

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ויתפלל אברהם את האלקים וירפא אלקים את אבימלך ואת אשתו ואמרוותי ... (כ-כ"א)

During the summer of 2004, a vein in the heart of **HaGaon Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt"l** burst, and the 94-year old *Posek Hador* was rushed to the hospital in critical condition. The doctors said there were two options: If they operated on the elderly *Tzaddik*, the chance of success was only three percent. However, if the surgery was not performed, he would live no longer than three days. The decision had to be made right then and there, on *Shabbos*. The *Rav's* relatives quickly traveled to his son-in-law, **R' Chaim Kanievsky shlit'a**, in *Bnei Brak*, to get his *psak* on the matter, and he ruled that in the meantime, nothing should be done. On *Motzei Shabbos*, they found out about a specialist from the United States who could take care of the matter without anesthesia and surgery, greatly reducing the risk. The doctor, together with all his instruments, was flown to Israel and, miraculously, the treatment was successful. For a few weeks it was touch-and-go, but Rav Elyashiv soon made a full recovery and went back to his rigorous learning schedule. Everyone could see that *Hashem* had answered the prayers of hundreds of thousands of *Yidden* who had *davened* for Rav Elyashiv's recovery.

But there was another story that took place behind the scenes. It was recounted by **R' Yitzchok Zilberstein shlit'a**, *Rav of Ramat Elchanan* and another son-in-law of Rav Elyashiv. As the entire Jewish world was steeped in prayer on behalf of R' Elyashiv, a man called the home of R' Zilberstein in *Ramat Elchanan*, asking to speak with the *Rov*.

When the *Rav* answered the phone, the man on the other line identified himself as a relative of one of the leading *Chassidische Rebbes* of the generation. It seems that a number of years back, the *Rebbe*, a leader and guide to thousands of devoted followers, took ill with mysterious symptoms. Always an active person who saw hundreds of *chassidim* daily, his body and strength seemed to have shut down. He was unable to fulfill his normal rigorous schedule of *Torah*, *Tefillah* and seeing to the needs of his *chassidim*, and this worried the multitudes; they felt lost without their leader. Top doctors across the spectrum were brought in to determine the cause of the mystery malady, but no one seemed to have the answer.

"It was then that I remembered reading something written by the great *Manchester Rosh Yeshiva*, **R' Yehudah Zev Segal zt"l**," said the impassioned *chasid* to R' Zilberstein. "He wrote that he had never seen even one family that learned *Hilchos Lashon Hara* earnestly, that did not experience some sort of salvation and solution to an ongoing crisis. I decided right then and there, that on behalf of the health and welfare of our *Rebbe*, I would organize a learning program, based on the calendar of HaRav Segal whereby we would learn two *halachos* of *Sefer Chofetz Chaim* each day. It was not hard to attract support for my idea and in a short time, we had a large group of *chassidim* dedicating their learning of two *halachos* a day to a *refuah shelaima* for the *Rebbe*." The man became excited on the other line and exclaimed, "And you know what? It worked! Within a short period of time, the *Rebbe* had a *refuah shelaima* and is now back to his usual schedule, learning, *davening* and seeing to his followers and leading his *chassidim*, as he did in the past."

The *chasid's* tone suddenly took on a serious note. "I was just thinking that perhaps you might try the same thing on behalf of your father-in-law, the great *Rav*, and *B'ezras Hashem*, we will all see his imminent recovery very soon."

R' Zilberstein thought it was a wonderful idea and quickly organized the members of *Kollel Bais Dovid* to begin learning two *halachos* of *Sefer Chofetz Chaim* each day. Word got around and many other people joined in the effort, as well. It was then the beginning of *Elul* and the agreed upon length of their trial was *Yom Kippur*. A great zeal and exuberance was embraced in this mass effort and everyone fulfilled their allotment of two *halachos* each day. Even a local seminary in *Bnei Brak* decided to get in on the act and hundreds of seminary girls accepted upon themselves to learn two *halachos* a day based on the calendar of the *Manchester Rosh Yeshivah*, on behalf of the *Posek Hador*.

Boruch Hashem, *simcha* and joy was felt throughout the Jewish world when in a short period of time, the news was received that *Maran HaGaon* R' Yosef Sholom Elyashiv, was feeling better and his health was restored.

וישם את המשענת על פני הנער ואין קול ואין קשב ... (מלכים ב' ד-יא)

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY R' TZVI HIRSCH HOFFMAN

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

Just as *Sarah Imeinu* was well beyond her child-bearing years, but was nevertheless promised a son, so too, *Elisha HaNavi* promised the *Isha HaShunamis* a child whom she bore despite all odds. Unfortunately, the child passed away and *Elisha* sent his attendant, *Geichazi* with a special cloth to revive the child. Nothing happened and *Chazal* explain that because *Geichazi* deviated from *Elisha's* explicit instructions and "tested" the cloth on an animal along the way, he "wasted" the special power vested into the cloth.

If *Elisha* had the ability to invest the power of revival into something, why couldn't he make it a lasting power? Additionally, how could someone else "waste" the power?

R' Meir Simcha HaKohen of *Dvinsk zt"l* (*Meshech*

Chochma) answers that when a *beracha* is given to someone, its fulfillment is not specifically dependent on the level of spirituality of the one who administered it. Rather, the fulfillment of the *beracha* is determined based on the level of belief and *emunah* of the one receiving it.

