

More Blessed to Give Rebbe Nachman on Charity

More Laws of Charity

by Chaim Kramer

Hi. Hope you all had an easy fast on Yom Kippur. May it be His will that we forgive everyone, along with meriting forgiveness and blessing for a good, happy, healthy and successful year, for us and for all Israel.

Rebbe Nachman offers a unique insight about charity and fasting. By equating the two, the Rebbe sheds a lot of light on why we fast on Yom Kippur and, amazingly, that we can merit the same result by giving charity. The following is from *Likutey Moharan I*, Lesson #179.

Know! there is a way to counter all forms of strife. Whether in material matters or spiritual matters, such as a person being unable to pray or do what he must in serving God, all is in the category of strife. Anything contrary to the person's will or desires falls into that category.

In order to eliminate the strife and make peace, fasting is necessary. This is as our Sages teach: "The more charity, the more peace" (*Avot 2:7*). And, charity is an aspect of fasting. For the essence of fasting is charity, as our Sages teach: "The reward of fasting is [its] charity" (*Berakhot 6b*).

This is because when fasting, one should contribute the cost of his meals to charity, then his fast assumes greater merit (Maharsha, loc. cit.). By giving charity, one merits to peace. By fasting, one effects the same result, peace. The Rebbe now continues:

For the concept of strife involves a conflicting will; they stand up against him to negate his will. And the propitiousness of fasting is found in the *Zohar* (III, 68b): "On that very day you shall afflict your souls" (cf. *Leviticus 16:29, 23:27*) - the benefit of fasting is the humbling of the heart, and then one can attach one's desires and will of the heart to the Holy One. By fasting, the [evil] passions of the heart are subdued and weakened. All one's other wills are nullified in the face of the will of the Holy One.

Therefore, by means of fasting, strife - the aspect of the will of others being unlike his will - is eliminated. This is as our Sages teach: Nullify your will to His Will so that He will nullify the will of others to your will (*Avot 2:4*). Through fasting, one's will is already nullified to the will of God, and so the will of others is nullified to his will. Strife is thus eliminated and peace is made. This is as was mentioned above: "The more charity, the more peace" (for fasting represents charity).

This is the meaning of: "Your eyes saw my unshaped form; and in Your book are recorded all of them, the days which are formed; and He has one of them" (*Psalms 139:16*). "Your

eyes saw my unshaped form...the days which are formed" - Each day is a formation unto itself. "He has one of them" - refers to Yom Kippur (Rashi, loc. cit.). This is the fast which revives all the days. For Yom Kippur encompasses all the days. Of it, it is said, "On that very day you shall afflict your souls" - i.e., the wills. As is written in the aforementioned Zohar: "To encompass all, body and soul, and be subdued on that day, so that their will is in the Holy One..." For the soul is an aspect of will, and the main thing is to subdue the will. This is: "On that *etzem* (very) day" - by means of the inner *etzem* (essence) of the day (Yom Kippur), which encompasses all the days - "you shall afflict your souls."

Thus, by "afflicting the soul," by fasting, one subdues the passions of the heart and negates strife, bringing about peace. And by fasting on Yom Kippur, a day which encompasses all days, the person brings about an inner peace within himself, as well as a universal peace. For the day encompasses all days, bringing peace in a universal manner.

The Rebbe equates fasting with giving charity; thus, the "more charity, the more peace." What better way to begin a new year than with gifts to charity? One can thereby effect a peaceful year: a year of no internal conflict between mind and heart, a year of tranquility in the home, between husband and wife, between siblings; and a peaceful year with the neighbors. If enough of us do this right, the peace will grow and grow and culminate in a universal peace, a peace which is so necessary in our strife-filled world, where evil leaders are willing and anxious to test their arsenal of atomic, biological and chemical weapons, may God spare us. So, as the Rebbe suggests, let us strengthen our mitzvah of charity, for this way we CAN affect the outcome, we can bring about a benefit to the entire world.

And should you need a wee bit more incentive, the holy ARI writes that we should be extra careful to give to charity just before Sukkot (*Pri Etz Chaim, Shaar Chag HaSukkot*, #3 p.620).

We take this opportunity to wish you all a very good year and a very happy Sukkot.

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