

## Why There Is No ברכה-Bracha/Blessing for Tzedakah

Before and after eating — a blessing. Before hanging a Mezuzah on a door — another blessing. Hearing thunder, seeing lightning flash, noticing trees as they first burst into bloom — a Bracha. Buying a new vehicle, tool, instrument, or piece of clothing — שהחיינו-Shehecheyanu.

So why is there no Bracha before giving Tzedakah, why no declaration, “Praised be You, O God, Ruler of the Universe, Who has given us the privilege to do the Mitzvah of Tzedakah”?

Sometimes there is no time to do it. Sometimes there are Mitzvah moments where even a split second’s delay can be harmful — even lethal. Just think of rescue teams screaming down the road, running red lights, emergency room medical teams making life-and-death decisions. Some Tikkun Olam has to be done that quickly, and because *sometimes* we have to react and act so fast, we have to train ourselves to be ready to react and act so fast *always*. Even if the Mitzvah-at-hand is not so pressing.

Related to this concept is the Talmudic principle that a person should try to be early whenever there is a Mitzvah to be done. The text (Pesachim 8a) reads:

שזריזין מקדימים למצות

*[Good] People [who are enthused to do Mitzvahs] get up early in the morning to make them happen.*

That’s one reason: Be early, be quick to respond. It was an answer someone gave me long ago, and I like it. Another is: if we are to be constantly aware of God’s Intimate Presence in the world, the very act of Tikkun Olam contains within the act itself a sense of the Divine Presence. Even if we think we are doing it automatically, the Presence is there. We only need to feel its existence. I like that reason, too.

Over the years I have heard more than a dozen good answers, all valid. I think it is one of those questions we should ask throughout our lives. Each answer only adds to the depth of our understanding of the nature and power of Tikkun Olam