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The Ruined Kesubah



Rav Avraham Pam

A man was marrying off his daughter. In honor of the occasion, he spent an exorbitant amount of money and commissioned an artist to create an exquisitely decorated, one-of-a-kind kesubah. At the chuppah, when the eidim were signing, one of them made a mistake and tried to correct it, only to make another mistake and attempt to correct it yet again.

The rabbonim there ruled that the kesubah was disqualified and may no longer be used. They had a basic standard form as a backup, which they used instead. The father of the bride was noticeably upset about the wasted ruined time, money and effort that had gone into that kesubah.

Suddenly, Rav Avrohom Pam zt"l went over to the father and whispered something in his ear. Immediately, the man calmed down and was happy for the rest of the night. Afterwards, someone asked him what Rav Pam had told him.

He replied, "He told me that there was obviously a gezeirah in shamayim that my daughter will have to have two kesubos in her lifetime. Usually, that happens if she needs to remarry after the death or divorce of her first husband. Hashem, in his infinite kindness, allowed the decree to be fulfilled in the easiest way-by having a mistake in her first kesubah and substituting it with the second one. After I heard that, I was calm."

Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeira 5785 email of Shabbos Chayeinu as compiled by Tzvi Schulz.

Being Like Hashem

By Aharon Spetner

Little Yaeli bounced happily in the back seat of the car.

"We're going to Zaidy and Bubby's house for Shabbos, we're going to Zaidy and Bubby's house for Shabbos!" she sang happily.

Yitzy looked up from his stopwatch. "We're going exactly 60 miles per hour," he said.

"How can you tell?" asked Shimmy.

"It's simple," Yitzy replied. "I started the stopwatch when we passed the last mile marker and we passed the next mile marker exactly sixty seconds later. So, it we traveled one mile in sixty seconds, that means in sixty minutes at that rate we would travel sixty miles. So, sixty miles an hour."

"Cool," said Shimmy. "So, if it took us a hundred seconds to get to the next mile marker we'd be going a hundred miles an hour? And a thousand seconds would be a thousand miles per hour?"

"No, how could that be?" Yitzy said. "We can't be going faster if it takes us more time to get there."

The Car Began Slowing Down

The boys looked up as the car slowed down noticeably.

"Totty, what's happening?" asked Shimmy.

"I don't know, there seems to be a lot of traffic," Totty replied.

"But it's almost Shabbos!" Basya said fearfully.

"Don't worry, we still have three hours until shkiah," said Totty.

The Greenbaums inched forward, slower and slower until traffic finally came to a complete standstill.

Totty rolled down his window as he saw a police officer standing nearby on the side of the road.

“Excuse me?” he called. “Is there any way of knowing when the traffic will clear up?”

“Oh, it shouldn’t be long,” the police officer answered cheerfully. “Four hours, five hours, tops. Then you’ll be on your way.”

“Five hours?” Totty exclaimed. “What’s going on?”

“Well the governor increased the speed limit from 60 to 61 miles per hour today so the workers have to change all of the speed limit signs so everyone can get where they’re going faster.”



Illustrated by Miri Weinreb

“What are we going to do for Shabbos?” asked Mommy nervously. “Are there any hotels around here?”

“Actually, there’s a hotel just a few minutes from here,” the policeman said. “Just pull your car over and take this next exit. Turn right on Abraham Avenue. The hotel will be on your right in about three miles.”

“Thank you officer,” Totty said, as they exited the highway.

Totty turned right on Abraham Avenue and a few minutes later they saw an elegant sign which read “The Abraham Avenue Pavilion Inn”.

“Wow....” whispered Basya as a gorgeous hotel overlooking a pristine lake came into view.

“Oh, I don’t know,” Mommy said. “This place looks very expensive.”
“What choice do we have?” asked Totty as they parked the car. “And besides, Hashem takes care of our Shabbos expenses. There is no need to worry.”

