



## Do We Get Advice or Not?

By Nachi Shulman, 11th Grade

In the first passuk of this week's parsha the Torah says: "Vayeria ailuv Hashem b'elonai Mamre vehu yoshaiv pesach haohel kichom hayom." "And Hashem appeared to him (Avraham) in the plains of Mamre while he was sitting in the doorway of the tent in the heat of the day."

Rashi explains that the reason why Mamre receives a special mention in this parsha is because Avraham consulted with him before circumcising himself.

This begs the question of why Avraham, who was known as someone who was extremely faithful to Hashem, would think it is right to consult with one of his followers instead of immediately obeying Hashem's will?

The Maharal answers that Avraham never thought of disobeying what Hashem said. He was worried however that skeptics would accuse him of just running blindly into a situation without thinking about the consequences. They would say that had Avraham even a moment to discuss this with more practical people, they would say that he should never do such a foolish thing. The act of bris mila would then have been seen as an act of contempt rather than a sanctification of Hashem. To prevent this Avraham made a public show of consulting with others. No one would be able to claim that Avraham would rush into some-

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## The Importance of Chesed

By Dovi Schlossberg, 11th Grade

This week's parsha teaches us how to love and develop a relationship with Hashem. The Baal Shem Tov teaches us that the way to love Hashem is to love others. Throughout his lifetime, Avraham exemplifies the trait of loving and caring for others. According to what the Baal Shem Tov says, this trait of Avraham explains why he had such a close relationship with Hashem. By showing love and care for others, Avraham was actually bonding and strengthening his connection with Hashem.

Each of the three Avos is correlated with a specific middah; a character trait that "qualifies" him to be an "Av", a patriarch. Each of the forefathers focused greatly on his unique middah, worked tirelessly to perfect it and eventually became a role models for the praised quality. Avraham's special middah was g'milus chasadim, or the performance of acts of chessed.

At the end of last week's parsha, Avraham gave himself a bris milah, a circumcision. At the beginning of this week's parsha, Avraham, a 99 year old man, is suffering through the worst pain from the circumcision just 3 days following his bris. Despite the intense pain, his old age and the oppressive heat, Avraham is anxious to per-

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**Torah Teasers**

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

Parshas Vayera  
Questions

1. Where is butter mentioned in this parsha? In what context is butter mentioned in the Prophets?
2. In this parsha, who is referred to as being "elderly" with the expression *Zaken* or *Zekainim*? (4 answers)
3. In this parsha, which two people question Hashem about killing a *tzaddik* (righteous person)?
4. In this parsha, which two people make a *Mishteh* - "a feast"?
5. Where is salt mentioned in this parsha? When is the next time that salt is mentioned in the Torah?
6. Aside from the book of Genesis, where else do the cities of Sodom and Amora appear in the Torah?

## Answers

1. Avraham serves butter to the angels (Genesis 18:8). In the book of Judges, Yael serves butter to Sisra (Shoftim 5:25).
2. The Torah refers to both Avraham and Sarah as "elderly" (Genesis 18:11). Later on, the Torah describes the crowd that converged on Lot's house as ranging "from young to old" (Genesis 19:4). Lastly, the daughters of Lot called their father a *Zakein* (Genesis 19:31).
3. Avraham asks Hashem if He will kill the *tzaddikim* of Sodom (Genesis 18:25). Avimelech also asks Hashem if He will kill a *tzaddik* (referring to himself for not touching Sarah) (Genesis 20:4).
4. Lot makes a feast for the angels (Genesis 19:3), and Avraham makes a feast when Yitzhak is weaned (21:8).
5. Lot's wife turns around and becomes "a pillar of salt" (Genesis 19:26). Salt is not mentioned again until Leviticus 2:13 with regard to the salt required for *korbonot*.
6. The song in Parshat Ha'azinu mentions Sodom and Amora (Deut. 32:32).

## The Haftorah Corner

Written By Benjamin Pleshty

*In this weeks parshah, parshat vayeira, Hashem promises Avraham that he will have a son, despite Avraham's and Sarah's advanced age. This week's haftorah describes a similar incident that occurred many years later: the prophet Elisha assuring an elderly childless woman that she will bear a child. Shabbat Shalom!*

-Benyamin

Elisha HaNavi performed a series of miracles during his lifetime; his sixth miracle involved promising a woman from the city of Shunam that she will have a son. Elisha spent his entire life traveling around the kingdom of Yisrael. He taught and guided the Jews in the land, similarly to other Torah leaders who constantly traveled and brought people closer to Hashem, despite their personal inconvenience. One of the cities Elisha frequently passed was the city of shunam, a city in the territory of Yissachar. There was a great *tzadeket* who lived with her husband in shunam, and she always invited Elisha to her home whenever he passed by the city.

