

True Charity, valid before God, needs to be learned...

THE GREAT GOSPEL OF JOHN Volume 4, Chapter 81

Revealed from the Lord thru the Inner Word to Jacob Lorber

Chapter 81 - About the true charity that is pleasing in the sight of God

1. (The Lord:) "This concerns the pure concept of what is mine and what is thine. Moses says: 'You shall not steal!' and again: 'You shall not covet that which belongs to your neighbour, except when it is lawful to do so!' (Exodus 20:15 & 17)
2. If you honestly purchase something from your neighbor, it is then your lawful possession before all men. But to take something from a person in secret, against their will, is an offence against God's ordinance as handed down to the people through Moses, for such an action is clearly in conflict with the love of one's neighbor. Whatever you would not wish another to do to you, you should likewise not do to your fellow man either.
3. Theft usually originates in self-love, which encourages indolence, a taste for luxuriousness and inactivity. From that point on a certain despondency develops, cloaked by a kind of arrogant shyness, which does not allow one to agree to a somewhat embarrassing request, but makes one more comfortable with secret larceny or theft. Thus, there are a great many character flaws that support theft, the most obvious of which is overdeveloped self-love. This malady of the soul can best be counteracted with active love for one's fellow man.
4. It is understandable for you to now think: 'It would be easy enough to practice love for one's fellow man, if only one always had the necessary means to do so. But in every hundred people there are seldom more than ten whose circumstances would allow them to practice this splendid virtue; the other ninety are usually those upon whom the wealthy are supposed to practice their benevolence. However, if theft can only be successfully curbed by the active love of one's fellow man, the ninety poor folk will hardly be able to refrain from it completely, since they lack the means to practice this virtue in an effective manner.'
5. From an intellectual viewpoint, your thinking is quite correct, and no one can object to it on rational grounds. However, the heart speaks a different language, and it goes as follows: Charity is not only evidenced by gifts, but rather by all kinds of good deeds and honest services, which, of course, must not lack goodwill.
6. Goodwill is the life and soul of a good deed; without it, even the most positive deed of them all would be valueless before the tribunal of God. However, if you do not have any means, but nonetheless possess the honest goodwill, wishing to help your neighbour when you see or find him in need of support, and your heart is troubled when you are unable to help him, then your goodwill is worth much more before God than some other person's deed that he would have had to be enticed to perform, in one way or another.
7. If a rich man helped an impoverished community to get back on its feet because it had promised to pay him tithes or show him subservience once it has financially recovered, his good deed is null and void before God, for he has already reserved his reward for himself. What he has done, any usurious miser would have done for profit.

8. This example shows you that anyone, rich or poor, can act charitably before God, to benefit his own inner, spiritual life. The important factor is the existence of a truly living goodwill, so that the donor in question is unreservedly prepared to do whatever he can.

9. However, goodwill alone would not be worth much if you were quite wealthy, not lacking in goodwill, but having too much regard, partly for yourself, partly for your children, other relatives or additional contingencies, or if you were to fail to help the one in need of charity sufficiently, or perhaps not at all, for one of these reasons, or simply because one cannot always know whether or not the supplicant might be a lazy scamp, unworthy of the help required. Thus, one would only be supporting an idle scoundrel, while a more worthy person might not receive the support required. However, if a more eligible one were to appear, you would have the same doubts, for it is impossible to know for certain whether one or the other is truly worthy of help.

10. Yes, my friend, a man of goodwill, who, even with the best of intentions, has doubts whether or not to do some unusual good work, does not yet enjoy the true life, not by a long shot. In his case neither his goodwill, nor his good deeds count for very much before God. Where there are the means, the goodwill and the deeds must be in balance, otherwise one reduces the value of the other and the validity of both before God.

11. Whatever you do or give should be done or given with a joyful heart, for a kind giver or helper is worth twice as much before God, and because of this, he is that much closer to his spiritual perfection.

12. For the heart of a kind benefactor is comparable to a fruit, which ripens easily and before its time, because it contains an abundance of warmth within it. This is essential for the ripening of a fruit, since warmth holds the element of life, which is love.

13. The willingness and kindness of the giver and helper represents that highly commendable fullness of the true inner and spiritual warmth of life, through which the soul matures more than twice as quickly to achieve total spiritual integration into its being. This must be so, since it is this very warmth that represents the migration of the eternal spirit into the soul, and this relocation, in turn, results in a progressive increase in their similarity.

14. However, even the most dedicated giver and benefactor is ever more distant from true inner and spiritual perfection of life, the more surly or lacking in compassion he is when giving or helping. Such an unkind and surly attitude still reveals materialistic and worldly elements, and is therefore much more distant from the pure and heavenly element than a joyful and friendly one is.

15. And so, you should not attach serious or bitter admonitions to your charity. These words may cause the poor brother great sadness, as well as a longing not to be obliged to accept any more charity from a benefactor who keeps reprimanding him with a serious face. Besides, such ill-timed words of censure often make the benefactor feel a little superior, and the recipient is humiliated and even more conscious of his own poverty, in comparison to the benefactor's wealth. Under such circumstances, it becomes far more difficult to receive than to give.

16. He who possesses wealth, together with goodwill, gives easily, but the poor recipient of his charity, even with the most friendly of donors, is afraid to be a burden to his benefactor, because

of his own poverty. How much more must he be troubled then, if the benefactor adopts a sullen face and offers a string of wise reprimands before his act of generosity. His manner could make any future approach even more difficult, because the second time around the recipient could expect even wiser, more prolonged and more emphatic censure, which, to him, might as well mean: 'Be sure not to return here too soon - or even ever again!', although the benefactor may not even have remotely thought this way.

17. And exactly because of this, a willing and friendly giver is immensely preferable to a sullen preacher, because the former comforts and gladdens the heart of the poor person and makes him feel grateful. It also fills him with loving and wholesome trust in God, as well as people in general, and his otherwise heavy yoke becomes a much lighter burden, which he can then bear with more patience and devotion than ever before.

18. A cheerful and kindly benefactor is the same to a poor brother in need, what a safe and inviting harbour is to a seaman on a stormy sea. A sullen benefactor, however, is like a partly sheltered bay that protects the ship from running aground, but keeps the skipper in a state of anxious tension, wondering, after the storm abates, whether or not the bay might possibly be swamped by a dangerous spring tide that could cause more damage than the storm on the high seas.

19. Now you know all that God wishes for you to know about the scope of his will, regarding the attainment of true spiritual perfection, readily achievable through love for one's fellow man. Act accordingly and you will reach the only true goal of life, easily and without delay."