Awed By the Elegance of the Hotel

The Greenbaums looked around in awe as they walked into the elegant hotel. The lobby even had a sumptuous looking buffet with cakes and baked goods!

“Hello, I’m Velvel,” said a man with a yarmulke from behind the front desk. “Welcome to the Abraham Avenue Pavilion Inn.”

“Hi,” Totty said. “Can we have the cheapest rooms for a family of six, please?”

Velvel tapped on his computer keyboard.

“Okay, I have a gorgeous lakeview suite with two adjoining rooms,” he said. “This includes a private dining area for your Shabbos meals (which are included), comfortable couches, and a spacious balcony overlooking the lake...”

Repeats a Request for the Cheapest Rooms

“I’m sorry,” interrupted Totty. “But can we please have your cheapest rooms? We got stuck on the way to visit my parents and just need a simple place to stay for Shabbos.”

“Reb Yid,” Velvel said kindly. “There is no way I am letting you have a simple Shabbos. And these are our cheapest rooms, because you are staying in my hotel for free!”

“Free?” Totty said, dumbfounded. “Why?”

“Boruch Hashem I was extremely successful in business at a young age,” said Velvel. “So, I decided to build a hotel to help out all of the Yidden who need a place to stay while traveling upstate.”

Inspired by the Example of Avraham Avinu

“My father always pointed out how Avraham Avinu was rewarded with a child for going above and beyond to do hachnosas orchim. And the reason is because doing chessed is a way of showing how Hashem acts. Look out this window at the beautiful lake and trees. Look how Hashem created this entire world for our enjoyment. When we do the same and do chessed for other Yidden, we are following in the ways of Hashem on the highest level.”

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

Reprinted from the email of Toras Avigdor Junior, based on the Torah teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller, zt”l.

A Bracha from Rav Elyashiv



Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv

Dovid A. tells this fascinating story:

When I was studying in yeshiva, my younger brother spent the year learning in a yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel. During bein hazmanim, my parents bought a ticket for me to go visit my brother in Eretz Yisroel (it was cheaper for me to go than to buy two tickets for them). I enjoyed a wonderful week in yeshiva, learning and spending time with my brother.

The trouble started on the way home. My mother had bought for me a return ticket on a Thursday evening. Keep in mind that this was in the winter, when Shabbos starts around 4:30.

“Don’t worry,” my mother reassured me. “You’re scheduled to land in New York early Friday morning, so you won’t have any problems.”

The plane had a scheduled stopover in Ireland, to refuel, and since we landed in Ireland in the middle of the night, I was fast asleep. Therefore, I didn’t notice that we had been on the ground there for a few hours, instead of the brief stopover that was scheduled. I was awakened by an announcement from the captain, who said:

“Ladies and gentlemen, unfortunately we seem to be having engine problems. This plane will not be able to take off. Everyone needs to disembark. You will be brought to a hotel where you will be given a free breakfast. Then, when a new flight has been arranged for you, you will be brought back to the airport.”

All of the non-Jews on the plane cheered: “Yay! Free breakfast!” And all of the frum Jews on the plane groaned: “Oh, no! Shabbos!”

I didn’t know what to do, so I decided that I’ll just stick with all of the other frum Jews, and do whatever they do. We got off the plane and went to the parking lot. There wasn’t enough space for everyone at one hotel, so we were sent to two different hotels. Everyone was given a card indicating which bus they should get onto. As it turned out, all of the frum Jews had one color card, and I had the other one. An airline employee said to me: “Sir, this is the wrong bus. You need to get on the other bus.”

“I’m getting on this bus, with these people,” I insisted. It could have gotten uncomfortable, but, Baruch Hashem, at that moment, someone appeared and said: “I have the other color card. I don’t mind switching with you.”

This was the first of a series of clear indications that Hashem was watching out for me. At the hotel, all the non-Jews went to have breakfast. All of the frum Jews made a minyan for Shacharis. After davening, they informed us that they had a new flight for us. It would arrive in New York a half hour before Shabbos. If we didn’t take this flight, then we’d have to make our own arrangements, and potentially pay for a new ticket. Then they gave everyone one phone call (this was in the days before cell phones).