One day she remarked to her husband that this man, Elisha, is a holy man since his face shines so brightly from the rays of the shechina. Thus, she reserved for Elisha a private room in her home. She put a bed, chair, table, and a lamp so Elisha can stay there whenever he visits. She thought the shechina would stay in her home for fulfilling this great mitzvah. Upon his next visit, Elisha noticed that the woman from shunam has gone through so much trouble for him and he greatly appreciated this. He eventually asked her if there is anything he can do for her, maybe he can speak to the king or the ministers on her behalf, or maybe he can daven for her? She replied and said that she lives among relatives and friends and no one harms her that she would need any favor from the king. She also told him that she

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# 10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz  
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by  
Zachary Goldberg

## Bikur Cholim

*Since this week's Parsha, parshas vayeira, begins with Hashem visiting Avraham who is in pain from his bris mila, I thought it would be appropriate to discuss some of the halachos of bikur cholim.*

*-Zachary*

One could be yotzei three mitzvos d'oraisa through the performance of bikur cholim. The first mitzvah is "v'ahavta l'reiacha kamocha". The Rambam doesn't count the mitzvah of bikur cholim as a separate mitzvah he includes it under "v'ahavta l'reiacha kamocha". He says "v'ahavta l'reiacha kamocha" is to do nice things for other people, and included in that there are many ways to do "v'ahavta l'reiacha kamocha". Bikur cholim is one of the ways one could accomplish "v'ahavta l'reiacha kamocha". When it is a situation of pikuach nefesh, where someone has a life threatening illness, and whatever help you give them might actually prolong his life. It might be an issue of "lo taamod dam al reiecha". Someone is about to die, or whose life is being threatened, you can't just sit there and do nothing, you have to do something. So it might be a fulfillment of "lo taamod dam al reiecha" and if you actually cause the person to get better, then it could be a mitzvah of "v'hasheivoso lo". Since included in "v'hasheivoso lo" is to bring a person back to life. In fact, Chazal understand that when you are mevakeir cholim, you take away some of the illness, so in a certain sense it is "v'hasheivoso lo", you are being meishiv something, you are being meishiv a little bit of life to the person.

The Gemara in Sotah daf 14 darshens that directly. The Pasuk says "v'halachta b'derachav", and the Gemara asks that it's not possible to be mekayeim that Pasuk since it's not possible to follow the Shechinah, since Hashem is an all consuming fire. Rather it means to follow the midos of Hashem. Just like He dresses the unclimates, so too we should. Just like He heals the sick, so too we should. Why do we know all of these things that Hashem does, why does the Torah tell us that Ha-

shem was mevakeir Avraham Avinu. Not to know how good of a guy Hakadosh Baruch Hu is, since we have to serve Him whether He is nice or not. So it's not about what Hakadosh Baruch Hu is, it's about we are told things about Hakadosh Baruch Hu so we could know what to emulate, and bikur cholim is something that we have to emulate.

The Rambam seems to say that even though bikur cholim is a mitzvah d'rabanen, still, it is at least a kiyum d'oraisa.

Why is there no beracha on bikur cholim? There are several shitos of Rishonim of why that would be the case that there is no beracha. It could be that there is no zman for the mitzvah. Any mitzvah that is not bound by a zman, but is just continuous forever, there is no beracha. Another answer given is that we don't make a beracha on bad or sad things. Since bikur cholim assumes a very unfortunate situation, so we don't like to make a beracha on something like that. Another reason is that maybe the choleh doesn't want you there, so you would be making a beracha levatala. The Binyamin Z'eiv writes that we don't make a beracha on something that the entire world does. Bikur cholim is something that is so seichel that everybody does it.

Despite there being no beracha, bikur cholim is still an extremely chashuv mitzvah. The gemara in Nedarim daf 40 tells us that there was a story where one of Rabbi Akiva's talmidim became sick and Rabbi Akiva came to be mevakeir choleh, and the sick talmid tells Rabbi Akiva that Rabbi Akiva gave him light. So we learn from that experience that whoever doesn't do bikur cholim, it's as if he was shofeich damim. The reason is, that if you have the ability to go be mevakei cholim, you are able to mechayeh the person, you are able to bring the person to life.

