

JEWISH PHILANTHROPY: A FAMILY AFFAIR?

By

LuAnne P. Tyzzer

Capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the joint degree of Master of Arts in Jewish Nonprofit Management and Jewish Education

April 2012

**HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
LOS ANGELES SCHOOL**

**SCHOOL OF JEWISH NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT
AND RHEA HIRSCH SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

JEWISH PHILANTHROPY: A FAMILY AFFAIR?

LuAnne P. Tyzzer

Approved By:

Director, SJNM

Director, RHSOE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| ABSTRACT..... | 4 |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | 5 |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 7 |
| LITERATURE REVIEW..... | 11 |
| JEWISH GIVING: AND EXPRESSION OF MIXED JEWISH AND CIVIC VALUES..... | 11 |
| DEMOCRATIZATION OF PHILANTHROPY..... | 13 |
| JEWISH COMMUNITY AFFILIATION..... | 14 |
| <i>TZEDAKAHL'DOR V'DOR</i> | 15 |
| METHODOLOGY..... | 18 |
| FINDINGS..... | 22 |
| JEWISH PHILANTHROPY: A FAMILY AFFAIR?..... | 24 |
| TRANSMISSION OF JEWISH VALUES AND PRACTICE..... | 28 |
| RECOMMENDATIONS..... | 30 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 32 |
| APPENDICES..... | 33 |
| APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS..... | 33 |
| APPENDIX B: EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEWS..... | 34 |

ABSTRACT

As this case study's title suggests, "Jewish Philanthropy: A Family Affair?" a prime goal of this paper is to better understand how the value of *tzedakah* is transmitted between parents and children. The paper looks at how parents of religious school children in an LA Reform congregation understood *tzedakah* when they were growing up; how they experience *tzedakah* as adults with children of their own; how they give; where they give; and to what degree they involve their children in their giving. The results of this study are intended to inform a family education curriculum on the subject of *tzedakah*.

Supported by scholarly articles and opinion pieces, the study consisted of extensive interviews with ten religious school parents of a large and historic Los Angeles Reform congregation. Study findings reveal the following realities are prevalent amongst religious school parents:

1. Religious school parents engage with philanthropy, but lack connection to the Jewish values and sense of responsibility that makes for *tzedakah*.
2. On average, these Jewish parents do not have established plans for giving nor do they have a rationale for their gifts.
3. Family education about *tzedakah* would effectively inform Jews of all ages about Jewish giving and, if given the opportunity to engage in *tzedakah*, they would do so.

Based on current trends in Jewish philanthropy and religious school parents' interview responses, which largely reflect those trends, a family education program on *tzedakah* is recommended.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the many people who have helped me through the completion of this capstone project. The first is my advisor, Richard Siegel, Director of the School of Jewish Nonprofit Management, who is the truest embodiment of a mentor. He provided me with deep insights, probing questions, and cheerful encouragement every step of the way. He has also been a guiding force throughout my HUC experience, and for that I am eternally grateful. I will always look up to Lori Klein's paradigmatic Jewish leadership. Additionally, for her patience and kindness I will always cherish Hattie Pearson.

Rabbi Jocee Hudson, Director of Education at Temple Israel of Hollywood, has been a phenomenal role model and supervisor. I am beyond appreciative for the insights she provided early on in my capstone research. I am also grateful to the ten religious school parents who gave of their time and shared with me priceless anecdotes about their relationships with *tzedakah* and experiences as contemporary American Jews, overall.

As this capstone is part one of a two-part project, part two being my curriculum guide, there are many others to thank. Of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education I am especially grateful for the challenge and support of Dr. Michael Zeldin. Along with Sara Lee and Isa Aron, Ph.D., special thanks go to my academic advisor, Rabbi Tali Zerkowitz, Ph.D., for her genuine care and trust. I also thank Eve Fein for her support during my curriculum guide process. I am also indebted to Joy Merriman for her poised spirit and graciousness.

This capstone project is dedicated to all those enlightened Jewish professionals and lay leaders who commit themselves to the holy work of inspiring others to learn about, invest in, and engage with Jewish belief, practice, culture, and community.

INTRODUCTION

Personal Statement

A Los Angeles native and product of a Reform day school, I knew early on that I yearned to learn about and contribute to the Jewish world professionally. In 2007, I enrolled at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion to participate in the DeLeT Fellowship (Day School Leadership through Training) program. After successfully completing this program, I enrolled in the Joint MA program in Jewish Education and Jewish Nonprofit Management.

One of my first courses in the School of Jewish Nonprofit Management was a Lunch and Learn course titled “Trends in (Jewish) Philanthropy.” It was here where I first concretely envisioned the academic concentration I would soon find so alluring. I also interned for sixteen hours per week, split between two very distinct field placements: one with The Women’s Campaign of the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles and the second at Temple Israel of Hollywood.

At the one-time “Central Address” of the Jewish people, the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, I observed first hand the initiative of several independent philanthropic women who make contributions of all sizes to support the lofty mission of the Federation. While at Temple Israel of Hollywood (TIOH), I engaged with the Jewish community from a radically different, but just as vitally important entry point, by introducing third graders to the foundational Torah stories, as well as to the *aleph bet*. I also ensured I conveyed the essence of *tzedakah* to my learners. I modeled the act for my learners and conveyed to them the importance of giving *tzedakah* to others weekly.

My goal in introducing *tzedakah* was to get my young students to begin to comprehend - at a level that eight-year-olds can understand and appreciate - that the Biblical assertion of giving Jewishly to those in need is a core part of being Jewish.¹ I was happy to find that, in my class, my learners seemingly took very quickly to the idea of *tzedakah* with an eagerness and palpable desire to participate, at least in theory. In practice, however, many came to religious school each week without their *tzedakah* contribution. Those who did bring a dollar or some pocket change admitted that their parents gave it to them in the car or packed it in their snack bag. They knew where the contributions were going; that year TIOH chose PATH² as the recipient of school-wide aid. Still, with no attachment to their money, the sense of informed giving was somehow less than authentic. This uneven giving among my students led me to deep questioning regarding *tzedakah* and its place among American Reform Jews. In particular, I began to wonder what, if any, kinds of conversations about *tzedakah* took place at home among students' families.

Over at the Women's Campaign, conversations of this sort were a constant. After all, educating donors about *tzedakah* and the impact of their gifts is part of professional fundraisers' job descriptions. Active volunteers form committees and take on leadership roles; in many cases their volunteerism is a full time job. I will always remember a Lion of Judah³ meeting early on in my internship. With about six months left in the Campaign, women filled the large boardroom at 6505 Wilshire Blvd. and discussed objectives for the

¹ While the Torah provides the first mention of *tzedakah* in this fashion, rabbinic text and modern commentary continue to reinforce its relevance as an enduring tenet of Jewish life and practice.