I used my call to call my parents and tell them where I was (and thereby caused them to panic for the rest of the day). There was a guy there who took the lead of our group. He used his call to call a relative in Eretz Yisroel to get him to ask Rav Elyashiv if it was muttar for us to take this flight that would be landing so close to Shabbos. After a little bit, his relative called him back with the answer:

Rav Elyashiv said to go for it, and he gives us his brachah!

Most of us lived too far from the airport to get home with only half an hour, but this man said he had an aunt who lived near the airport, and we could all stay with her for Shabbos. So, we got back on the buses, and went back to the airport. When we arrived, we discovered that they didn’t really have a new plane for us. Instead, it was a preexisting flight that had some free seats, but there weren’t enough seats for everybody.

We still had to stand on line at the ticket agent to get a new ticket. Before I knew what happened, I found myself standing all the way in the back of a very long line. By the time I got to the front, there were no more tickets left to New York. They had some tickets to Chicago, but that would land after Shabbos started already. Then they said they also had some tickets to Boston.

Perfect! I'm originally from Boston, and my parents still live there. Plus, the plane would land an hour and a half before Shabbos. Plenty of time to get home! Once I was on the plane, I looked around to find any other frum Jews who had gotten on the plane. I found two people, and offered them that they could stay at my parents' house for Shabbos. However, they said they had a friend in Boston, and would stay there.

Everything went fine until we arrived in Boston. For some reason, the plane wasn't landing. It was just going around in circles around the airport. The captain announced: "Ladies and gentlemen. There is a snow storm in Boston right now, and we can't land. This may be a while, so we're going to put on a video while you wait."

Now I started panicking again. A stewardess noticed that I looked distressed, and asked what was wrong. I explained the situation. She allowed me to sit in a first-class seat in the front, so I could be first to get off the plane.

When we finally landed, about a half hour before Shabbos, I was standing there waiting as they opened the door. There was an airline employee standing there, waiting to greet the disembarking passengers. She seemed surprised when I immediately dashed right past her, and she had to run to keep up with me.

The luggage wasn't coming out immediately, so I just ran out without my suitcase. I hooked up with the other two frum people, and we asked the people if they minded if he cut the line for a taxi. We then prepaid the driver some money, and told him to drive as fast as he could.

Unfortunately, there was rush hour traffic. Plus, it was the middle of a snowstorm, so he couldn't go very fast. When it was shkiah, we told him to pull over, and we got out. The other two people said their friend lived nearby, so they said goodbye. Then I walked in a snowstorm for about an hour and a half to my parents' home. But it was all worth it when I saw the look on my mother's face when she opened the door (she thought I might be in Ireland for Shabbos, but hadn't heard anything from me since the morning)! I said to her, "Good Shabbos. I had a rough day today. How was your day?"

We had a very enjoyable time that Shabbos. After Shabbos, the question was if we could get any of my luggage back. We drove to the airport to look for my suitcase. The terminal was empty and dark, however, in the back there was an office with the light on. We went to that office, and nobody was there, but my suitcase was sitting right there! We called out, and someone came out from another room, and was happy to give me my suitcase back. Everything worked out perfectly,

Hashem watched over me every step of the way! And the bracha of Rav Elyashiv was fulfilled!

Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeira 5785 email of Shabbos Chayeinu as compiled by Tzvi Schulz.

How an Explanation of a Pasuk of Tehillim Saved Two Jews from Prison

By Yehuda Z Klitnick

Haradok, was a small village near the town of Karlin, in the Pinsk district of Belarus. Most of its residents were Stoliner Chassidim of Rav Aharon Perlow of Karlin, author sefer Bais Aharon, and had the upper hand, which agitated the few Misnagdim there.

The opportunity arose when the elderly shochet / kosher slaughterer, a Stoliner chosid, passed away. Haradok, could only support one shochet. This was an opportunity for the misnagdim, who hired a shochet from their own camp, before the Chassidim could find a shochet.