The mitzvah of bikur cholim has three prongs as to what you are supposed to accomplish when you are mevakeir choleh:

1) When you are going to be mevakeir cholim,

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## *The Need for Tefillah*

*By: Shlomo Schwartz, 9th Grade*

We commonly respond to requests to pray on other people's behalf. A friend or peer will ask us to daven for his friend or relative who is ill, undergoing surgery, or experiencing a serious calamity. We submit the names of such individuals to the gabbai who makes a mi shebeirach on their behalf. These are everyday practices that we take for granted, yet the basis for such prayer needs to be understood. The Maharal, in his Nesiv Ha'avodah perek yud bet, questions the suitability of such prayer. He opines that possibly one can not pray exclusively on behalf of others, as we evidently regularly do in the above scenarios.

At first glance, the Maharal's position is very puzzling. Must tefillah be self-centered? Moreover, the Torah provide examples of such sincere prayer, including Avraham Avinu on behalf of Avimelech and his household and the people of Sedom, Moshe Rabbeinu on behalf of Miriam and consistently for Bnai Yisroel. So how could the Maharal say it is not allowed?

In order to understand and appreciate the beauty of the Maharal's position we must first understand the gift and obligation of prayer. The Rambam, when defining the mitzvah of tefillah writes that after reciting the praise of Hashem "sho'el tzrachav she'hu tzarich lahen". Translated literally it means, "a person asks for his needs that he needs". The Rambam's words when translated literally appear to be repetitive. In truth there is no actual redundancy. The Rambam is expressing that in order to pray one must experience need. One must feel needy, dependent. It is not enough for a person to know intellectually

that he has tzrochim (needs). He must also feel those needs in order to daven ("hu tzarich lahein") for this is a crucial aspect of tefillah, turning to Hashem out of a sense of need, dependence and vulnerability. An individual who feels self-righteous and self-sufficient can turn pages in the prayer book and mouth all the words; but he cannot daven. Following the Rambam's definition of she'eilas tzrochim (request, petition) within prayer, we can appreciate the position of the Maharal. It is not that tefillah should be self-centered; self-centeredness is obviously not a virtue. Rather tefillah must flow from a sense of need. If one does not experience need, he can not pray. Therefore, a person with a sense of detachment cannot pray exclusively for another person's needs.

But the second question still remains. Avraham Avinu prayed exclusively for others, as did Moshe. The answer lies in a famous story about a tzaddik in Yerushalayim, Reb Aryeh Levin. He once accompanied his wife who was experiencing pain in her knee to a doctor. Explaining the reason for the visit he told the doctor, "our knee hurts." Reb Aryeh Levin's sense of empathy was so great that he experienced his wife's (and other people's) needs as his own.

This empathetic experience, says the Chasam Sofer by way of explaining the Maharal (Orach Chaim 166), allows us to daven on behalf of others. When, with love and compassion, we experience their needs as our own, we are able to daven on their behalf. Avraham Avinu did so, Moshe Rabbeinu did so, and it is our challenge to do so as well!

*(Binyamin Pleshty—Continued from page 2)*

prefers him to daven for the community and not specifically for her. Elisha left, but returned again, and promised her that in a year, she will have a son. Exactly when Elisha predicted, she gave birth to a son.

Some time passed and this boy once had a headache in which his condition worsened until he died. His distressed mother didn't tell anyone what happened. She took him to Elisha's room and put the boy on Elisha's bed and closed the door. She saddled her donkey and went to find Elisha. She had no doubt that Elisha could revive the boy since he was able to promise the boy to her in the first place. She found Elisha on the mountain of Carmel, and she told him the whole story. At first Elisha sent his servant Gaichazi to revive the boy with his stick, but since Gaichazi was not holy enough (as the woman thought), she called Elisha back and told her that she wanted him to revive her son. Elisha agreed, and he went to her home, placed his mouth on the boy's mouth to connect him to a new source of life. All of a sudden, this boy sneezed a few times and he opened his eyes. According to the Zohar, this boy grew up to be none other than the prophet, Chavakuk. We see from this story and from our parshah that Hashem has the power to make unnatural events to occur. Hashem promised Avraham a son when he was 100 years old, and Elisha promised a son to an old lady from Shunam. Though the boy died soon, he brought him back to life.