² Path is an organization that does x, y, and z.

³ The Lion of Judah is a symbolic adornment of a gold lion that represents an annual giving level of \$5,000. Gems are added to indicate increased giving levels such as \$10,000, \$15,000, etc.

coming year. A think tank of sorts, women stood, microphone in hand and shared some of the dreams they wanted to see become reality. One woman stood and declared she would like “Women’s” (as it’s called by those involved), to include daughters in their giving. Then, another rose with a similar request. The room was abuzz with excitement about involving children in their legacy of giving. As much as they yearned to pass the torch of philanthropy and engagement with the Jewish Federation onto their children, they also desired to participate alongside them. In this moment, they charged the Women’s Campaign with the heartfelt plea to make that happen.

That was the impetus for my research into youth philanthropy initiatives and those organizations bolstering the trend. I discovered there were many models to emulate in program development at “Women’s.” One of my colleagues and I brainstormed a creative incentive program for current donors’ daughters. The goal was to transfer the Lion of Judah concept to a younger demographic; thus, the idea of “Charmed Giving” emerged. The charm bracelet was to mirror the Lion of Judah pin, which visually indicates one’s level of giving. For each *mitzvah* completed, daughters, aged 11 – 17 would earn a related charm to add to the bracelet. Think Girl Scouts with a Jewish subtext. Although this project never got beyond the planning stages, the take away for me, personally, was significant.

Over the course of that academic year, I began to better understand the Los Angeles Jewish community and its engagement with Jewish philanthropy. Based on my dual experiences in the congregational school setting and Jewish communal setting, I began to seek a resolution to the seeming disconnect in the way Jewish institutions promulgate *tzedakah*. I wondered, “*Is possible to break the silos of organized Jewish life*

in order to create a vibrant Jewish community committed to learning about and engaging with tzedakah?” This question ultimately led me to more questions, not regarding institutional efforts related to *tzedakah* (though these too are essential questions and warrant attention), rather in regard to Reform Jews as represented by a diverse sample of religious school parents at a large and historic Los Angeles Reform congregation.

Purpose of this Case Study

Supported by scholarly articles and opinion pieces alike pertaining to Jewish philanthropy, the following hypotheses guide this case study:

1. Religious school parents engage with philanthropy, but lack connection to the Jewish values and sense of responsibility that makes for *tzedakah*.
2. On average, these Jewish parents do not have established plans for giving nor do they have a rationale for their gifts.
3. Family education about *tzedakah* would effectively inform Jews of all ages about Jewish giving and, if given the opportunity to engage in *tzedakah*, they would do so.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Jewish Giving: An Expression of Mixed Jewish and Civic Values

About *Tzedakah*, literally translated as “righteousness,” the late Jewish sociologist, Gary Tobin (2001), observed:

The command of *tzedakah* was codified within a set of societal laws that wove a system of communal order. How one was to perform righteous acts was laid out in an elaborate set of instructions- first the written law (Torah), and then in the oral law (Talmud). These acts of giving became interwoven into the basic foundation of Jewish society.

As Jewish communal structures developed, *tzedakah* became normative for Jews. It operated, as it does for many American Jews today, on a subconscious level. Tobin (2001) asserts, “These feelings and actions are now ‘hard-wired’ into the Jewish subconscious and communal psyche, guiding and directing Jewish behavior.” This value and behavior pattern, however, sometimes morphs into or is confused with another conception of giving, philanthropy as civic responsibility.⁴

According to Alex Joffe, research scholar with the Institute for Jewish and Community Research, this sense of “civic responsibility” can be seen clearly among wealthy Jewish donors where “less than 25 percent of their [gifts are] to specifically Jewish causes” (Joffe, 2011). To explain this phenomenon, he continues, “Jewish philanthropists have always seen themselves, or have wished to see themselves as members of the American class defined by its support of the great civic causes of the day.” Reinforcing and expanding this self-perception is the relative comfort and stability experienced by many American Jews today. Joffe notes that in the past, mega Jewish

⁴ The notion of “civic responsibility” comes up quite frequently in literature regarding Jewish philanthropy in America. See Karp, Alexander C. Tobin, Gary A. Weingberg, Aryeh K. *An Exceptional Nation: American Philanthropy is Different Because America is Different*. Philanthropy Roundtable. 1 November 2004.

philanthropists cared as much or more about supporting Jewish communal organizations as they did non-Jewish causes. In other words, though they gave to both Jewish and non-Jewish causes, they nevertheless felt obligated to give to Jewish causes. Today, that sense of obligation to the Jewish community is muted or absent in many of the wealthy in favor of supporting interest-based institutions or programs. With a common American Jewish story, albeit on a smaller financial scale, the giving patterns of less wealthy and even middle class Jews, such as those focused on in this study, seem to echo those of the wealthiest Jewish donors.

Democratization of Philanthropy

Another influence on the attitudes and behaviors of American Jews in relation to *tzedakah* is the “democratization of philanthropy.” Simply, this means that more funders are participating in philanthropy with smaller charitable donations. Applied to family foundations, in his article titled “Current Trends in Philanthropy,” Steven Gunderson (2009, p. 92) notes the trend of families starting foundations with as little as \$5,000 - \$25,000 and tries to explain it. In order to understand this phenomenon, Gunderson points to what he calls the “3 S’s” of philanthropic trends, expressly growth in: size, service, and scrutiny. Of particular relevance to the research for this thesis is his point that “Philanthropy is no longer just a privilege of the super rich. We are literally democratizing philanthropy” (Gunderson, 2009, p. 92). Because philanthropy is now open to all income levels, Jewish families in the middle class and beyond should have increased interest in educational efforts related to Jewish giving. Gunderson adds, “If we do not communicate the potential, the power, and the purpose of philanthropy (especially in contrast to the one-time gifts of charity), we will have done a disservice to future generations all over the world” (2009, p. 95). He emphasizes the importance of giving thoughtfully, at any amount. For the organized Jewish world, this suggests the need to cast a wider net of relationship and reach out to a wider demographic.