The Bais Aharon came to visit his chassidim in Haradok, and was informed what was done. The Rebbe felt that a chassidishe shochet should serve the chassidishe clientele, who are the majority.

A dialogue began between both sides who should have their shochet candidate serve. The local Stoliner Rav met with the misnagdim and explained that the chassidim would not eat from their shochet, and that their shochet would not have much business! The misnagdim understood and backed out of their plan.

However, one of the rivals, a reform Jew, became irritated at the chassidim and was intent on taking revenge on the Rebbe. His anger prevailed and he barged into the Shul while the Bais Aharon was conducting his tisch. This man berated the Rebbe with chutzpah, but the Rebbe, didn't utter one word in response. The Rebbe forbade anyone to avenge the Rebbe's honour by taking any action, and calm prevailed! The maskil was astonished to hear these words from the Rebbe, and felt like a fool of what he did, and retreated from the tisch.

The Rebbe began by quoting a posuk in Tehillim (41:12),

“With this I shall know that You desired me when my enemy does not shout joyfully over me.” The Rebbe Rav Baruch of Mezibush, the grandson of the heilige Baal Shem Tov, has a powerful insight on this

“How can I know Hashem is satisfied with my actions? It is when my enemies do not harm me.”

Reb Baruch answered differently: Dovid Hamelech was saying, how do I know that Hashem is satisfied with my conduct? It is when no evil shall befall my enemies. Even when they berate me, they should not be punished!

The Rebbe applied this insight and said we must not take action against this man even if he is our opponent. The chassidim understood their Rebbe's desire very well. The words of the Rebbe were powerful and the rivalry quieted down. A chassidische shochet was hired and a peaceful state of affairs endured for 20 years.

Turev was a village near Haradok where a fierce fighting took place in the Russian-Polish struggle of 1863 known as the "January Uprising". The Polish commanding general and his soldiers took refuge in Turev. His soldiers hid among the population. However, some people from the town informed the Czar that the Polish general was hiding in town, and he sent Cossack soldiers to arrest him.

The Polish soldiers were upset and were ready to destroy the town in revenge, but a battalion of elite Russian soldiers wiped them out. Some Polish soldiers, who were members of the Polish underground, started burning down a few houses. No one had any idea who the arsonists were until one day the shul went up in flames.

Two Jews were caught running away from the scene, and some residents tackled them and dragged before the heads of the Kehilla in Haradok, two wealthy Stoliner chassidim. The two Jews confessed to setting fires to the houses but claimed that the local Polish leaders had threatened to kill them otherwise. They revealed the names and addresses of these leaders, and promised to exile themselves from the town, never to return.

The Roshei Kehilla took the information straight to the Russian authorities, who dispatched a high official to arrest the Polish suspects accused by the Yidden. The Polish leaders, denied any involvement, and bribed the official into believing that it was the Roshei Kehilla themselves who were behind the Turev fires. Turning truth and justice on their head, the official wrote a report describing how the Roshei Kehilla had falsely accused the Polish leaders. They locked the Roshei Kehilla into the jail in Pinsk, the regional center, where a severe judgment awaited them.

The Reform Jew, who had publicly insulted the Bais Aharon 20 years earlier, still lived in Haradok and knew full well that the two Jewish leaders were not guilty of ordering the burning of Polish, or any other, property. Convinced of their good character and total innocence, the man, of his own good will, made the long journey to Petersburg, where he gained an audience with Czar Alexander II himself. The man spoke fluent Russian, was scholarly and well-spoken and convinced the Czar of the men's innocence and to order their release.

Word of the Royal reprieve reached Pinsk, and they freed the men. When the Bais Aharon learned what happened, he reminded his Chassidim that by not taking any reprisals against that arrogant maskil 20 years earlier; the man was now inspired to take pity on falsely accused Jews and ultimately secure their release.

The Rebbe added: “what would have been the fate of these worthy Jews if we had beaten that man up at the time!”

Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeira 5785 email of Pardes Yehuda.

The Shidduch of Rav Chaim Kanievsky



Rav Chaim Kanievsky

A Shidduch was once arranged between the son of the Steipler Gaon, Rav Chaim Kanievsky, zt”l, and the daughter of Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zt”l. The Steipler Gaon requested that Rav Elyashiv, the respected Mechutan, buy an apartment for the young couple.

However, Rav Elyashiv did not have the money for an apartment, so he decided that he would not go ahead with the Shidduch. Nevertheless, Rav Elyashiv first went to see the Chazon Ish, zt”l, to get his advice about it before he did anything, and the Chazon Ish told him that he should proceed with the Shidduch and not to worry about the money.

Rav Elyashiv listened to the advice, and agreed to the Shidduch, even though he didn’t have the money for an apartment. Right after Rav Elyashiv gave his consent, he was offered a job in the Bais Din HaGadol of Yerushalayim, and this offered him a large salary, which enabled Rav Elyashiv to buy the couple an apartment. We can learn from this that one will never lose out if he seeks out guidance from Talmidei Chachamim and listens to their advice!

Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeira 5785 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’s Torah U’Tefilah.

The Baal Shem Tov and the Inn Keeper

In Parsha Vayeira, we read about the greatness of the mitzvah of Hachnasas Orchim. The Torah tells us that Avrohom Avinu "was sitting at the entrance of the tent in the heat of the day." (Bereishis 18:1) Rashi explains that Avrohom Avinu was waiting to see if travelers would pass by, so that he could invite them into his home. When Avrohom Avinu saw that three men were approaching, Avrohom Avinu ran towards the men in order to offer them hospitality.

When the guests arrived, Avrohom Avinu was in the middle of receiving the Shechina - the Divine Presence of Hashem. Hashem had come to visit Avrohom Avinu who was still recovering from his bris milah which had taken place three days earlier. The Torah quotes Avrohom Avinu as saying: "My L-rd, If I find favor in Your eyes, please pass not away from Your servant." (18:3)

The Sages explain this verse to mean that Avrohom Avinu asked the Shechina to wait for him, so that he could take care of the guests. Avrohom Avinu and Sorah Emainu then quickly prepared a meal for the travelers. (Stone Chumash, p.79 citing Shabbos 127a and Shevuos 35b).

The fact that Avrohom Avinu put the needs of his guests over receiving the Divine Presence, shows the greatness of the mitzvah of Hachnasas Orchim. (ibid.) As the Sages tell us, "let your house be open wide" (Avos 1:5) Bartinurah explains that the house of a Jew should be like that of Avrohom Avinu, which had entrances on all four sides in order to make it easy for guests to enter. The Baal Shem Tov once gathered a select group of his students and announced: "Come, I will show you someone who sincerely and wholeheartedly welcomes guests into his home."

The Baal Shem Tov once asked for his horse and wagon to be prepared for a trip. The wheels of the wagon flew road through fields and forests, The wagon finally came to a halt in front of an inn.

A Jewish man came running out of the inn to greet them. He called out: "Hooray, there are guests! Precious Jewish guests!" The innkeeper went over to the travelers and invited them into his home.

"Come, dear rabbis, come into my home. You can rest up and eat something. You will refresh yourselves, and at the same time bring life to me! It's not every day that I am so fortunate to do the mitzvah of hachnasas orchim [welcoming guests]!"

The Baal Shem Tov responded, "Perhaps it would be better that we continue on our way to the nearby city. There we will have a mikvah, and we will be able to pray with the congregation and hear the Torah reading."

“Oh, but I have a mikvah and a Torah scroll right here; and together with all of you, we will also have a minyan the innkeeper said, entreating them to remain. He added that if they would like to pray in the city on Shabbos, they could walk there, because it was within the permissible area one is allowed to walk on Shabbos.

In the end, the Baal Shem Tov agreed to the request of the innkeeper, and the travelers became his guests.

