

You shall not test Hashem. (6:17)

One does not test Hashem to see whether He will fulfill His promises, because we are clueless as to the workings of the Divine. So many factors are included in the Heavenly calculations of which we are unaware. It is ludicrous to second-guess the Almighty, since we know so little of the true past and even less of the future – all of which are factored into everyone's reward and punishment. There is one *mitzvah*, however, explains *Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl*, that we are allowed -- nay, encouraged -- to test Hashem: *tzedakah*, *Maaser*/tithe/charity. The *Navi Malachi* (3:10) quotes Hashem as saying, "Bring all the tithes into the storage house, and let it be sustenance in My Temple. Test Me, if you will, with this, says Hashem... (See) if I do not open up for you the windows of the heavens and pour out upon you blessing without end." We may "test" Hashem by giving *tzedakah* and observing how this act of generosity, in fact, ratchets up one's relationship with Hashem, the Source of all good.

Rav Pincus explains that, for every other *mitzvah* in the Torah, Hashem promised reward for its successful completion, the actual reward being contingent upon the person's suitability and worthiness to receive said reward. For instance, one who honors his father and mother is promised longevity. If the son who is so good to his parents happens to be a thief, obviously his unscrupulous activities will preclude him from receiving reward for honoring his parents.

This might be compared to the fellow who visits a doctor to treat a troubling ailment. The doctor prescribes a regimen of medication which will effect a cure in about a week. The patient then decides to drink a glass of poison or take a walk off the roof of the sixth floor. Can one blame the doctor's prescription for not working? Can one complain to the doctor that his advice did not save the man? Likewise, the Torah promises *arichas yamim*, longevity, for *Kibbud av v'eim*, but, if he decides to jump off the roof, he is acting against the Torah.

Tzedakah is different. It is much like a respirator that neither heals nor alters the quality of one's life, but does keep the patient breathing indefinitely. *Tzedakah tatzil mimaves*, charity saves from death – is a verity. Charity sustains a person. Try it; go ahead; test Hashem.