Jewish Community Affiliation

In “The Nexus of Volunteerism, Philanthropy, and Jewish Identity,” sociologist Steven Cohen (2001) discusses the strong link between Jewish community service, philanthropy, and Jewish Identity. While *tzedakah* and (Jewish) philanthropy are not explicitly the focus – community service is – these are forms of community service. Cohen’s insights discuss the importance of deeply rooted Jewish communal values and the impact of meaningful, regular, and educative engagement in Jewish identity formation. He observes,

We can reasonably infer that community service programs under Jewish sponsorship really do strengthen the Jewish and philanthropic muscles of participants, especially, we suspect, if the service is meaningful, regular and enriched by a Jewish educational context. Not only do such programs serve an intrinsic Jewish purpose laden with historic, cultural and religious meaning for Jews today. In all likelihood, Jewish participants accrue additional benefits in terms of strengthening the commitments that bring them together in the first place: Jewish identity, philanthropic generosity and an actionable desire to help one’s community. (p. 11)

In another research report called, “Giving Among American Jews: Contributions to Federations, Jewish and Non-Jewish Causes - Report Series on the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01,” Cohen (2004) asks “who gives and how much” in order to “examine how patterns of philanthropy among American Jews vary by region, Jewish affiliation, income, and age” (Cohen, 2004, p. 2). A key point mentioned by Cohen is that “communal affiliations play a major role in explaining the philanthropic patterns of American Jews” (2004, p. 8). Accordingly, it is likely that the energy and vision which congregations, such as TIOH, expend on *tzedakah* opportunities and education may have a direct impact on why, how and where congregants, including religious school parents, give.

Tzedakah L'dor V'dor

Two core elements facilitate *tzedakah l'dor v'dor* (transmission of *tzedakah* from one generation to the next): (1) the development and spread of youth philanthropy initiatives, and (2) the trend of multigenerational giving. An important article by David Arnow addresses both elements. Published in 1993 (nearly twenty years ago), Arnow's analysis is still relevant today, highlighting the discomfort which parents feel in discussing *tzedakah* with their children.

As this case study's title suggests, "Jewish Philanthropy: A Family Affair?" a prime goal of this paper is to better understand how parents understood *tzedakah* when they were growing up; how they experience *tzedakah* as adults with children of their own; how they give; where they give; and to what degree they involve their children in their giving. Ultimately, it is about the transmission of Jewish values and practice around *tzedakah*.

Among all the other literature reviewed for this paper, Arnow's (1993) is the only one that asserts family education as key to sustaining *tzedakah*. He writes that it is important for parents to expose children to their giving and encourage them to participate in *tzedakah* to some degree:

This kind of introduction to *tzedakah* conveys Judaism's profound conviction that many of the tragic elements of the every day world are not immutable, that little by little the world can and must be improved. Youngsters discover the world's imperfections all too quickly. They know it needs repair, but the job seems too overwhelming and children don't know where to start. A healthy exposure to Judaism's particular approach toward *tzedakah* – in a family setting – creates a safe space to start. At the same time, this builds pride in one's heritage along with a durable sense of optimism and enthusiasm for continuing the lifelong work of *tikkun olam*...But, if *tzedakah* and other Jewish values are to be transmitted effectively...a quarter in the *pushke* at home or at school is simply not enough. (p. 4)

There are a number of contemporary attempts that seek to acculturate adolescents and teens to a culture of giving, such as the widespread development of youth philanthropy initiatives. In “Jewish Youth Philanthropy,” co-author Sefanie Zelkind mentions that Jewish youth philanthropy programs work “within a framework of Jewish values and with special attention given to the needs of the Jewish community” (Zelkind, 2009, p. 123). She asserts, that these “programs do not encompass all *tzedakah* initiatives and, in fact, are distinct from standard *tzedakah* education units, youth fundraising campaigns, social action efforts, and Bar/Bat Mitzvah *tzedakah* projects” (2009, p. 123). The distinction is evident in her assertion that, while enrollment rates are dropping in other Jewish educational settings, enrollment in Jewish youth philanthropy is growing. Zelkind posits that this is because these teens are engaged in values-driven Jewish activities that call upon critical faculties (2009, p.124). If teen giving initiatives are this successful, then activities that engage the whole family in an organic, Jewish-values driven way could potentially reenergize the broader Jewish community.

Another article by Sharna Goldseker (2001), “Being the Next Generation,” proposes just such an initiative. This piece discusses the creation of www.2164.net, a division of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, which specializes in “multigenerational philanthropy.” Though its mission aims to address the complexities of family foundations, mainly their continuity and change as family members spanning all ages take on leadership roles, its methodology and logic clearly supports the hypothesis that multigenerational giving is important to enhance the lives of both Jewish youth and their families, along with invigorating the future of Jewish philanthropy.

The sections of Goldseker's paper on "who are the next generation?" and "preparing for the next generation" present helpful ideas regarding identity formation and the next generation's passion for meaningful experiences. This supports the premise that in order for philanthropy to be life-long, it has to be part of the Jewish experience early on.

METHODOLOGY

This case study relies primarily on personal interviews. Originally, I intended to develop a case study comprised of both qualitative and quantitative data. To do so, I had hoped to distribute an online survey to all religious school families of Temple Israel of Hollywood, a large and historic Los Angeles Reform synagogue. A select number of respondents would be interviewed as a follow-up so that the data would be combined with additional anecdotes or reflections of parents. Because of the sensitivity many people experience around the subject of money and the difficulty of separating attitudes towards money from attitudes towards philanthropy or *tzedakah*, the Director of Education at the Religious School did not feel comfortable with me widely addressing the issue of parents' philanthropy. Administratively, she was concerned about a possible negative response from some parents, who ultimately, are congregants. Instead, she agreed to pre-select a group of ten parents, mothers and fathers, representing a spectrum of Jewish communal involvement. Thus, this case study took shape as a keyhole glance at the thinking and motivations behind a select number of religious school parents who were invited to discuss their philanthropic giving.

Of the ten interviews conducted, three were face-to-face, and the remaining seven were over the phone.⁵ A couple of interviews ran about an hour, while most fell within a range of twenty to thirty minutes. Not all interviewees were strangers to me. Of the ten, I teach and tutor children of four of the parents. I observed that those interviews tended to run longer, it may be because my personal and established connection with the parents generated a sense of trust and made them more comfortable sharing. It is interesting to note that these four parents are also the most involved with volunteerism and communal

⁵ Because of logistics and having to schedule around the High Holidays, many parents preferred to converse over the phone.

leadership, be it Jewish or secular. By virtue of their fundraising experiences with causes they support and in some cases even spearhead, they had much to share. Their anecdotes provide invaluable evidence, which will be discussed in the Findings section of this study.

The interview questions were intentionally designed to take the parents on journeys back to their childhoods to recall how philanthropy was experienced in their homes. The questions then moved to their current lives as mothers and fathers and how they view and participate in philanthropy. The answers were quite moving; they seemed to enjoy making associations about how they learned to give, the degree to which Jewish values underlie their giving, and how as adults with families of their own they are role models for their children.

In order to get parents to go below the surface, the questions started off with the personal, then transitioned to the practical, and then went deeper into reflections on personal values and motivations for giving.

Why Religious School parents?