While the innkeeper lived modestly, he offered his guests his best rooms and did everything he could to make their stay comfortable. After they had prayed, he invited them to a table set with delicious food. He himself stood by to serve them.

On Shabbos morning, they all walked to the nearby city to go to the mikvah and daven. After Shabbos, the innkeeper prepared a lavish melaveh malkah feast (meal after the conclusion of Shabbos), and even invited many more guests from the area. He radiated joy as he greeted his guests and bustled around making sure everyone was cared for.

The Baal Shem Tov and his students spent a few more days with the villager, who took care of all their needs personally and did everything in his power to make sure they felt at home.

Before leaving, the Baal Shem Tov asked their host if he had any special requests. “My only request is that you daven for me that I merit life in the world to come,” the inn-keeper asked.

“The thing you ask for is dependent upon you,” the Baal Shem Tov responded. “But if you want me to bless you, you must come to me in Mezhibuzh. And, by the way, I can give you some sound advice. Since in our country there is a shortage of wine, when you come, it would be worthwhile to bring with you 100 barrels of wine of the best kind, so that you can earn a nice profit.”

Time passed, and the students all but forgot about the whole episode. One day, the Baal Shem Tov said to his students, “Today a group of poor people came to our town. Please go and tell them that I am inviting them to my Shabbos meal.”

The students were very surprised to hear this. The local custom was that poor people and passing guests who came to town had all their needs met by the local committee in charge of accommodating wayfarers, who arranged meals and sleeping accommodations. And now the Baal Shem Tov was inviting this group to his house.

When the poor folk were seated around the table, the Baal Shem Tov turned to one of them and invited him to come sit next to him.

“Do you recognize me?” the Baal Shem Tov asked him.

“Yes,” the poor man answered. “I had the merit to host the Rebbe and his students in my inn.”

The students sitting around the table perked up their ears.

“Tell us what happened to you since then,” the Baal Shem Tov continued.

The villager told the following tale: “When the Rebbe told me to come to him to Mezhibuzh and bring 100 barrels of the best wine, I firmly believed in the words of the Rebbe, and set out to do this. I sold everything I possessed, and bought 100 barrels of wine. Then I set out on my way. Toward evening, as we passed through a forest, a big storm broke out and torrents of rain fell.

“The path was totally sodden with water, and the wagons were unable to move forward. I got off the wagon and, leaving the merchandise with the wagon drivers, I started searching for a house or inn in which to spend the night. Eventually, I noticed a small light far ahead in the darkness. I went toward the light. Soon I reached a house in the forest.

“An old Jewish man with a flowing beard greeted me at the door. He invited me in. The house was warm and well-lit, and the old man treated me kindly until I warmed up. In the morning, after I said the morning prayers, I parted from the regal old man and went back to where I had left my wagons. However, there was no trace of them. It was as if they had vanished into thin air.

“At first I was very upset and depressed. However, then I began to think that I don’t have any reason to be upset. ‘G-d gave and G-d took, may the name of G-d be blessed.’ Surely it is all for the good, I decided. I began to walk, and then came upon a group of poor people traveling this way. I traveled with them until I came to Mezhibuzh.”

The poor man finished his story, and all eyes now focused on the Baal Shem Tov. “Do you regret that you asked me to be blessed with life in the world to come? Perhaps you would prefer to get all your lost wealth back?” the Baal Shem Tov asked the innkeeper.

“G-d forbid!” the man replied without hesitating. “Is the Rebbe suggesting that I give up my share in the world to come in exchange for 100 barrels of wine? Absolutely not, Rebbe. I am prepared to remain a poor person all my life, traveling from place to place, if only I can merit life in the world to come!”

“Indeed that is what I wanted to hear from you,” the Baal Shem Tov said. “A Jew needs to be ready to give up everything for faith in G-d. You accomplished this, and therefore you will merit life in the world to come.”