As such, the *Isha HaShunamis* only placed her belief in *Elisha HaNavi's* abilities as a man of *Hashem* to help her and her child. Therefore, special cloth or not, from the very outset *Geichazi* was never able to revive the child since the woman had never placed any measure of belief in his abilities.

While people tend to chase the use of amulets to cure their problems, the only way for the amulet to have its proper effect is only after one first places his belief in *Hashem*.

ויקרא אברהם את שם בנו הנולד לו אשר ילדה לו שרה יצחק ... (כ"א-ג)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN ZT"L

מחשבת הלב

It would seem that the words "אשר ילדה לו שרה" - "*that was born to Sarah*," are superfluous. The *posuk* before said that Sarah gave birth. It would have sufficed to say, "*And Avraham called his son Yitzchok*." Let us analyze another *posuk* later in this *parsha* for more understanding. As per Sarah's request, due to Yishmael's aberrant behavior, Avraham agreed to send him away. The *posuk* says, "*Sarah said to Avraham, banish this maidservant and her son*." The question is why was Hagar also evicted just because of her son's bad behavior? Why must she suffer too? I saw a *pshat*, that if Yishmael reached such a level, it must have come from his mother's lack of *yiras shamayim*. Hence, said Sarah, drive out both of them and *Hashem* agreed.

When Avraham saw at the outset how special Yitzchok was, he credited his *eishes chayil*, Sarah. Therefore, he said "אשר" "ילדה לו שרה", as the *tefillos*, actions, and *zechusim* of his son's mother aided him in becoming a *tzaddik*. Avraham understood that the actions of parents have a direct effect on their children, forming who they are, and what their future potential will be.

Later in the *parsha*, it states: "ויטע אשל בבאר שבט". Avraham planted an "*eishel*". **Rashi** offers two meanings of the word. Either a tree/orchard, or alternatively, an inn or hotel. Both of these would have greatly expanded Avraham's *hachnasas orchim* operation. **R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l** explains the difference between the two. A hotel is a building, while a tree produces fruit. Thus, he explains, first Avraham established himself, assuring that he was worthy of being an instrument for *kiruv*. That is analogous to a hotel - a solid edifice. Once assured of that, he planted trees, passing on "the fruits" of his *emuna*; the knowledge he gleaned in *ruchniyus* to his descendants and all humanity. This example in *chinuch* is a life lesson for us all. And *b'ezras Hashem*, it will help us have only *nachas* and happiness, as our own "trees" bear "delicious healthy fruit"!

משל למה הדבר דומה

הנה נא ארני סדר נא אל בית עבדכם ולינו ורחצו רגליכם ... (יש-ג)

משל: *Atalmid* of **R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l** came to him with a dilemma. *Boruch Hashem*, his family was growing and needed more space. Until now, they had managed in a small two bedroom apartment on the second floor, but a great opportunity came up to move to a place with three spacious bedrooms. It was affordable, and just what they needed. The problem was that it was on the fifth floor. Although the family was willing to deal with climbing many flights on *Shabbos*, the problem was, that he would often bring guests home from *shul* on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* and feared that this "luxury" would be at the expense of his *hachnasas orchim*.

After hearing the question, R' Moshe was adamant that he should take the apartment for the good of his own family. As for the guests, R' Moshe gave the man a good *eitzah*: simply

וירא אליו ה' כאלני כמרה והוא ישב פתח האהל כיום ... (יה-א)

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON MIDDOS TOVOS FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

דרגה יתירה

Hashem comes to *Avraham Avinu* to visit him after his *Bris*. Avraham is in a lot of pain, and *Hashem* is being *mevaker choleh*. Imagine, getting a *bikur cholim* visit from *Hashem* Himself! And yet, we see that in the middle of this visit, Avraham notices that there are three nomads that look like they could use some hospitality. *Avraham Avinu* (probably) politely excuses himself and runs to help the new guests. From this, the *Medrash* derives that, "*Gedolah Hachnasas Orchim yosair m'kabbolas Pnei HaShechina*." It is greater to take care of guests, to take care of the needs of a fellow Jew, than to greet *Hashem* Himself. This means that if a guest was coming your way, the same time that *Hashem* Himself was coming to visit you, you should go and take care of your guest. What a tremendous lesson about our priorities. How great is *chessed* in the eyes of *Hashem* that He is willing to put Himself aside so that we can be there for our fellow Jew?!

Perhaps, when we feel overwhelmed and exhausted from continuously taking care of everyone around us, leaving us little time or energy for our own spiritual growth and connection to *Hashem* (otherwise known as *kabbolas Pnei HaShechina*), we should remember that *Gedolah Hachnassas Orchim*, taking care of all the little (and big) guests in our home, who just so happen to be our kids (and our spouses) is greater in the eyes of *Hashem* than the loftiest and most spiritual deed imaginable ... even greeting the *Shechina* itself.

As **Rabbi Dov Brezak shlit'a** so succinctly stated, children are not "in the way" of our *avodas Hashem*; they "are the way" for us to reach the greatest spiritual heights imaginable. So, don't get buried under the laundry, bills or the dishes. Don't get frustrated or resentful because you are constantly giving to all the "guests" who drop into your life. Each one is truly a gift to help you reach your greatest potential in *avodas Hashem*. And may the *zechus* of all the *hachnassas orchim* that we do, bring about the final *geulah* when we will all truly be *zoche* to the real *kabbolas Pnei HaShechina*.