Studying the behavior and attitudes of religious school parents gives great insight into how Judaism is transmitted over generations. Many of the parents were undoubtedly shaped by encounters with Judaism throughout their formative years. While it is not conclusive (there are exceptions to the norms), the anecdotes they provided indicate those who grow up in an actively Jewish home tend to develop positive feelings about being Jewish. Essentially, they are more likely to become affiliated with synagogues and communal organizations, including Jewish educational programs once grown. Typically,

these feelings, attitudes and behaviors then get imbued in their own children as they model Jewish values.

The reality of the American Jewish experience, however, indicates this is not the case across the board. There are many religious school parents who grew up in an environment where Jews put the practice of religion aside in order to be “American.” On the other end of the spectrum are the grown children of highly affiliated parents who gave time and money during their childhood. These individuals tend to be cultivating positive Jewish identities in their children. These parents model for their children what it means to be a committed Jew, just as their parents did for them. Despite these varied personal backgrounds and current involvement levels, there was a general willingness (eagerness, in many cases) to engage as families in the Jewish tradition of giving. This underlines the power of continuing Jewish education and being part of and participating in community.

Interviews

Interview questions and selected responses may be found in the appendices.

My research rests on the question: *How are religious school parents engaged in Jewish philanthropy?* This question seeks to elicit attitudes and behaviors religious school parents hold about Jewish philanthropy. The goal in asking such a question was to explore the extent to which parents give Jewishly, and also to discover if and how they include their children in conversations related to their philanthropy. Surely, the degree to which parents give with intention and sense of obligation underlies these realities.

During my interviews, other interesting and worthwhile issues surfaced. One area of concern that warrants attention, but is beyond the scope of this case study, is the disparity between financial gifts religious school parents make to Jewish and non-Jewish causes. For the most part, all parents give to secular organizations, but not all give to Jewish causes.⁶ This raises questions regarding why parents give in this way. And while parents did share that often their giving reflects both social ties and personal interests, a major contributing factor is their limited knowledge about Jewish organizations that align with their values. Strikingly, however, most parents also stated they would like to learn more about *tzedakah* and engage with their children in such learning. Perhaps there is hope. For selected interview responses related to this issue, please see Appendix B.

⁶ This is separate from Temple membership dues and religious school tuition.

FINDINGS

The parents' candid responses revealed many striking things about what it means to be an American Jew today; how childhood experience with Jewish giving and Jewish communal affiliation transfers to adulthood; and how the essential value of *tzedakah* is transmitted from generation to generation. Analysis of the collected data revealed several patterns and trends, some that support and some that contradict the current research in this area. Corroborated by my own experience and the wide range of both scholarly and popular articles that deal with education, fundraising, and organized Jewish life, it seems that most parents are not particularly thoughtful in their giving. Few have any sort of custom, routine or plan when it comes to giving philanthropically.

Two questions I asked parents brought this reality to the fore:

1. How do you make philanthropic decisions?
2. Do you have any sense what percentage of your income you allocate to philanthropy?

Caught of guard, most responded, "I've never thought about that before." This lack of forethought about conscious giving suggests that this constituency could welcome more formal and experiential learning. Several parents seemed intrigued by the questions and expressed a desire to be more thoughtful about giving. They realized that philanthropy is something they do to a certain extent without thinking about why or how much they give annually, and they were motivated by the interview to become more reflective and deliberative about it. It is somewhat remarkable that these educated, upper-middle class parents had never really thought about the differences between philanthropy and *tzedakah*, and that there was no agreement about the basic definitions based on their

collective responses. This gap, too, suggests the need for greater research and Jewish communal attention.

While parents' participation in the Jewish community varies, one outstanding similarity emerged: The parents interviewed, even those highly involved in Jewish giving, had no concrete philosophy or method of giving. In fact, most have no sense of how much they give or why. Those who prefer to give "because it is the right thing to do" are virtually uneducated about those Jewish values related to *tzedakah* which address the fundamentals of the principle. But it goes deeper than just education; it harkens back to their childhood experience and how their own parents participated in Jewish philanthropy or *tzedakah*. The combination of their own memories and educations formed how they view philanthropy today. And the cycle apparently continues as they model or do not model this practice for their own children.

While this may seem like a non-issue, a reality of busy professional lives, it is much more significant, in that the values that are espoused in the home are those that become integrated into the children's consciousness. Overall, those parents who did not grow up actively Jewish or affiliated, or are not currently active in a particular Jewish cause, do not give Jewishly. They are unknowledgeable about the history and tradition of *tzedakah*. The concept does not resonate with them, and therefore, when asked what Jewish values motivate their giving, they overwhelmingly reply, "It's the right thing to do." This answer implies some sense of civic duty, but there is nothing specifically or inherently Jewish about it.

Jewish Philanthropy: A Family Affair?

There are many factors at play in determining one's degree of engagement with *tzedakah* and reasons for giving. Perhaps the most deeply rooted element, however, is one that operates on a subconscious level for many people: childhood exposure to and experience with *tzedakah*. Whether one's parents or other members of their immediate family modeled for them what it feels and looks like to be an active, participatory Jew who gives *tzedakah*, greatly influences one's current attitudes and behaviors about Jewish values and practice generally, and related to *tzedakah*, specifically. One religious school mother I interviewed is highly active at the Temple and beyond. All of her children are enrolled at the religious school. After many years at another Jewish nursery school, she now teaches at the congregation's nursery school, and she is on several Temple committees and initiatives. She and her husband also make contributions to secular causes because of personal and social ties. When asked about her childhood memories of her parents and philanthropy, she had this to say:

As far back as I can remember my parents were involved in Jewish philanthropy. I grew up at Camp Ramah and at one point my Mom was on the Board. She was a Hadassah member...[My parents] were instrumental in creating the Library Minyan at Temple Beth Am...I grew up in *havurah*⁷...It just so happened that one of the rabbis happened to be from the Hebrew Union College, so my parent's were kind of HUC 'groupies'...I was not involved, explicitly in many conversations about all this, but the *havurah* had great impact.

Clearly, her childhood experience of a *havurah* greatly impacted this mother's sense of Jewish identity. She also shared that she remains close with many childhood friends from those formative years in the *havurah*. It appears her parents provided a clear and profound model of passionate, enthusiastic Jewish life, and this has influenced her active

⁷ Explain what *havurah*'s are and how they function.

participation in the Jewish community of her Temple, its school, and the larger mission of *tikkun olam*. Her current involvement clearly reflects her early encounters with Jewish communal involvement and philanthropy. Giving back matters to this family because it was an important feature of both parents' upbringings. Even more important, it was framed through the context of Judaism.

There is no doubt that the experiences one has during childhood get imprinted into one's sense of identity and self. When contextualized Jewishly, the experiences one has with "giving back" serve to cultivate active and engaged Jews who give back not only with time, but also through *tzedakah*.

