

Charity Also Benefits the Giver

written by Chaim Kramer
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Rabbi Zvi Aryeh Rosenfeld brought many American youth closer to Torah Judaism and to Rebbe Nachman. One of his memorable, hands-on lessons was about tzedakah (charity).

When the Beis HaMikdash, the Holy Temple, stood in Jerusalem, Jewish emissaries stood near the Altar. As the sacrifices were offered, they would recite certain passages from the Torah, called *ma'amadot*, and pray for the welfare of the Jewish people. After the destruction of the Temple, donations made on a regular basis to support the yeshivot were called *ma'amadot*. The people who regularly gave these *ma'amadot* to the yeshivot had a share in the students' Torah study.

Rabbi Zvi Aryeh Rosenfeld used the concept of *ma'amadot*,

regular donations to a yeshivah, to teach his Talmud Torah students in New York City the importance of *tzedakah*. Since the money was channeled through the Breslov elders in Israel, the students learned to respect and appreciate the rabbis, too.

Chaim Kramer recalls:

“My father-in-law, Rabbi Rosenfeld, got the Talmud Torah kids involved with the Breslov Yeshivah in Mea Shearim. Every month he expected each child to give a small sum – for example, ten cents – to the yeshivah. In that way, the children had a share in the yeshivah’s Torah learning. In addition, the children were expected to raise money for the yeshivah. So, for example, every month, each child would bring in a dollar that he had raised from others, together with ten cents of his own money. This was one of the ways that Rabbi Rosenfeld trained his students to give *tzedakah*.”

Rabbi Rosenfeld encouraged his older students to send their *tzedakah* money to the Breslov elders in Jerusalem, who would distribute it for them. At the conclusion of every class, Rabbi Rosenfeld collected small sums of money from his students and wrote their names on a sheet of paper. His script was so tiny that he wrote sixty to seventy names on one sheet.

Afterward, he phoned Rabbi Avraham Sternhartz in Jerusalem (and, after Rabbi Sternhartz passed away, Rabbi Elya Chaim Rosen, the rosh yeshivah), and told him the names of the students who had contributed money so that he could pray for them.

Through these *ma’madot*, Rabbi Rosenfeld was training his students to consistently give *tzedakah*, and also forged a relationship between his students and the Breslov elders that would last for many years to come.