

A Midrash for Monday

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“When God your Lord will expand your borders...” (Deuteronomy 12:20).

This relates to the verse (Proverbs 18:16), “A person’s gift expands him.” When a person is generous, God gives him greatness.

There’s a story about Avun Ramaah (Trickster) who lived in Batzrah. Our Sages went there on a fund-raising mission. Although Avun Ramaah was among the first to be approached, he did not pledge any donation. He waited to see what the rest of the city would pledge? Why? He wanted to know how much they would contribute—and he would then match their gift.

This is why he was named Avun Ramaah: he made tricks so that others would increase their charity-giving so that he could increase his.

*In response to his generosity, the Sages sat Avun Ramaah at the head of the table to fulfill the verse, “...and gives him access to the great” (Proverbs, *ibid.*).*

Generous giving, largesse when contributing to a worthwhile charity, expands us in numerous ways. By giving properly to

someone (or some cause) worthy of support, we emulate God, the most generous giver of all. This automatically expands our soul and increases our propensity to give in the future. (In almost all cases it also increases our wherewithal to give.)

Additionally, when we give to people (or organizations) that are heavily involved in Torah and/or *chessed* (kindness), our association with them increases our awareness and sensitivity to Torah-thinking and the importance of generosity. This leads to a further expansion of our soul.

Nu? What are we waiting for? Let's start giving!

Based on *Midrash Tanchuma, Re'ei* #5

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