For another mother interviewed, an aspiring cantorial student, her family did *tzedakah* on a small scale, with a lovely tradition.

She reminisced:

We had a ritual – every Shabbat on Friday night before we lit candles, everyone at the table put a quarter into the *tzedakah* box. Even if you were too young to know what a quarter was, you were given a quarter every single week - not a nickel or a dime – a quarter; it was that ritualized.

Though she could not recall where the money went each time the box filled up, the memory is vivid. Now this mother expresses *tzedakah* by feeding the homeless. She said that she always carries canned food in her car in case there is a beggar on the street. Though driving around with canned food fulfills a particular mitzvah, it is different from the classical understanding of *tzedakah*, which obligates one to give financially. The scale in which she gives as an adult is, nonetheless, a carry-over from her childhood. From a quarter at the Shabbat table to a can of food in the hand of stranger, little by little this mother contributes to the betterment of the world and does so Jewishly. Nonetheless,

when asked how she makes philanthropic contributions today, she replied, “I’d like to be more involved in the [Jewish] community than I am.” Although she does make financial contributions to some worthy secular organizations, her giving is mainly interest-based, with a universalistic approach, such as National Public Radio or The Sierra Club

Another mother -- a producer for television and film and a key fundraiser for her children’s charter school -- shared the cultural and religious obligation of *tzedakah* and “giving back” that was modeled for her as a child.

I was always taught and modeled for by my parents [that] there’s a social connection to fellow Jewish tribal members. So you didn’t just give because you understood you should...but also it’s fun. For me, that was a major precept in the Jewish community from which I hail which is suburban Detroit. My association, personally, is that my mother would dress up to the nines and my father would come down in a tuxedo [for a black-tie Jewish Federation gala]. You know, my sister always says you have got to give to the Jewish causes because all kinds of people will give to the other causes like the orchestras, but only the Jews give to the Jews. What I always thought was so intriguing about that statement was that actually the Jews give to the Jews and everywhere else! So the Jews look after their own which is culturally essential to their survival, but there must also be this sense of a good, [satisfying] feeling attached.

I asked if her parents ever included her in the conversation surrounding the fundraising events they attended or why the social elements are so key. Though she admitted her parents did not include her in direct conversations regarding money, she recalled overhearing what she calls “jovial rehashes” of pressurized and public pledges announced at the events that turned giving into a competition. Though this was “old school,” she declared, “It worked!” She continued, “It is so effective, I use it my own little way when we are fundraising for my children’s public school!”

It is clear that these parents' early childhood experiences of their parents' experiences with the Jewish community and *tzedakah* foreshadowed how they would come to incorporate *tzedakah* into their lives as parents with children of their own.

This reality is not without exception, of course. If one does not get Jewish values and call for social justice at home, then where else might one find it? In the case of some fathers I spoke with, it came from outside the home. One father grew up Mormon, but always had Jewish friends. Back in the 1980s, he took up yoga and met a "Jewbu." Then, he found that all he yearned for could be found in Judaism. He converted and is now more involved in Jewish life and culture than his Jewish-from-birth wife. Another father described how his secular, single mother did not have many means, but valued Jewish education and sent him to Orthodox day school, Yavneh Academy in Los Angeles. He then went to a *yeshivah* in Israel for misfit boys. He is now a movie producer in Hollywood and says he gives wherever and whenever he can, but does not think about giving in terms of Jewish values.

A particularly illuminating example of successful acculturation is the father who grew up in a totally secular home, but was recruited by the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles to participate in the New Leadership Project. He is now on the Board of a Jewish cause that provides non-sectarian aid to war torn and developing countries, and is devoting time and much money.

In fact, "giving back" was a feature of all ten parents' upbringings. This call to duty, to make the world a better place, is a value they also share. The linkage breaks, however, when their rationales and reasons for volunteering or making financial contributions are examined.⁸

⁸ For insights related to parents' rationales for giving, please see Appendix 2.

Transmission of *Tzedakah* Values and Practice *L'dor V'dor*

Many parents who believe in and practice *tzedakah* do not take the obvious step of sharing their attitudes and activities in this area with their children because, as Arnow writes (1993),

Generally speaking, families tend to relate to issues involving money with discomfort and outright avoidance. Even many parents who are deeply involved with philanthropy therefore, miss the opportunity of making the home a place where children can learn from example...Aside from such discomfort, many parents fail to actively bring *tzedakah* into the home because they assume it is already there...If *tzedakah* remains a subject that a family does not intentionally discuss, chances are it is one about which children will remain misinformed or indifferent. (p. 4)

My interviews corroborated Arnow's perception about the great discomfort and anxiety with which parents view money and conversations surrounding money. Most parents felt that children must reach a certain "developmentally appropriate" stage before they can discuss matters of their financial giving. Unfortunately, this limits any meaningful conversation about *tzedakah* prior to that, because *tzedakah* is about money and how much to give. The mother who grew up the child of active Jewish parents shared,

They know where we give...we always frame these experiences, but have to keep it developmentally appropriate. I think sometimes we just lead by example and the processing follows when they're able to have those conversations. So what I say to my eleven year old about why it is we're giving to camp, I might not have with the younger kids.

She and her husband are actively, overtly involved, so it is likely that her children will also internalize a sense of the values of *tzedakah*. However, few actually lead by example, and thus their children are likely to continue on the trajectory of disassociation.

Arnow references the work of the sociologist Steven Cohen to support his perception that though parents may feel positively about and practice *tzedakah*, because

they are uncomfortable, they often fail to include their children in their giving— either in conversation or in practice. The discomfort prevails, and it is a stumbling block to transmitting the value and practice of *tzedakah*.

In recent years, partially to address either the lack of parental patterning or their reluctance to discuss their philanthropic decisions, a youth philanthropy movement has emerged that engages Jewish youth in the concepts of *tzedakah*. Along with education about *tzedakah*, there is the call to participate and make thoughtful financial contributions. In fact, according to the Teen Funders Network, over the last ten years, more than sixty Jewish youth philanthropy programs have emerged throughout North America. Teens participate in “hands-on collective philanthropic giving,” which means they draft plans for giving, raise funds, and educate others about their efforts. This phenomenon is in response to the absence of overall conversation, as well as the squeamishness surrounding conversations about money.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Viable Family Educational Programs about *Tzedakah*

From the perspective of Jewish identity formation and continuity, it is highly desirable that Jews of all generations have an understanding of the Jewish concepts and praxis of *tzedakah*. Given the limited adult understanding of Jewish giving together with youths' impressionable, formative identity, family education about *tzedakah* is a natural and significant bridge. Recently, there have been multiple programmatic attempts to strengthen the awareness and practice of Jewish philanthropy in the organized Jewish community. There are initiatives to engage youth; initiatives to garner multigenerational involvement and leadership of family foundations; and the democratization of Jewish philanthropy. Despite these multi-faceted steps to inculcate a strong philanthropic sense of purpose and meaning for their target demographics, an important group remains overlooked: the Jewish family

On the basis of this case study, it is recommended that Jewish educational and nonprofit institutions alike broaden their scope and direct serious attention toward innovative family education about *tzedakah*. With an aim to make *tzedakah* a family affair, I have developed a family education curriculum guide, designed to reach congregations, supplementary schools, and Jewish communal institutions.

