

## **So that I can test them. (16:4)**

A prospective teacher usually prepares and gives a sample class in order to showcase his/her style and abilities, so that the employer can discern whether the teacher is a good fit for the class and the school. This is especially important if the school caters to students from diverse backgrounds, difficult family situations, and emotional and physical learning disabilities. The teacher's ability to engage and motivate the students, generate their interest in the subject and build their trust are his greatest assets. In such a daunting situation the teacher's skill is crucial. In addition, his ability to tolerate behavior which under ordinary circumstances presents a discipline issue, is certainly in his favor.

A young *rebbe* prepared a sample class to be given at a *yeshivah* that specialized in addressing the educational needs of boys who would otherwise not be in *yeshivah*. These were good boys who, for a variety of reasons, just did not fit into a mainstream learning program. In order to succeed in reaching them, a *rebbe* requires charisma, an abundance of patience and an educator's appreciation and understanding of the human condition. The *rebbe* thought he was the perfect candidate for the job.

He prepared an excellent class. Since it was before *Pesach*, he went through the story, some of the pertinent *halachos*, the *hashkafah*, and stories to enliven their appreciation of the Festival. Fifteen minutes into the class, he saw that this was no ordinary group of boys. As much as he tried to reach them, they rebuffed his efforts, practically ignoring his presence. Meanwhile, the principal was taking copious notes concerning his handling of the class. One of the class leaders began to bang on the floor with his desk. Despite the disruption that this caused the class, the *rebbe* remained calm. He told the boy that the noise was disturbing his classmates. The principal took note of the *rebbe's* patience. Ten minutes later, spitballs came flying across the room. Once again, the *rebbe* asked the boy to be considerate of his class. The principal marked the *rebbe's* reaction on his pad. When another boy took out a harmonica from his pocket and began to play it, the principal thought that the *rebbe* would lose it. He did not. He informed the boy that this was not music class and that he would have to find another venue to play his harmonica.

The young man was hired! The principal explained that, while he was well aware of the *rebbe's* reputation, he had never seen him under fire. The various incidents that occurred tested his control and indicated that he would be a star *rebbe*.

Let us imagine if the *rebbe* had not been challenged with these tests. Would he have landed the job? Perhaps not. We do not realize how life's tests, challenges and obstacles – and how we react to and deal with them – play a critical role in our favor before Hashem and the reward we accrue. This might be the way we land the "job."