, “Who is Rich,” and my discussion in Chapter 2.

¹¹¹ See, for example, the laws supporting orphans in *t. Ketubbot* 6:7–8. Support for women, which is addressed in the rabbinic laws on marriage, ultimately comes from her husband, father, or their estates. We see this, for example, in *m. Ketubbot* 13:1–2, which neither mentions the *quppa* nor constitutes an act of charity; see Seccombe, “Was there Organized Charity,” 140–41.

¹¹² That slaves are distinct from the poor is evident in *t. Pe'ah* 4:10, where a poor man is given a slave; see my discussion in Chapter 5. On slaves in ancient Judaism and classical rabbinic literature, see Paul Virgil McCracken Flesher, *Oxen, Women or Citizens? Slaves in the System of the Mishnah* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1988); Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

with the Amoraim. In an important move, the Amoraim would use the rhetoric, terminology, and conceptual architecture of *tsedaqah* to raise money for themselves.

It is also important to distinguish charity from other forms of support for the poor. Outside of charity, the other major category of poverty relief consists of agrarian laws associated with the harvest. These require leaving leftovers or marginal crops for the poor, such as *pe'ah*, produce standing in the "corner" of a field. Other items to be left for the poor are "gleanings" (sheaves that fell to the ground during the harvest), "forgotten things" (items overlooked by the harvester), and similar allocations of grapes and olives.¹¹³ **The laws of *pe'ah*, gleanings, and forgotten things, which I will call collectively "harvest-time allocations,"** draw directly from and elaborate upon commandments in the Torah (Lev 19:9–10, 23:22; Deut 14:28–29, 24:19–21). They are, however, not charity. The landowner or harvester does not *give* this produce to the poor. There is no agency on his part. Rather, the harvester's obligation is to refrain from interfering with the distribution of provisions to the poor *by God*. **That is, God is the benefactor of *pe'ah*, gleanings, and so forth – not humans.**

The misunderstanding of harvest-time allocations as charity can mistakenly lead one to conclude that the poor have a right to charity. All poor individuals have a right to claim and collect *pe'ah*, gleanings, and forgotten things. If harvesters fail to leave these items for the poor, the rabbis instruct, they have essentially stolen what rightfully belongs to the poor. Charity, however, entails no such right. Charity is an obligation for a non-poor individual to give – not a right for the poor to receive. In general, the laws governing harvest-time allocations are negative obligations which, in turn, are "perfectly" defined – the identities of the giver, recipient, and things given are all completely (i.e., "perfectly") determined. The laws of charity, by contrast, are positive duties and "imperfect," as key aspects of giving are left undefined and up to the personal discretion of the giver.¹¹⁴

Charity is also distinct from the poor tithe. Deuteronomy (14:28–29; 26:12) instructs that, once every three years, one should set aside a tithe of his produce for the Levites, strangers, widows, and orphans. The Tannaim expand upon and reorient this commandment, instructing that this tithe be devoted to "the poor" alone (*m. Pe'ah* 8:2–6; *t. Pe'ah* 4:1–7). The distinction between the poor tithe and charity is set out expressly in *t. Pe'ah* 4:16, where the Tannaim

¹¹³ The key texts are *m. Pe'ah* and *t. Pe'ah* 1:1–4:7; see Gardner, "Giving to the Poor," 16–41.

¹¹⁴ On perfect and imperfect obligations as they apply to poverty relief, see Schneewind, "Philosophical Ideas of Charity," 54–75.

instruct that *tsedaqah* cannot be taken out of the money designated for the poor tithe.¹¹⁵

In short, “charity” or *tsedaqah* in early rabbinic texts is a narrow concept, far more restricted than the modern sense of charity that has been misapplied to early rabbinic texts by previous scholars. The rabbis understand “charity” to be a specific way to fulfill the more general obligation to live righteously. In later rabbinic texts, *tsedaqah* would expand to denote a wide variety of endeavors understood to be altruistic or philanthropic. These would include donations to support rabbis and rabbinic disciples – sacerdotal giving as opposed to charitable giving.¹¹⁶ *Tsedaqah* would also later include contributions toward the salaries of teachers, gifts to synagogues, care for orphans, burying the dead, dowries for poor women, visiting and caring for the sick and elderly, and ransoming captives.¹¹⁷ For the Tannaim, however, charity was exclusively meant for poor men.

CHARITY AND OTHER FORMS OF SUPPORT

How do the Tannaim, who discuss charity (both individual and organized) in the midst of discourse on harvest-time allocations and the poor tithe, envision that all of these forms of support would work together? First, while the two categories (harvest-time allocations and charity) are distinct, they are also complementary as they address poverty in two different settings. The laws for allocations made at the harvest presume a rural setting and it is easy to see how *pe’ah*, gleanings, and forgotten things would be most accessible to poor peasants. Charity is an ideal solution for the poor living in towns. Soliciting alms from individuals is most effective in densely packed areas, as the poor can situate themselves in high-traffic locations (such as marketplaces and near temples) to increase their chances of receiving alms. Moreover, charity institutions (especially the *quppa*) are shaped by Greco-Roman civic culture, as they stand alongside other institutions in the urban landscape.¹¹⁸ Indeed, the

¹¹⁵ As noted in Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew*, 67.

¹¹⁶ Silber, “Echoes of Sacrifice,” 300–08; Silber, “Neither Mauss Nor Veyne,” 291–312.

¹¹⁷ E.g., Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot mattenot ’aniyyim* (Laws on Gifts to the Poor) 7–10; see also Aryeh Cohen, *Justice in the City: An Argument from the Sources of Rabbinic Judaism* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2011), 101–2; Mark R. Cohen, *Poverty and Charity in the Jewish Community of Medieval Egypt* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005); Mark R. Cohen, *The Voice of the Poor in the Middle Ages: An Anthology of Documents from the Cairo Geniza* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005); Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 150–51.

¹¹⁸ See my discussion in Chapter 6.

creation of solutions to urban poverty may have been prompted by increased urbanization during the Roman era.

Second, while the two forms of support for the poor complement one another, in certain respects they also overlap as they all target the same beneficiaries. All poor individuals are eligible for the harvest-time allocations as well as alms from the *tamhui*. It is conceivable that that a single poor man could collect *pe'ah*, gleanings, forgotten things, the poor tithe, and alms from the *tamhui* (and some could collect from the *quppa* as well). While each allocation provides the poor man with only a minimum amount of provisions (the *tamhui* and poor tithe each provide the poor man just enough to stay alive), combined they could provide a significant amount of support. That is, if a poor man collected everything for which he was eligible, he could consume well beyond the minimum amount of calories required for physical efficiency.

It can be said that the Tannaim multiplied the number of ways to support for the poor – Tannaitic texts elucidate more distinct commandments related to poverty relief than we find in the Hebrew Bible or Second Temple texts. For example, Josephus names only one type of allocation for the poor from the vineyard, while the Tannaim identify multiple categories of grapes for the poor.¹¹⁹ Likewise, in an unprecedented move, the Tannaim expand the commandment of *pe'ah* to include grapes and fruit (i.e., olives), alongside cereals.¹²⁰ Thus, if each form of poverty relief is to provide only a small amount of alms, working together these allocations would go beyond merely keeping the poor alive. In combination, these forms of support could keep a poor individual reasonably well fed.