A smile of pure happiness spread across the poor man’s face. The Baal Shem Tov continued: “You are thinking that now you will have to wander with your friends for a long time. Well, that is not the case. With the help of G-d, tomorrow the wagons with the wine that you lost in the forest will arrive here. You will sell them for a nice profit, and you will once again be able to do the mitzvah of welcoming guests as before.”

Sure enough, the very next day, the wagons arrived as the Baal Shem Tov had said. The villager became wealthy, and continued to host guests in a generous

fashion. And, as the saying goes, they lived happily ever after! (Translated and adapted from Sippurei Tzaddikim #257)

Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeira 5785 email of Good Shabbos Everyone.

Treasures of Emunah

The Warsaw Baker's Son and the Imrei Emes

Learned from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman



In Warsaw there was a baker who began baking at 3:00 a.m. every morning, so people could buy fresh bread for breakfast. By the time he finished working, it was late in the morning, and that's when he would put on tefillin and daven Shacharis.

His son was becoming bar-mitzvah, and he asked his father, "When will you put tefillin on me?"

The father said, "Wait for me at 7:10 in the beis medresh. I'll meet you there and I'll teach you how to put on tefillin."

7:10 passed, and also 7:30, and the father didn't show up. The Imrei Emes zt'l, found the boy crying. "What's the matter?"

"Today is the first day I'm wearing tefillin and my father isn't here to help me."

"I will help you put them on," the Rebbe said. The Rebbe brought him to his room and explained the concept of tefillin: "In the tefillin, Hashem's holy name is written several times. When one puts on tefillin, he draws all that holiness onto oneself."

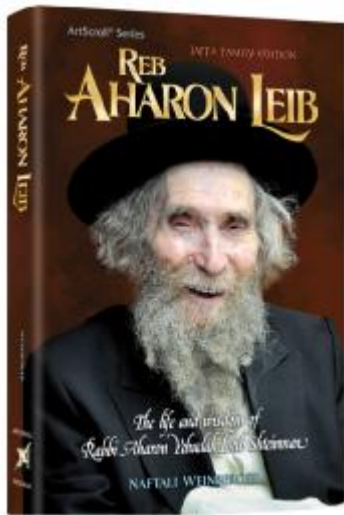
Pointing to the light fixture hanging from the ceiling, the Rebbe said, "How does the bulb give light? There are wires connecting the bulb to the electricity. The straps on

the tefillin, serve a similar purpose. They bring the holiness of the tefillin inside the person."

The holy sefarim teach that the tefillin worn on the arm and head accomplish two different matters. The tefillin worn on the arm, near the heart, is for overcoming temptations. The tefillin worn on the head indicates accepting the yoke of Heaven.

Reprinted from the November 14, 2024 email of Torah Times Media.

Reb Aharon Leib and the Baby's Bris



Their smiles rose up the sides of their cheeks expressing their gratitude to Hashem; yet, a hint of anxiety, due to the catering and seating arrangements, was simultaneously visible in their scrunched eyebrows. This family in Israel just had a baby boy and was preparing to give him a bris. During the emotional roller coaster, their hearts nearly dropped straight to the ground when the terrible news came in. Their newborn son had a very serious illness, which only certain hospitals outside Israel were equipped to address and they had to fly out immediately.

However, there was a real risk that the baby wouldn't survive the flight to receive the procedure. Unsure of what to do, the parents approach Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman, ZT"l, for guidance. Listening with empathy, one could see in the Rav's glassy, crystal-like eyes that he didn't merely hear their words, but that he also felt their pain. After contemplation, the Rav decided they should take the flight to have the procedure.

Three months later, that family returned, happy once again, to the Rav announcing that the procedure was successful, the baby was now healthy enough to have a bris and they'd like the Rav to have the role of *Sandek* at the bris, a position of great honor.

In the Rav's legendary sensitivity for others and emotional intelligence, he told them that he assumes they already had a *Sandek* planned from the first bris and it would not be proper to take away that honor from him. That is a *Gadol* (Torah Giant)!

Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeira 5785 email of Torah Sweets.