To instill vigor in American Jews' understanding of *tzedakah* and philanthropic deeds, the curriculum guide provides learners the resources to accomplish the following:

- Understand the ancient principles of *tzedakah* as taught in the Torah, rabbinic texts, and contemporary texts.
- Research Jewish communal organizations that do *tzedakah* on behalf of Jews and non-Jews.
- Connect to Jewish communal organizations that do *tzedakah*.
- Assess values and interests to guide family contribution to selected organization(s).

Over an academic year, families in a congregational school setting will become equipped to give thoughtfully as a lifelong practice. Families will create a *kupat tzedakah*: a family collective⁹ whereby they assess their values, research organizations, and ultimately collect funds to allocate to organization(s) of choice. This curriculum guide aspires to institute a culture of Jewish giving by providing Jewish families the opportunity to learn about *tzedakah* together. The envisioned outcome is a vibrant Jewish community that esteems *tzedakah*, and continues to model it as an important Jewish practice, *l'dor v'dor*.

⁹ *Kupah* literally means community fund. Traditionally, it is held that a communal pot of funds creates anonymity, which preserves the dignity of both giver and receiver of financial aid.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arnov, D. (1993, November) Reflections on the Family, Tzedakah and Transmitting Jewish Values. *Sh'ma: A Journal of Jewish Responsibility*. CLAL: the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership, 3 – 6.
- Charendoff, M., & Prager, Y. (2009, October) New Thinking for a Changing Philanthropic Climate. Toward a Renewed Ethic of Jewish Philanthropy. KTAV Publishing House, Inc., Yeshiva University Press. 309—317
- Cohen, S. M. (2001, Fall) Community Service: The Nexus of Volunteerism, Philanthropy, and Jewish Identity. *Contact: The Journal of the Jewish Life Network / Steinhart Foundation*. Steinhart Foundation for Jewish Life. 10--11.
- Cohen, S. M. (2004, July) Philanthropic Giving Among American Jews: Contributions to Federations, Jewish and Non-Jewish Causes - *Report Series on the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01*. United Jewish Communities.
- Gelman, S., Zelkind, S. (2009, Spring) Jewish Youth Philanthropy. *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*. Jewish Communal Service Association of North America. 121-125.
- Goldseker, Sharna. *Being the Next Generation*. *Sh'ma: A Journal of Jewish Responsibility*. Jewish Family & Life (JFL Media). October 2001
- Gunderson, S. (2009, Spring) Current Trends in Philanthropy. *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*. Jewish Communal Service Association of North America. 91-95.
- Karp, A. C., Tobin, G. A., & Weinberg, A. K. (2004, November) An Exceptional Nation: American Philanthropy is Different Because America is Different. *Philanthropy Roundtable*. 1
- Rosenn, J. (2001, October) Deepening Our Tzedakah. *Sh'ma: A Journal of Jewish Responsibility*. Jewish Family & Life (JFL Media). 15-16.
- Tobin, G. A. (2001) The Transition of Communal Values and Behavior in Jewish Philanthropy. *Institute for Jewish and Community Research*.
- Zion, Z. (2011, October) The Guide for the Perplexed Donor: Tzedakah as Jewish Identity. *Sh'ma: A Journal of Jewish Responsibility*.

Appendix A: Interview Questions

- i. Thinking back to your childhood, do you remember if your parents were philanthropic?
 - If so, do you happen to know the organizations they made contributions to? (were they involved in your *shul*, JNF, etc.)
 - Did they ever involve you in their philanthropic contributions?
 - Do you have any memories connected to a philanthropic experience?
- ii. Do you make philanthropic contributions to Jewish or non-Jewish causes?
- iii. How do you make philanthropic decisions?
- iv. Do you have any sense what percentage of your income you allocate to philanthropy?
- v. Do you include your children in philanthropic decisions?
 1. Why/why not?
 2. How?
- vi. Do you have any children of Bar/Bat Mitzvah age or older?
- vii. What qualities do you look for in an organization you contribute money to?
- viii. What does your gift(s) to these organizations look like a) Jewish organizations that benefit mostly Jews, b) Jewish organizations that benefit mostly non-Jews, and c) non-Jewish organizations? (looking for a %)
- ix. Regarding the Jewish organizations that benefit mostly Jews?
 1. Where do you give?
 2. Why?
 3. Do your friends and family members give to these/this organization(s)?
 4. How did you first come to give to these/this organization(s)?
 5. How long have you contributed to this organization?
- x. Regarding Jewish organizations that benefit mostly non-Jews?
 1. Where do you give?
 2. Why?
 3. Do your friends and family members give to these/this organization(s)?
 4. How did you first come to give to these/this organization(s)?
 5. How long have you made contributions to this organization?
- xi. Regarding the non-Jewish organizations?
 1. If yes, where do you give?
 2. Why?
 3. Do your friends and family members give to these/this organization(s)?
 4. How did you first come to give to these/this organization(s)?
 5. How long have you made contributions to this organization?
- xii. What comes to mind when you hear: *Tzedakah*?
- xiii. Do you think there is a difference between *tzedekah* and philanthropy?
- xiv. To what extent do Jewish values come into play when you make philanthropic decisions?
 1. Explain
- i. Would you be interested in engaging with your children in learning about issues related to *tzedakah* and Jewish philanthropy?

Appendix B: Selected Responses to Interview Questions

Question 1:

Thinking back to your childhood, do you remember if your parents were philanthropic?

P₁ Raised by single Mom who put me through the Jewish school system, but barely scraped together. I don't remember her being very involved.

P₂ My parents, as far back as I can remember, were involved. I grew up at camp Ramah and at one point my Mom was on the Board. [She was a] Hadassah member and would go to meetings somewhat frequently. They were instrumental in creating the library *minyán* at Beth Am. We would go to *shul*, you know, every Saturday. You know, my parents were always very involved.

P₄ We had a ritual: Every Shabbos on Friday night before we lit the candles, we had a real tradition of everybody at the table put in a quarter. And if you were too young to have a quarter or know what a quarter was, you were given a quarter by my Mom or my Dad. [We did this] every single week, so that tzedakah box would get filled.