# A Great Heritage

*By Jonathan Crane, 11th Grade*

The Torah gives us a scenario of an older Abraham, sitting at the door of his tent, after just recently performed his own Bris milah. Hashem appears to Abraham to visit the sick, then three "men" whom we find out are really not men at all, but messengers of Hashem, come to visit Abraham. As soon as Abraham sees them he says "Please excuse me, Hashem, while I go and help my guests. Please wait for me until I return." Abraham runs and welcomes the strangers and offers them some bread, water, and a place to rest for a while.

As soon as they accept, Abraham gets to work. Sarah bakes the bread, Yishmael prepares the meat, and Abraham is personally standing over the guests serving them a full meal. Here is a 99 year old man who just performed a minor operation on himself running around at the hottest point of the day to serve guests who are just strangers! To top it all off he has the audacity to walk away from the presence of the Creator of this world and ask Him to wait until he returns from serving his guests!??!

It seems that Abraham understood that this is simply what Hashem wanted him to do. Abraham gave up spending private time with the Creator to perform kindness. These travellers may have been hungry, thirsty, or tired from their travels. Abraham's sole concern was their physical needs, even to the point of discomforting himself. Physical existence is meant to use as a way to reach spirituality. It was not meant to completely avoid. This "seeker"

is selfish and self-centered in Jewish terms.

For example, relationships are the prime opportunity to improve in spirituality. How often we are placed in family situations where a kind word can break the tension that sometimes hangs in the air. How often you can be started on the right foot by giving a kind word or an act. A compliment can go an extremely long way. People remember the compliments they were given even years ago. It's a very inexpensive way to lift yourself, but very effective. Small things matter truly matter. This is what we understand from Abraham's actions. There is nothing wrong about Abraham excusing himself from Hashem's presence to go and do Hashem's will. This is what we are here for. There will be plenty of time later to spend in Hashem's presence.

Hashem loved and singled out all of our avot and emahot of the Jewish religion. They were the most exceptional people. We are blessed with the opportunity to know of them and to follow in their deeds and attitudes of life. We connect ourselves to them by emulating them, and we thereby connect ourselves to the relationship they had with Hashem. Kindness is the way of Abraham. It is the path to true spirituality. A student understands that spirituality is not a result of exceeding the physical world, but rather living as part of the world in an elevated way. What a Zichos it is to be able to have a share in the heritage of such amazing people who came before us.

*(Dovi Schlossberg—Continued from page 1)*

form the mitzvah of hachnasas orchim, welcoming guests. In fact the Gemara in Masseches Shabbos 137 says that Avraham was so determined to do his hachnosas orchim that he asked Hashem to "wait" for him until after he completed the mitzvah!

Avraham's dedication to the love for other human beings is unparalleled in history. Even in his most difficult times, he is still able to find in himself the determination to care for strangers. From here we learn the emes, truth, of chessed. There is a greater goal to performing chessed that goes beyond loving others. Chessed is in fact the way to connect to Hashem. If one wants to become closer to Hashem, he first needs to become close to others—bein adam l'makom begins with bein adam l'chavero.



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# WAS AVRAHAM SUCCESSFUL?

BY YISRAEL LEBOWITZ, 9TH GRADE

While we often think of Avraham Avinu as a very successful person, when you take a closer look he seems to have failed more often than he succeeded. So many of the things he tried to accomplish did not succeed. First, he tried to do hachnasas orchim, and feed his "guests" on an extraordinarily difficult day, but ultimately the "guests" turned out to be Malachim and they were just pretending to eat. Next, Avraham tried to save Sedom, and ultimately that effort failed as well.

Later, Avraham wanted to raise his oldest son, Yishmael well, and tried his hardest to do so, but ultimately he was forced to listen to Sarah's advice and send Yishmael away.

Finally, Avraham was given his biggest test - to slaughter his son Yitzchak and displayed great courage in showing the willingness to do so, but ultimately he wasn't able to follow through, because Hashem prevented him from slaughtering Yitzchak. It was only after all of these

unsuccessful efforts, that Avraham was able to raise Yitzchak and initiate the future of Klal Yisrael. What can we learn from the string of seeming failures in the life of Avraham Avinu?

