

**Re'eh – 5770**  
**Rabbi Aharon Ziegler**

On the Mitzvah of “Tipping”

(15:13) ...you should not send him away empty-handed, “*ha’aneik ta’anik lo*”, you should adorn him generously with gifts”.

After six years of servitude, the Torah requires that the *eved ivri*, the Jewish slave be set free. Furthermore, he should not go out empty-handed but the master should furnish him with gifts of significant value, in other words, give him a nice tip.

Modern day tipping practices vary depending on the country, society and culture. There is however, a common denominator regarding certain services that we feel obligated to show our generosity to some, but to ignore others. For example, when checking in our luggage at curbside for a flight, we leave a tip for the porter, but if we check in our luggage at the counter we do not tip the attendant. Similarly, we tip a barber, but not a cashier. We tip the grocery deliverer but not the grocer who took our order. We tip the waiter, but not the chef. The rationale for this is, that when someone does a personal physical service for us, to a certain extent, that individual has been demeaned by it. The tip therefore, is the way by which we show our appreciation for the service and, restore dignity to the person serving us.

Rabbi Y. Zweig suggests that the Torah uses a very unusual verb “*ha’aneik*”, instead of the more common verb “*titein*”, for teaching us about this gift. Rashi explains that the word comes from the noun “*anaka*”, which means jewelry worn around the neck. When a person wears jewelry, he feels elevated, for it gives him/her a sense of dignity (ask the women if you doubt this statement). This is the function of the gift, which is given to the Jewish slave. We attempt to restore his personal dignity that was lost during the six years of personal service.

This Mitzvah applies “*be’chol makom u’vechol z’man*”, it applies not only to the master of a Jewish slave, but to all places and situations where someone performs a personal physical service to us. So, let’s be generous.