P₅ My parents were very involved in giving back, caring for people, visiting people who were sick, etc. They served on different boards of organizations and I know that they contributed financially to different organizations, but I was never in a position growing up where my parents had a lot of money to donate so they did a lot with service oriented activities around the community.

P₆ My parents taught and modeled for me that there is a social connection to fellow Jewish tribal members. You don't just give because you understand you should, or because you are looking out for your generation *l'dor v'dor*, but you also because it's fun to give. For me that was a major precept in the Jewish community from which I hail which is suburban Detroit Michigan...It's about fundraising not only out of an innate sense of gratitude and obligation to give back, but out of social exuberance and enjoyment. So my association personally is that my mother would dress up to the nines and my father would come down in a tuxedo. This was black tie, but it was not uncommon to be going out mid-week, sparkling on the arm of your husband engaging in this sea of fellow Jews who were looking at one another and leaning on one another. You know my sister always says you got to give to the Jewish causes because all kinds of people will give to the other causes like the orchestras, but you know only the Jews will give to the Jews. What I always thought was so intriguing about that statement was that actually the Jews give to the Jews and everywhere else. So Jews look after their own which is culturally essential to their survival, but there also must be this sense of good feeling...I don't think I would have been well versed in that able to understand and my parents didn't really talk about money we were definitely very suburban and comfortable but again in a way I had no other conception- I thought the entire world was kind of well-heeled and Jewish.

P₇ I grew up with my mother and grandparents in the same neighborhood. My mother was pursuing her education, but my grandmother was the social service director at the

Stephen Wise synagogue where she was a volunteer social worker. That's what she did five days a week. Other than that she didn't do anything else. They donated to their causes, but didn't go to galas or anything like that.

P₈ Absolutely, the first thing my parents did when they moved out from NYC was join an organization...All of my parents' friends were involved in the org. and some of them threw my wedding shower and my baby shower...I remember going on trips with these people and whatever charity event they were involved with at that time, I was a part of...I assume it influenced me and I'm not sure where I got this information, but I guess I realized at a very young age - young adult age - that in order to make LA smaller, you have to get involved. In my junior high and high school years, I don't remember them being involved in that fundraiser but I do know that it impacted our life.

Question 2:

Do you make philanthropic contributions to Jewish or non-Jewish causes?

P₁ To be honest, I don't think about it that way. To fulfill that rule, that *mitzvah*, I just give whenever I can. I just hope at the end of the day, it makes a difference.

P₂ We give to the Temple, Ramah, and Hadassah. Throughout the year we collect *tzedakah* and one night during Hanukkah, instead of giving gifts, we give to two causes (one is always Jewish), like SOVA.

P₃ We make contributions to non-Jewish organizations such as: our high schools, colleges, graduate schools, toward natural disasters (Haiti), food drives, etc

P₄ I'd like to be more involved in the community than I am, but I tend to carry extra food in my car: an extra apple, can of tuna or whatever... We give to the Weisenthal Center and this is not on any kind of consistent basis. We give to Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council (somewhat similar to the Sierra Club, focus on wildlife and what's needed to manage that), Alzheimer's Association because my grandmother died of Alzheimer's. Frankly, the contributions we make, I can't even say that it's annually. When we give to National public radio, to me that's *tzedakah*- you know they need it.

P₅ My husband and I make our decisions about financial decisions together. With the kids what we do is, they get a small amount each week and they are encouraged to put a third into *tzedakah* or into savings... We are very active in the community in terms of going places and volunteering our time, and sometimes that does involve fundraising so my kids will help me.

P₆ Give to the federation annually, but it's because of their outreach. They bug you until they get it; it doesn't bother me. It's part of our [Jewish] culture so Federation definitely because they go after it. Definitely give to the museums and culturally, we give to the orchestra, we support the LA Philharmonic, our respective colleges, my high school, SOVA (write a check and then they print out a certificate)... Jewish world watch is one of our go to [organizations].

P₈ I really got involved in my kids public education school because I believed in the mission of giving our kids an enriched education. So I am co-president... and I worked my way up and am taking bigger and bigger roles. We raised \$550,000 last year... It's amazing because I talk about it at the dinner table with my kids and they are proud of me. I say, "I may not be able to be a room parent, but I help you raise money so you have this or that program." My kids get that and they love that I know their principal, and am on the Board. And right now we are interviewing a dance instructor, so I feel like I have my professional life and I've taken on a whole other life and I feel like it's been good for me and my kids... I am definitely not involved in a lot of other things. I support other things because of my friends' involvement and I will go to charity events. I will give money to charity events based on connections. I have always given to Planted Parenthood, I have always given to NPR, certain breast cancer organizations because my mom had breast cancer, but am I actually involved in them? No, because I can't do everything.

Question 3:
How do you make philanthropic decisions?

P₁ To the extent [my son] goes to religious school so he's usually the one that gives to the tzedakah box.

P₂ They need to align with our values, mostly Jewish values. [When] friend or family is doing a walk of some sort to support them...

P₃ At the end of the year, we sit down with pocket change and decide where to give.. We do not give to Jewish causes.

P₄ It's organizations that are important to us and we think could use the assistance right now. It generally falls into a few categories: education, Jewish organizations, environmental organizations, that's what we do together. We support several charter schools, several different educational institutions, the synagogue...and usually something related to the environment. But then I usually also do public radio...

P₇ Somebody we know that supports an organization or has been affected...that would be a motivator for donations influences us.

P₈ I think it's the connections. Planned Parenthood has no social component but I believe in it strongly and give every year. NPR- I believe in the philosophy and I give every year. So there's both the combination of believing in the mission and supporting people that you care about.

P₉ It's generally in the organizations I'm involved with- either through the temple or Jewish World Watch, which I've very involved with.

P₁₀ I'm not as systematic with my giving, as I would like to be. I give on an ad hoc/personal basis.

Question 4:

Do you have any sense what percentage of your income you allocate to philanthropy?

P₂ 10% or below I would imagine. "You know I've never thought about it in that way."

P₄ Not the 10% that the Bible suggests. - Laughs - that goes to the Temple and my child's education. I'm very aware the Biblical injunction is that it should be 10%.

P₅ It would be interesting to know how much of our income actually went because I work at a university and my husband works at a nonprofit so you know we're comfortable, but not making tons and tons of money but we do prioritize donating money... We don't often realize it, but it is a narrative about our values and stuff.

P₆ I don't know. We don't have a money manager or anything.

P₉ I don't do it on a percentage basis.

P₈ I would think I would support more Jewish organizations, but when I look at what I'm actually supporting it's really not the case. So I don't know if it's that I'm too busy or that I already kind of already have those things and areas where I give.

P₁₀ Maybe about \$1,000.

Question 5:

Do you include your children in philanthropic decisions?