Avraham is still a hero of the Jewish people. Hashem loves Avraham and makes him the patriarch of a great nation, as the title Avraham AVINU suggests. Avraham is a great hero and role model for the Jewish people, not because of what he accomplished, but because of his willingness to always try his best to serve Hashem. We can learn from Avraham that all Hashem asks of us is that we try our best no matter how hard the challenges in life may be. Whether we accomplish all that we set out to do, and which of our efforts will be successful, is ultimately up to Hashem, but our effort, and our willingness to serve Hashem is up to us.

**(Based on a shiur by Rav Andi Yudin on [yutorah.org](http://yutorah.org))**

*(Story of Greatness — Continued from page 8)*

id would place a note containing his requests on a table, and if the Rebbe took the note, it was assured that the requests would be fulfilled. If the Rebbe did not take the note... As the day of his audience approached, Reb Yisrael became more and more anxious. He stopped sleeping and couldn't eat. Finally his turn came and there he was, standing in the Rebbe's room. He placed the tear-stained note on the table and waited for the Rebbe to take it.

What seemed like hours passed, and it became apparent there would be no salvation -- the Rebbe did not take the note. Somehow, the dazed Reb Yisrael made his way out of the room. His worst fears had come to pass; perhaps his dear son had already left this world. He wandered until he came to the edge of town, and there, under a tree, Reb Yisrael fell fast asleep. When he awoke, the sun was high in the sky, and he realized that it would soon be Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah. Tears poured from his eyes as he thought, "What is my life?"

Back in town, everyone was rushing to and fro in a tornado of preparation for the festival. But he, like an automaton, proceeded to the synagogue where he sank into a corner, oblivious to the joy which surrounded him. What caused him to lift his eyes is not clear, but

Reb Yisrael looked up for a moment and his eyes locked onto the dancing figure of Reb Mula. Reb Mula, who during the entire week could barely put one foot in front of the other, was dancing and leaping like a young stag. The town beggar was whirling with a strength that he never before possessed, his face gleaming with holy joy. As he watched in fascination, Reb Yisrael felt a great yearning well up inside himself. And he thought, "Today, all of creation is joyful. And what of me? When all the angels and all the worlds are rejoicing, should I remain alone in my own private sorrow?" Reb Yisrael rose from his corner and joined the circle of dancers.

Forgetting everything in this world, he whirled and spun and leapt and jumped. He stamped and turned and never stopped until his joy merged with the joy of the universe and he no longer remembered his son, his pain, or even his own name. His entire being was only rejoicing. Reb Yisrael entered the Rebbe's room for a blessing on his departure. He had decided not to ask about his son. The Rebbe blessed him and then spoke, "When you came and asked my blessing for your son's recovery, I saw that Heaven had decreed his death, and so I left your note on the table. But on Simchat Torah, when you annulled your own pain and rejoiced in the Torah in pure joy, the Heavenly decree was also annulled. Your son will live.

(10-Minute Halacha — Continued from page 3)

you are supposed to accomplish lifting the person's spirits, making the choleh feel good, which is the idea of "v'ahavta l'reiacha kamocho". However, there is a difference between bikur cholim and nichum aveilim. Nichum aveilim isn't making the person feel good per se, it's about providing nechamah over the death of a relative. You aren't supposed to speak about other things. You are supposed to talk about the meis and show nechamah in all that the meis had provided within their time on this earth. However, by bikur cholim you don't talk about the illness the whole time. It might be a greater kiyum to talk about sports than to talk about the illness. The kiyum is to talk about whatever the choleh is interested in that will get his mind off of the illness. His whole life is defined by his illness, so you try to normalize it by talking about normal things.

2) Provide physical support. If the person needs an extra pillow to get more comfortable or needs a drink. Rabbi Daniel Feldman points out that one might say that I'm not providing anything physical, since there is a nursing staff right there that is taking care of all the physical needs of the choleh. So he says that where there are two cholim in neighboring rooms, and one gets no visitors, so it looks seems that no one really cares about that choleh. But the other one has his room filled with flowers and balloons, and has visitors coming constantly and people are always calling. When the nursing staff see that so many people are investing in this choleh, and that if they treat this person like a celebrity, then so many people are going to know about it, then that has to have an effect on the treatment the choleh gets.

