

## You shall be wholeheartedly simple with Hashem, your G-d. (18:13)

Fundraising can be a disheartening endeavor, regardless of the organization or individual for which one is working. The esteem which we accord the fundraiser is commensurate with the individual's own level of self respect. One can view his undertaking as an opportunity to enable another Jew to share in the spiritual reward reserved for those who demonstrate strength of character - to overcome that "little voice" that finds every excuse to urge them not to give *tzedakah*. If he succeeds in adopting this perspective, he will approach his mission in a positive light.

There is a story told about the **Netziv** who sent out two *meshulachim*, fundraisers, to raise funds in order to sustain the famous *Volozhiner Yeshiva*. These were *talmidei chachamim*, erudite scholars, who were proficient in *Torah*, spending every moment of their free time engrossed in *Torah* study. We can then well imagine the level of enthusiasm they exhibited for their task at hand. While he was complaining, one *meshulach* presented an excellent idea. They would purchase a lottery ticket on behalf of the *Yeshivah* and pray to *Hashem* that it would win. The same Providence that decrees that wealthy people should contribute to a worthy cause would also respond to their prayers on behalf of the *Yeshivah*.

They decided to buy the ticket bearing the number 2118. One *meshulach* went to purchase a ticket, while his partner went to the *Beis Medrash* to pray for a successful drawing. There was, however, one problem. The first man--who had suggested the idea--decided to change their original choice of number. He concluded that since the number 2117 is the numerical value of "*ach tov*" - "only good" - it would be a more favorable number to buy.

As can be imagined, the *tefillah* of the second *meshulach* effected a positive Heavenly response, and number 2118 won. The two men returned to the *Netziv*, terribly dejected over their apparent lack of success. The *Rosh Hayeshivah* decided to give these hapless fundraisers a lesson in the essential attitude for fundraising. First, why does *Hashem* make it that difficult for their *Yeshivah*, or any *Yeshivah*, to receive its sustenance. After all, the Almighty provides for all things, each in accordance with their individual needs. Surely He could provide for the citadels that prepare and shape the spiritual climate of each generation. We are what our *Yeshivos* are. Why does He not make support easier for them?

The *Netziv's* compelling answer goes to the very heart of the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*. True, *Hashem* could have made it easy, but how would other Jews who do not attend or connect with a *Yeshivah* share in the *mitzvah* of *limud haTorah*, or elevate themselves through the *mitzvah* of *gemillus chesed*? How could the Jew in the small town, far away from the beaten path, share with other Jews in fulfilling their communal responsibilities, if not through the vehicle of the *meshulach*, or in contemporary times, "direct mail"? If finances were to be easy for the *Yeshivos*, a large segment of the Jewish population would, by default, be denied the privilege of maintaining a partnership in

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*Torah* with the scholars who are involved in *Torah* study. In other words, if one merits, he will contribute. If he does not merit, he will find excuses to refrain from contributing to any worthy cause.