

More Blessed to Give Rebbe Nachman on Charity

More about Charity and Fasting

by Chaim Kramer

At the close of Sukkot it is customary, here in Israel, to wish one another a "good winter." (When Pesach has come and gone one wishes others a "good summer.") Our wishes and prayers are for all of you to have a very good winter, a very good year, a happy, healthy and successful year.

Before Yom Kippur, the lesson quoted in [Essay #10](#) spoke of the connection between charity and fasting, how fasting/charity has the ability to transform one's will to a powerful vehicle of desire for the spiritual. Perhaps, as we begin to explore Rebbe Nachman's and Reb Noson's teachings on charity, we can continue this motif with another lesson, presented here from the *Abridged Likutey Moharan* (I, Lesson #37).

1) The ultimate purpose of Creation is "in order that we should know God" (*Zohar* 2:42), as is written, "Everything is called in My Name; I created it, I formed it, and I made it all for My honor" (*Isaiah* 43:7).

2) The body as it relates to the soul corresponds to the material, the animal [i.e., animalistic desire], mental obtuseness, darkness, death, forgetfulness and secular wisdoms. The soul, as it relates to the body, represents the Torah's wisdom, which is identified with man, as in (*Numbers* 19:14), "This is the Torah - a man"; it corresponds to "spiritual form," light, wisdom, memory and life. Each person must subordinate his material aspect, i.e. the body's cravings, such that he separates himself from all his base desires and attains an elevated form of intellect, of Torah wisdom, of light and life.

3) This is accomplished by fasting. Fasting weakens the strength of the body which is the source of one's physical cravings. By fasting, the body's physicality - its obtuseness, forgetfulness and darkness - is subjugated and nullified, and the intellect, the "spiritual form" and the memory become dominant and rise. Fasting nullifies strict judgments and darkness in the world, eliciting an influx of Divine lovingkindness.

In addition, fasting subjugates secular ideologies to Torah wisdom; it brings one merit for a good livelihood. Nonetheless, the essence of the rectification effected by fasting comes through charity.

4) There are two types of charity. There is charity given outside the Land of Israel and there is charity given to the Land of Israel. The charity that one gives to those in the Land of Israel is greater and loftier than that given outside the Land. Correspondingly, there are also two kinds of Torah, since "Torah spoken with breath tainted by sin cannot be compared to Torah spoken with breath untainted by sin" (*Shabbat* 119). Strict judgments are mitigated and the world is sustained by the breath of children, which is untainted by sin, when they

recite words of Torah. This untainted breath causes the Patriarchal merit to be revealed in the world, protecting it. By giving charity in the Land of Israel one includes himself in the air of the Land of Israel which is one and the same as the untainted breath.

Thus charity to the Land of Israel is the essential means of nullifying strict judgments, darkness and forgetfulness from the world. It also subjugates secular ideologies and brings one merit with which to grasp the wisdom of the Holy Torah. Furthermore, through charity to the Land of Israel, one merits memory, which is light and the other parallel concepts mentioned above.

The Rebbe goes on to explain that by giving charity/fasting, one elevates every aspect of the soul. Furthermore, one must take care when eating, to partake only of permitted foods, for non-kosher foods, especially from improperly slaughtered animals, diminish one's livelihood. Due to elevating the aspects of the soul one encounters the "animalistic desires," subjugating the aspects of the body. This causes the form to illumine and one comes to recognize God.

In the unabridged version of this lesson the proof-texts supporting the Rebbe's statements are brought. The idea is that charity has the power to subjugate one's base desires and cause one's inner form, his powerful spirit and soul, to shine. God willing, in the next few essays, we will elaborate upon these ideas and merit tasting the "untainted air" of Rebbe Nachman's teachings.

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- [Home](#)
- [Blessed to Give Table of Contents](#)
- [Chapter #10](#)
- [Chapter #12](#)