



world can reach, however, there wasn't always anything practical to take from the stories. This story about the בבא סאלי is a story which we can all take something practical from to put into our daily lives, every person according to their own נסיונות.

### *The delay to ירושלים*

The בבא סאלי lived in a place called נתיבות, he lived in the middle of a field near the town, ברוח קדשו when he came to ארץ ישראל he said exactly where he wanted to live. He lived there the whole year, besides for once a year when he would travel to ירושלים for חנוכה. When he went he would take his whole household with him. He had a big household, quite a few wives, his many children and grandchildren, his many גבאים, and to move the whole household to ירושלים took nearly a week of preparation, the food for the week of חנוכה which obviously had to be prepared with all the חומרות and הידורים, all the other belongings, the clothes, etc. and then on the day a whole fleet of cars would arrive to take them all to ירושלים. The day before חנוכה arrives, they get ready to leave, all the cooking had been done, the cars were all loaded, all

prepared to go to ירושלים. Once everyone was in the cars, the גבאי goes back to the house to call the בבא סאלי who was busy sitting and learning. It was six o'clock in the evening, and as he walks into the house, a איד comes over to the גבאי exclaiming he has come for a ברכה from the בבא סאלי.

"Now is not the time," the גבאי told him, "We're about to travel to ירושלים... come back a different time, I'm sorry..."

The איד wasn't going to give up so easily and he tells the גבאי, "I've travelled all the way from חיפה with four buses to get here... it took me the whole day, please! I beg of you let me go into to the בבא סאלי to get a ברכה."

"What do you want a ברכה for?" the גבאי asks him. "I've been married for twenty years and I have not been זוכה to children..." the איד replied.

It softened the גבאי's heart, he was נתרש, he had travelled so far, "Okay," he tells him, "Come with me... I'll take you in to the בבא סאלי."

They go into the בבא סאלי and the בבא סאלי was about to get up to go into the car when the גבאי tells him about this איד who has travelled a long way to ask for a ברכה.

The **בבא סאלי** asked the **אייד**, "What have you done so far? What have you done the past twenty years?"

The **אייד** told the **בבא סאלי**, "I've done everything I possibly can! I've tried every **סגולה**! I've been everywhere, for **ברכות** from all the **גדולים**, I've been to **קברים**... I've done it all..."

The **בבא סאלי** turned to his **גבאי** and told him, "Please go and call the **rebbezin** for me..."

The **rebbezin** comes and he tells her, "I'm really sorry to trouble you but I would like to make a **סעודה** now."

If the **בבא סאלי** asks for a **סעודה** then there are no questions, she runs to cars, opens the boots, pulls out some bread, finds some salads, she lays the table, they wash and they sit down to eat their **סעודה**. After they finish the bread, he calls back the **rebbezin** and tells her, "I'm really sorry but now it's time for main course..."

Main course!?! Everything was packed already! She keeps quiet, she goes back to the car, takes what she needs out of the cars, goes into the kitchen, puts the gas and oven on... till the food was ready it took nearly an hour. And meanwhile everyone was waiting in the

cars, the engines were running, people were hanging around, they were all waiting for the **בבא סאלי**.

Once the food was ready, she brought it in, and the **בבא סאלי** ate slowly together with this **אייד**.

Once they finished the main course, **מנהג** של **בבא סאלי**, he would learn eighteen **פרקים** of **משניות** by every meal. They bring him his **משניות**, he didn't just *daven* them, he learnt each **משנה** properly.

After he finished his **משניות**, it was already after nine o'clock, and the **בבא סאלי** says, "Rebbezin, I'm really sorry to trouble you again but now it's time for desert..." again backwards and forwards she manages to put it together.

Then after desert, like all *serfardisher* **איידן** they bring in these dishes of different foods and spices, and finally it came to *benching*, the **בבא סאלי** didn't *bench* in two minutes, he *benched* with tremendous **כוונות**.

When he finished *benching* it was already after eleven o'clock!

The **בבא סאלי** stands up and says to the **אייד**, "I give you a **ברכה** that this year you will make a **בריית**."

The **אייד**'s face lit up, and off the **בבא סאלי** went into the car to start his journey to

ירושלים, and the איד stayed there overnight to make his way back to חיפה the next morning.

Now here comes the פלא of the story: On the way to ירושלים the grandchild who was driving him plucked up the courage and says to the סאלי, "בבא סאלי, This איד wanted a ברכה! Fine! So, give him a ברכה! But what's פשט in the whole סעודה when everyone is waiting to travel to ירושלים?!"

