

You shall cover it with pure gold, from within and from without shall you cover it. (25:11)

Chazal (*Yoma 72b*) derive from here that a *talmid chacham*, Torah scholar, should be consistent; in other words, his inner character must correspond with his public demeanor: *Tocho k'baro*; his internal rectitude should coincide with his outward conduct. The Torah does not brook hypocrisy. The *Aron HaKodesh*, which is the repository of the Torah scroll, symbolizes the crown of Torah. As it is covered with gold both within and without, it alludes to the requisite character of a Torah scholar.

Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, relates a *shailah*, halachic query, that was posed to him by an individual who thought that he had crossed the line of personal integrity, feeling that how he had presented himself did not exactly give a clear picture of him. A *meshulach*, fundraiser, visited London for the purpose of soliciting the Jewish community for the organization that he represented. When he reached the home of a distinguished philanthropist, the man, who had been in the middle of studying *Gemorah*, said to him, "I am having difficulty understanding a *Tosfos*. If you can explain this *Tosfos* to me, I will give you a very large donation." The *meshulach* was a learned man, but was unprepared to explain the *Tosfos* to the man's satisfaction. He walked out with the usual check – nothing extra. He walked outside and met another *meshulach* who was about to try his luck. He related to him what had occurred and suggested that, prior to soliciting this man, he should carefully review the *Tosfos* (he showed him which one) and be prepared to present a satisfying explanation. The second *meshulach* stopped by the nearest *bais medrash* and reviewed the *Tosfos* with all of its super commentaries. He was now certain that he could answer any question concerning the *Tosfos*.

The second *meshulach* knocked on the door of the man's home and was invited in. The host was poring over a tome of *Talmud*, and when he looked up at the *meshulach*, he said, "Let me ask you a question. For some time, I have been stumped by a question that continues to bother me concerning a *Tosfos* I am studying. If you can explain it to me, I will contribute a large donation to your organization. The *meshulach*, of course, now being proficient in that particular *Tosfos*, immediately explained it to the shocked – but very happy – man. He immediately wrote out a check for a considerable amount of money. The *meshulach* could not believe his good fortune.

A week later, however, when the *meshulach* had returned home, he was troubled by his actions. Did he transgress the prohibition of *geneivas daas*, stealing one's mind, misrepresentation, deception? After all, the wealthy contributor had no idea that the man who stood before him had spent time preparing the *Tosfos*. Had he gone in "cold" as his predecessor had, he too, would have walked out with a less-than-considerable donation. The *meshulach* was a man of integrity. He did not want to do anything that might have a taint of unacceptable behavior. He turned to *Rav Zilberstein* to clarify the *halachah*. The *Rav* brought the question to *Horav Chaim Kanievsky, zl*, who ruled that it was not a question of *geneivas daas*. On the contrary, it was a clear example of

siyata d'Shmaya, Divine assistance. Hashem provided the second *meshulach* with an opportunity through which he could receive a large donation.

Rav Chaim cited an instance which occurred concerning *Horav Yitzchak Elchanan Spektor, zl*, which was closely related to the incident that occurred with the *meshulach*. As a young man, *Rav* Yitzchak Elchanan became *Rav* in a small town. As he traveled to accept his position, he stopped in an inn (owned by a Jew) to spend the night. He asked the innkeeper if he had any *sefarim* from which he could learn. The innkeeper said that all he had was a *Derech Chaim Siddur* with a *halachic* commentary authored by *Horav Yaakov Lorberbaum, zl* (author of *Nesivos HaMishpat* and *Chavas Daas*, both classics). *Rav* Yitzchak Elchanan spent part of the night studying the laws pertaining to *Krias HaTorah* and the *kashrus* of a Torah scroll. The day he arrived in the town, a question was raised concerning the community *Sefer Torah's* suitability. It "just so happened" that he had learned the *halachah* that addressed this question the night before. This was a clear instance of *siyata d'Shmaya*. If we would only open our eyes, we would see how often Hashem provides us with opportunities for success.