P₂ They know where we give and in terms of other giving, I don't know specifically...Always frame these experiences and have to keep it developmentally appropriate, but I think also sometimes we just lead by example and the processing follows when they're able to have those conversations. So what I would say to my 11 year old about why it is we're giving (to sleep away camp), [for example,] we might not have with younger kids. This happens in more informal conversations.

P₃ We speak about issues of global import...those that are of human concern.

P₄ When it's more about the value of the act, but not the financial part of it.

P₅ Just recently my daughter got a UNICEF box for Halloween and instead of asking for candy she's going to raise \$500 to build a well...Whenever the kids do a good deed, we characterize it as a mitzvah or as *tzedakah*. That even though it could be a secular cause, we definitely tie back through the simple characterization of it is *tikkun olam*. So yeah, tying it back to Judaism is a lot of what we do. Leading by example is a part of who I am and how I live my life and that trickles down to them. Definitely part of how I'm trying to build their character is by trying to talk to them about those issues.

P₆ There's lots of talk about having the children feel squeamish about [money and fundraising]. It's important to involve kids in fundraisers...That's how we got to 75% parent participation [in our fundraiser]. And a lot of it had to do with the kids' enthusiasm for the giving. Now, were they driven by the cause or driven by the reward? They were driven by the reward, but I know that they always come from a place of do you believe in the cause and the mission ok then, let me show you why it's a good idea then.

P₉ I think they're involved in the broader conversations, which include volunteering and fundraising, but in terms of the financial, I think they're a little young for that. We try to provide them a perspective of why in the world this is important, why it's something we do that reinforces the values we have, and we'll talk about *tzedakah*, and the Jewish values behind it -sometimes - we'll talk about... *tzedakah* is a big part of what we do.

Question 8:

What does your gift(s) to these organizations look like a) Jewish organizations that benefit mostly Jews, b) Jewish organizations that benefit mostly non-Jews, and c) non-Jewish organizations? (looking for a %)

P₁ 40% Jewish 20% health (UCLA Cancer research) 30% Non-Jewish. 10% arts

P₂ 90% Jewish and of this figure 75% goes to Jewish organizations serving Jews, 25% goes to Jewish organization serving non-Jews. The remaining 10% goes to non-Jewish organizations.

P₅ I think mostly Jewish organizations serving non-Jews...the federation would be one. Well I don't know...It's interesting....[The order is] Federation, synagogue, then we do Jewish World Watch. We do organizations that Jewish friends support so they're not exactly Jewish organizations...The majority of our contributions go to our secular organizations such as health and public education. One third is Jewish organizations that serve non-Jews. Mostly right now I'm involved with schools and that's the primary emphasis of our involvement because it's related to the work that we do; my husband works for the CA charter association.

P₉ Given commitment to the Temple, it is probably the most significant at 50% other two categories would be 25% each...besides the Temple I make an annual gift to The Jewish Federation. Full disclosure, I am a alum of the New leadership Project and on the Board and on the Board of another Jewish organization that serves non-Jews. On any given year I'm on a committee of some sort of committee.

Question 13:

Do you think there is a difference between *tzedakah* and philanthropy?

P₁ I don't I think philanthropy is *tzedakah* on a bigger scale. At the end of the day, it's all *tzedakah*. It's all giving to charity.

P₂ *Tzedakah*, you need to be emotionally connected. Somehow it needs to mean more than just writing a check. It's not something you can concretize I guess, but somehow it is just more meaningful in the act because you are more tied to it emotionally. Needs to link to me internally, feel connected to the idea behind giving to the particular cause.

P₄ I've never really thought about that....

P₅ I don't know...*tzedakah* to me seems more soulful. I don't know why but I guess it's because it's connected to the Jewish values. Like I wouldn't use the term 'charity' with my kids, I would use the word '*tzedkah*'. The Jewish aspect we tie *tzedakah* to our Judaism and that's the way we do that with the kids. So that's why we use *tzedakah* versus charity.

P₆ Is this a trick question to see if I know what *tzedakah* means in Hebrew? Philanthropy seems like a bigger word with bigger contributions. You know something you sit down with your money manager and you know where *tzedakah* is a can that comes around and you give what you can in the most basic on the ground level.

P₈ Well, I think they're part of the same value. I don't know I guess they can't be the same. I've always been told that it's not just money that it's also doing.

P₉ I'm not sure. I think there might be overlap.

P₁₀ It's a mitzvah to tithing 10% of income to the needy. Most people treat it as optional even though it's not. Since I grew up Mormon, I am familiar with tithing and that they take it very seriously.

Question 12:

What comes to mind when you hear: *Tzedakah*?

P₁ It's that term: pay it forward if you make some money, you need to give some back. Make someone's world a better place, not necessarily set aside 10%

P₂ It's about taking responsibility for people, places, ideas, visions that go beyond your own personal means and being able to teach my children that it's super cool to save money for a video game, but it's also cool to know that money needs to be for people who are in need.

P₄ Referring people to a homeless shelter or food pantry like SOVA is a form of *tzedakah*. Justice, trying to balance scales a little bit.

P₅ Can it be *tikkun olam* too?

P₆ Is this a trick question to see if I know what *tzedakah* means in Hebrew? Philanthropy seems like a bigger word with bigger contributions. You know something you sit down with your money manager and you know where *tzedakah* is a can that comes around and you give what you can in the most basic on the ground level.

P₉ It's all about repairing the world. Taking on the responsibility to make a difference to make the world a better place than it was when you got here.

P₁₀ I think about Maimonides and how I gave anonymously to a woman whose son was ill. I didn't want it to be about me or my relationship with her. Becoming Jewish has made me much more sensitive to others and their needs.

Question 15:

Would you be interested in engaging with your children in learning about issues related to *tzedakah* and Jewish philanthropy?

P₁ Hopefully Temple Israel can help me.

P₂ Yeah. Definitely in ways that are age appropriate and part of a family experience, for sure.

P₃ No.

P₄ Absolutely! I would want to learn about finding not only ways to incorporate *tzedakah* into our daily/weekly family life, but maybe even as importantly is finding ways to talk about it...So in terms of a *tzedakah* program would be to find a way to talk about *tzedakah*. The modeling is key and the boys will see that and even on a subconscious level, they will see it.

P₅ Yes...Besides learning, it would be good if there was an action component as well so the kids could see the power of their giving. It's one thing hearing about it and another to actually do it.

P₇ Yeah, I think so, if we were available. I don't know.

P₈ Perfect topic, yes.

P₉ Um yeah, I think it would be probably as they get older. I think I have a unique perspective, but as they get older, I anticipate that they're going to be able to far surpass my abilities to explain it all to them.

P₁₀ Sure, I'd be on the board with that.