

When a person (soul) offers a meal-offering to Hashem. (2:1)

Of all those who offer voluntary sacrifices/ offerings, only one who brings a *Korban Minchah*, Meal offering, is referred to by the Torah as a *nefesh*, soul. This inexpensive *korban* was brought primarily by the poor, since they were financially challenged to bring an animal or fowl. Hashem says: "I will regard the *korban* of a poor man as if he had offered his very *nefesh*, soul."

The simple explanation of this statement is that a wealthy person who brings a *korban* takes from his "extra" money – not from the money he needs for his daily sustenance. A poor man, however, has no extra money. In fact, he does not have sufficient funds for his daily living. Yet, he finds a way to somehow put together a few pennies to purchase the required flour for his *korban*. Such a person truly offers his soul.

Horav Eliyahu Meir Bloch, zl, offers a pragmatic explanation, which also teaches us a perspective on charitable giving – and how it should be performed. When a wealthy man contributes to an organization or an institution, he receives accolades in the way of a dinner, a plaque, a public gesture of gratitude – and he should. Without the support of those who can, our ability to subsist would be greatly stunted. Obviously, all support is derived from Hashem, but these are His agents. Even one who normally shuns public acclaim feels good about his contributions. After all, who is not happy if he can help someone? And who does not feel elevated when he receives that "thank you"? This applies even to a *tzadik*, righteous person, who takes personal pride in his good deeds.

The exception is the *ani*, poor man, who has nothing to scrape together. He knows for certain that accolades will not be forthcoming. The poor man derives nothing personal from his contribution, because he knows that his tiny donation, his few pennies, will not amount to much and will not create any stir or change within the organization or institution to which he gives. Why does he give? He gives to fulfill the command of Hashem – pure, selfless giving, with no ulterior motives – prior to or after the fact. This is a unique form of giving, which is found only in the *korban* of the poor man. Thus, Hashem refers to his giving as one who offers his soul.

Meged Yosef relates a story which is endemic to the *Rosh Yeshivah's* exposition and offers us a powerful insight into *tzedakah*, charitable giving. A poor, wretched widow who, despite having a daily challenge to obtain enough to sustain herself daily, would scrounge all week, saving everything that she could until she had one penny – which she personally proceeded to deliver to *Horav Yechezkel Sarna, zl*, for the *Chevron Yeshivah*. This took time, because the *Rosh Yeshivah* would drop everything to greet and spend a few minutes with her. The members of his family were not very happy that she occupied the *Rosh Yeshivah's* precious time. "Does the *Chevron Yeshivah* subsist from her penny?" they asked. The *Rosh Yeshivah* replied, "Veritably, the *Yeshivah's* continued existence does not hinge on her donation – but the entire world does!"

What a compelling insight. We tend to disregard the small, insignificant donations that are received from those who simply cannot give more. *Tzedakah* should not be measured by how much one

gives, but by the proportion of his assets this donation represents. If one has very little and he gives a little, he is actually giving considerably more than his counterpart who has very much and does not give proportionately.