3) Tefilah- The gemara in Berachos (12b) says that if you are mevakeir a choleh and you weren't mispallel, then you weren't mekayeim the mitzvah of bikur cholim properly. So it's important that when you are mevakeir a choleh to be mispallel for the choleh when you go. Obviously it doesn't necessarily mean to be mispallel right in front of him. In fact there are halachos in the Shulchan Aruch about when you should be

mevakeir because it will effect your tefilah negatively. You shouldn't mevakeir too early in the day, since the choleh looks stronger than he really is, so then you will say that the choleh doesn't really need my tefilos. Also, you shouldn't come too late in the day, since the choleh is so exhausted and is so drained, he looks much worse than he really is, so you would say that the choleh isn't worth davening for.

Because there are these three elements, you are able to be makayeim one without the others, and it is still a partial kiyum. If the choleh is most probably going to die, is there any inyun of being mevakeir? First of all, there is definitely an inyun of making the family feel better, and coming to give them chizuk and support. That might not be bikur cholim, but is a separate mitzvah of "v'ahavta l'reiacha kamocho" and chesed for the family. But is there a bikur cholim element? So the tefilah element is seemingly very strong. When you come and see the choleh hooked up to machines, there is a very strong tefilah element. And you could be mispallel in front of the choleh and that would give the family comfort when they see that people are davening for the choleh.

There is another element of the bikur cholim in the Gemara in Bava Basra (daf 116) that anyone who has a choleh in his house, he should go to the chacham of the town to be mispallel for him. The Meiri says that the idea of the chacham is that the chacham will teach you how to daven properly. Very often people just don't know what to do. Someone in the community or a close friend gets sick and people are so shocked that they don't know what to do first. They are so desperate to do something that they will do whatever they could to heal the choleh and even violate issurim like looking for segulos. That's the idea of going to a chacham, to go get guidance in terms of what is appropriate. Then hopefully the chacham will tell you that teshuva, tefillah and tzedakah will get rid of the evil decree, and he will tell you this is how to be mevakeish rachamei shamayim on the choleh and on all of the cholei yisrael.

(Nachi Shulman — Continued from page 1)

thing that he would later regret. Therefore his talk with Mamre was not to consider any doubts he had, but rather to make sure that the act of bris mila was purely an act to sanctify Hashem.



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## STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: YEHUDA BENHAMU

*This weeks story reminds each and every one of us that or future and destiny is all in our own hands. Even when G-d makes a decree we have the power to cancel it and decide to change our ways and become better then before. Now more then ever we must learn and daven to G-d to decree only good on all of us and our brothers and sisters in the land of Israel. adapted from [beverlyhill-schabad.com](http://beverlyhill-schabad.com). may we all merit long life and simchaot. Shabbat shalom!*

-Yehuda

Reb Yisrael lived for his Rebbe. That is to say, his Rebbe's words inspired everything he did in life. Not only did he live according to his Rebbe's teachings, but he spread his holy words wherever he went. Although it wasn't easy, Reb Yisrael traveled to his Rebbe twice a year. A trip to the Rebbe, however, wasn't like a trip to the market. Certainly not. Reb Yisrael began his preparations months in advance, with daily immersions, constant study of Chasidut, fervent prayer and a course of general self improvement. Even his children were caught up in the excitement of the impending trip, emulating their father by increasing their own good deeds and Torah study.

Suddenly, with no warning, in the midst of all this flurry of preparation, Reb Yisrael's youngest son, Yaakov, fell desper-

ately ill. A stream of doctors attended his bedside, but nothing could cure the illness that was sapping the child's life away. In desperation, Reb Yisrael hurriedly packed his bags. He would go to the Rebbe and ask for his holy blessing. After all, now it was the month of Elul, the month when the King of Kings was most accessible, the month of mercy and forgiveness.

The long journey passed in a fog. Hours merged into one another, as the distraught father recited the Book of Psalms. As the houses of the town emerged in the distance, Reb Yisrael began to feel a flutter of hope in his heart. As he entered the study hall, he barely returned the enthusiastic greetings of his fellow chasidim. All his thoughts centered on his beloved Rebbe and the audience he would soon have.

Meanwhile, Reb Yisrael prepared himself for the holy day of Rosh Hashana. When the day arrived, Reb Yisrael barely lifted his eyes from his prayer book, for he never stopped beseeching the Almighty to spare his son. By Yom Kippur, Reb Yisrael was even more desperate, his prayers even more intense.

Now, added to his pleas for the life of his son was another prayer: that when he entered the Rebbe's room, his note would be accepted. It was a known custom that a chas-

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