

From every man whose heart motivates him, you shall take My portion. (25:2)

Much has been written in praise of those who generously open their hearts and their wallets to help those who are in need. What about those who volunteer to raise funds for people and organizations in need? The commentators write that he who contributes charity, receives his due reward regardless of his motivation – be it *l'shmah*, for the sake of the *mitzvah* or the person and organization in need, or he is acting beneficently to promote himself. The same does not hold true with regard to the one who has the “fun job” of raising money. He must do so *l'shem Shomayim*, for the sake of Heaven; otherwise, his reward is very limited. This is derived from *V'yikchu Li*, they shall take for Me – *LiShmi*, for My Name, *l'shem Shomayim*.

Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl, explains the *tzedakah* process and its benefits with a meaningful analogy. The world we live in may be compared to a stormy sea, its waters raging. Man sits in his boat being thrust up and down with the rising and descending waves. Torah and *mitzvos* are the boat that protect man from the raging world. They are his boat of salvation, his only line of protection from the dangers of the sea. One who sins, inevitably cracks his boat and falls prey to the destructive elements. He is thrown into the water, cast about by the waves, and, ultimately, becomes their victim.

There is, however, one way to have one's life spared, even as his boat capsizes: a lifeline. He grabs hold of that lifeline and literally holds on for dear life until the storm subsides and he is able to make his way to dry land. Man's lifeline is the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*. When all else has failed and he is drowning in the raging waters, the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah* allows him to hang on. Even if the Heavenly Tribunal has issued negative decrees against him, he may continue to cling for dear life to his lifeline of *tzedakah*.

One who inspires another Jew to perform *mitzvos* is certainly performing an enormous favor for him. It may, at times, appear to be a thankless endeavor, but it is not. Hashem will pay him gratitude, and perhaps, at one point, the person whom he inspired will also remember his origins. When it comes to the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*, however, it is much different. Then, he is quite possibly saving one's life. Availing someone the opportunity to give *tzedakah* is tantamount to throwing him a lifeline.

Imagine that the Heavenly Tribunal has issued a decree that has severe negative – even drastic – implications for a person. It could be a dread illness, a car accident, a severe financial crisis, and it appears that the decree will be carried out. Out of His infinite compassion and love for all of us, Hashem sends a poor man, or someone representing either a group of people in need, or an organization that is hurting. Hashem is thereby sending him a lifeline, an opportunity to be spared from the crisis, the accident, the illness. *Tzedakah tatzil mi'maves*, charity saves from death, is a very real and absolute dictum. It really does save.

Perhaps if we kept this in mind, the next time we are approached with an opportunity to give *tzedakah*, we might respond with a more appealing countenance. Rather than looking at the person in need as if he was someone about to rob us of our hard-earned wealth, let us make believe that he is here to throw us a lifeline to the future.

Horav Yaakov Galinsky, Shlita, relates an incident which took place during one of his many fundraising trips abroad on behalf of his *yeshivah*. He attempted to obtain an appointment with a well-known philanthropist. He made the call, asked to speak with the man of the house, and received a negative reply: "The man of the house is not home." When will he be home?" *Rav* Galinsky asked. "In a few hours," was their response.

A number of hours elapsed and *Rav* Galinsky presented himself at the man's doorstep. "I am sorry; the man of the house was delayed. He is not yet home," was the curt response he received. "When do you expect him?" he asked. "We have no idea," was their way of "graciously" dismissing him.

Rav Galinsky returned to his waiting car and dialed the man's home. "Hello, I have an important message for Mr. "so and so". Is he available?" "One moment," was the response. A few seconds went by and lo and behold, the elusive man of the house came on the line. *Rav* Galinsky introduced himself and said, "According to *halachah*, I really must apologize and beg your forgiveness." "Forgiveness?" asked the man, "What did you do to me that requires my forgiveness?"

Rav Galinsky explained, "At first, when you instructed your family to inform me that you were not home, I suspected you of uttering a falsehood. After all, I asked for the man of the house, and I was told that he was not home." At first, I perceived this as an outright lie. But then I realized it was the sad truth. The *baal ha'bayis*, true master of this house, is the *yetzer hora*, evil-inclination, who is in absolute control over here. I erred in thinking that you were in charge. Sadly, you are obliged to the *yetzer hora*. You have my sympathy."