

## Extra Tzedakah Money

### **Rav Baruch Fried**

**Question:** An individual organized a fundraising event for a very specific cause. He needed to raise a certain amount of money to cover the costs of this cause. When he counted the proceeds, he realized he had raised more money than he needed. What should he do with the extra money?

**Answer:** The Mishnah in Shekalim states that if a person raised money for the poor people of his town and he has extra money left over, he should distribute it to other poor people. If, however, he raised money for one specific poor person, if he raises more money than was needed, he must give the extra to the poor person. There are two reasons for this: One reason is because the collector is acting as the poor man's agent, and it is as if he is *koneh* the money for him. A second reason is because the poor person's name was used in the fundraising, which caused him some embarrassment. Since he had this embarrassment, he is entitled to all of the money that was raised.

The Mishnah here is speaking about a case where the cause was relevant at the time, but extra money was raised. In such a case, we see that the money should be given to the intended recipient, or if it wasn't for specific recipients then it is used for a similar cause.

The Teshuvos HaRosh discusses cases where *tzedakah* was raised for causes that turn out to be irrelevant. He speaks of a case where money was raised to free a captive who had been kidnapped and taken to a foreign land. Unfortunately, after the money was raised it was learned that the captive had converted to the religion of the land and did not want to return to Yiddishkeit. Another example he speaks about is a case where money was raised for the funeral of a deathly ill man. Miraculously, the man recovered and the money was no longer needed. In these cases, where the entire cause ended up being irrelevant, the Rosh rules that the donations were given in error and should be returned to the donors.

Regarding the story in our question, if the fundraiser set a specific goal that was known beforehand, every donor thought that his donation was going towards that goal. Had they had known that the goal was already met, they would not have given the donation; therefore, it can be said that the donations given above the goal are like the cases of the Teshuvos HaRosh where the donation is being given in error and, if possible, should be returned to the donors. If this is not possible, the money should be given to a similar charity.