

Peace

When Sara was informed that she would bear a child she laughed to herself. "And my husband is old" (Bereshis 18:12). When Hashem informed Avraham Avinu of this, He changed Sara's words to, "I am old" (Bereshis 18:13). Rashi points out the reason for this change, based on the Gemora (Bava Metzia 87:a). How great is peace. Even Hashem changed words for the sake of peace (in order to avoid possible conflict between Avraham and Sara). That is the value of peace.

Kinderlach . . .

One way to have peace is to avoid confrontation. If your sister is playing with your favorite doll, find another one to play with. If your brother insists on showering first, find something else to do until the shower is free. When Imma says that it is time to do homework, do it. You can continue playing after you are finished. Be agreeable whenever possible. In this way we can all avoid unnecessary conflicts and increase the peace in our home.

Pray for Others

"There is no fear of G-d in this place" (Bereshis 20:11). What place? In Gerar, the kingdom of Avimelech. Avraham and Sara traveled to Gerar after the destruction of Sdom and Amora. "Is this your wife or your sister?" the men of Gerar asked him. "That is how you treat a guest?" comments Rashi. You should ask him whether he needs food and drink. Instead you ask him about his wife. You only want to kill him and take her for a wife. You have no fear of Hashem.

Avimelech and his court were punished for their behavior. "Hashem surely closed every womb in the home of Avimelech upon the word of Sara the wife of Avraham" (Bereshis 20:18). Yet they were healed by the power of Avraham's prayer. "And Avraham prayed to G-d and G-d healed Avimelech and his wife and his maidservants and they gave birth" (Bereshis 20:17). The very next verse states, "And Hashem remembered Sara... and she became pregnant and Sara bore a son to Avraham in his old age." Rashi explains the juxtaposition of these two events. Avraham prayed

to Hashem to open the wombs of the people of Gerar. Therefore Hashem opened Sara's womb. One can pray for Hashem's mercy to fulfill his friend's needs. If the one who prays is lacking the same thing, he will be answered first.

Perhaps we can understand this as follows. When one prays for another, he reaches a level of empathy with the other person. He truly cares for him. He feels his lack because he is lacking the same thing. Hashem says (so to speak), "You care for one of my children? Then I care for you. I will grant your request first."

Kinderlach . . .

We all have our special requests that we pray for every day. Do you know someone else who needs the same thing? You can certainly empathize with him. He is lacking the same thing as you. You know how he feels. Pray for him. Put all of your heart into it, as if you were praying for yourself. Truly care for him. No prayer is ever wasted. Hashem hears you. If the thing you request is good for you, then Hashem will answer your prayers. First.

Don't Delay

"What's that smell?" "Something is burning. Look! Over there! A fire!"

The two boys ran over to the empty lot to see dry weeds going up in flames.

"Look, the fire is spreading quickly! All of the weeds will soon be burning!"

The two boys watched as the fire furiously devoured all of the weeds. Then, as quickly as it began, the fire dies down.

Rav Moshe Chaim Luzatto zt"l, in his classic *mussar* (character improvement) work, "Mesilas Yesharim," explains the *middah* (character trait) of *zerizus* (quickness). There are two aspects to *zerizus*. One, before you begin the mitzvah. Hurry to start performing a mitzvah. If you delay, you may lose the opportunity. There are many obstacles to prevent you from doing the mitzvah. Two examples are laziness, and getting involved with other things. The second aspect of *zerizus* is to finish a mitzvah as quickly as possible. One

should not rush through a mitzvah haphazardly; however, one should not waste time in finishing it properly. Obstacles may arise to prevent you from finishing. Rav Luzzato compares one who performs a mitzvah to a burning fire. He should proceed along quickly (as a fire spreads quickly) and should not rest until he has completed the mitzvah (just as a fire continues burning until all of the fuel is consumed).

"And Avraham *rushed* to the tent to Sara and said, "*Quickly* knead and bake cakes (for our guests). And Avraham *ran* to the cattle, took a tender, good ox, gave it to the lad and he *hurried* to prepare it" (Bereshis 18:6, 7). Avraham Avinu shows us how to perform a mitzvah. With tremendous *zerizus*.

Kinderlach . . .

"Imma, the Shabbos meal was outstanding. Thank you." "You're welcome, kinderlach. Now that you have thanked me, let's thank the One Who made this all possible, Hashem, by saying the blessings (Bircas Hamazone)." "I can wait, Imma. I want to sit on the sofa first." "And I want to talk with my friend." "Kinderlach, don't put off starting this most important mitzvah. You may get busy and forget about it. Or you may fall asleep. Either way, you will lose the mitzvah. Mitzvos are more valuable than diamonds. If there was a diamond lying in the street, would you run to pick it up before anyone else?" "Sure, Imma." "Then don't be lazy about your mitzvos." "Boruch Atto Hashem..." "Kinderlach, your blessings are music to my ears."

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