

Myra Estelle Class : Money & Trust

From: Iggeret HaRamban: Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman (Nachmanides)(1195-1270)

For indeed, of what should man be prideful? If he has wealth—it is God who makes one poor or prosperous.

From: Psalm 37:3-4: King David

Trust in God and do good, that you may dwell in the land and nourish yourself with faithfulness. And rely upon God for your enjoyments, for He will grant you the desires of your heart.

From: Proverbs 3:5–6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.

From: Deuteronomy 8:16-18

Who feeds you manna in the Wilderness, which your forefathers knew not, in order to afflict you and in order to test you, to do good for you in your end? And you may say in your heart, “My strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth!” Then you shall remember God, your God: that it was He Who gave you the strength to make wealth, in order to establish His covenant that He swore to your forefathers, as this day.

From: Toward a Meaningful Life: Charity and Wealth: Rabbi Simon Jacobson

Charity enables us to spiritualize the material, and to actualize our virtuous intentions. God could have easily distributed wealth evenly to all people. But, as the sages say, “If everyone were wealthy or poor, who would be generous?” Just as God continues to give—every fraction of time, every day on earth—charity allows us to give, thus becoming Godlike ourselves. Remember: The money you give away is not your own; God has lent it to you to allow you the gift of giving. Those who have been blessed with more money, then, are those who have been blessed by God with the opportunity and privilege to be more giving, to be more Godlike. (Midrash Tanchuma)

So charity must be given with humility. If a wealthy person gives arrogantly, thinking that he is doing a great favor, he is sadly mistaken. The favor is being done to him. Recognizing this fact makes the act of giving charity that much more compelling.

After all, God created the universe as an intricate system of give and take; our entire existence revolves around this relationship. Just as plants, for instance, need the carbon dioxide that humans exhale, humans need the oxygen that plants produce. Charity is yet one more expression of this pattern: the giver and the receiver need one another. “More than the rich man does for the pauper,” say the sages, “the pauper does for the rich man.” (Midrash Rabba, Vayikra)

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From: Charity: Two "Owners": Rabbi Dov Ber Pinson

The charity that is given from the more fortunate to the less fortunate establishes a relationship between 'giver' and 'receiver' and ultimately reveals a deep bond between the two 'owners'—the person who gives it away and the person who now has it in their possession. Tzedakah is generally the Hebrew word used for charity, though literally translated it means 'doing what is right.' Clearly, there is a marked distinction between giving charity and doing what is right. To be charitable is to assume that the money or belongings are yours, and you are nice enough to give away your money or possessions to others. Tzedakah means doing right, being aware that the money you are giving to the poor has been offered to you as a gift, to be kept in your trust until you distribute it to its proper owner.

From: 1 Lekutai MoHaran 68: Rebbe Nachman

Money has the ability to transfer spiritual energies from one physical item to another. Rabbi Nachman explains how: Every physical item has a spiritual essence, which is behind its concrete manifestation. In addition to an item's own unique essence, it also contains a universal soul in common with all the other items in the physical creation. This universal soul is rooted in the spiritual energies of wealth. This is why every physical item has or is associated with a monetary value.

From: Proverbs 21:21

One that pursues charity and generosity finds life, righteousness and honor.