The סאלי said a *moridicker-zach*: "This איד tried all the סגולות! It didn't work, it must be the door in שמים was closed. He went to all גדולי ישראל and to all קברים, it looks like nobody had the key.

When the door is closed and nobody has the key there is only one עצה, and that is to break down the door."

He said to his grandchild, "If you break your מידות you can break down doors." remember this line your entire life.

"I've been waiting for weeks to go to ירושלים, everyone is waiting, this is the highlight of the year, I'm about to go into the car and this איד tells me, 'Twenty years have past and I've not had any children...' the door is locked, we have to break down doors, the עצה to break

down the doors in שמים is to break your מידות. It was hard for me, it was hard for everyone else, and I saw that during those five hours that we broke our מידות we broke down the doors in שמים so I knew that this איד is going to make a ברית this year."

This is a story which we can learn a lesson from. Often, we really feel we need זכותים or we need things to change, if we break our מידות we can break the doors in שמים. Sometimes we get challenges, and we feel the doors are locked, we try every סגולה, but there's something else which can be done.

When we speak about breaking מידות, we mean giving up of ourselves for somebody else, taking ourself out of the picture and thinking only about others.

### ***Three doughnuts***

There was a great עסקן in America who lived in Brooklyn who went round every morning to different shuls, and made appeals, every time there was a big נצרך or a terrible tragedy he went round from shul to shul making his appeals.

This past הנוכה he went to a shul and made an appeal. After davening there served doughnuts, so they told him to take a few doughnuts.

He told them that he had to be in another shul within ten minutes to be there before they finish davening and therefore, he did not have time to eat the doughnuts. "Take the doughnuts with you!" they told him.

He took three doughnuts, put them in a bag, and he placed them on top of the ספרים shelf so that later once he has finished his rounds he would come and enjoy his fresh doughnuts.

Two hours later he returned, and as he was walking down the street of the shul he saw a big commotion, fire engines, ambulances... a big fire had spread in the shul, people were carrying out the ספרי תורה, people were searching for each other, pandemonium had let loose on the street!

The איד said over, "I'm so embarrassed of myself! When I saw the fire engines and the smoke, the first מחשבה I had was: *'My doughnuts!'*"

We know how true such a story is. Often there could be a major event or a major change in society, in England, in the world, in a מוסד, and our first מחשבה sometimes is, "Myself!" even though it plays such a minor part in the greater picture.

That is the way human beings work, *'what about myself?'* For instance, the war in Ukraine, a big event, what was the first thing people worried about? "*Oy vey! My gas bill is going to go up! Inflation!*" What about so many other things which this involves? The so many אידן who are in great danger?!

Sometimes there are so many big events in the world and the first thing one can think about is a small *narrish-kite* which is נוגע to oneself, *three doughnuts*, that's all it is, remember this story, remember the *three doughnuts*.

A person thinks about himself straight away, revolving the whole world around himself. Breaking our מידות means: leaving oneself out of the picture for the moment, and thinking about somebody else.

We began earlier with a question: אברהם had so many merits! Why wasn't he זוכה to any children?

– "לך לך מארצך!" "ויהי רעב בארץ!" – challenge after challenge! Wasn't all this enough? Thrown into a fiery furnace! list out so many נסיונות which he passed with flying colours! And yet nothing happened with them, שרה remained an עקרה.

He didn't manage to break down the door in שמים with his נסיונות. What did the trick? What do ל"ה tell us which broke the doors in שמים?

In fact, it's a על התורה רש"י in next weeks פרשה. On the פסוק, "וזה'פקד את שרה", *And Hashem remembered שרה*, רש"י tells us, "סמך פרשה זו לכאן", *The תורה put this פרשה next to the פרשה of אבימלך*, "ללמדך", *to teach you*, "שכל המבקש רחמים על חבירו", *that whoever seeks mercy by davening for his friend, and he himself, i.e. the one davening needs that same thing for which he is davening on behalf of his friend, he is answered first*, שנאמר "ויתפלל אברהם אל האלקים", *as it says in the earlier פסוקים that אברהם davened for אבימלך to have children.*

אברהם wanted children, he had been waiting his whole life for children, but he is מתפלל on behalf of other people, he takes himself out of the picture and completely focuses on others, he's breaking his מידות, and therefore, הוא הוא נענה, because then doors break down, this is the reason why הוא נענה, because he broke his מידות, תחילה.

This did the trick, "לך לך מארצך" and "ויהי" and all the different נסיונות רעב בארץ"

אברהם had did not break doors, but breaking ones מידות, taking oneself out of the picture and thinking about others was גורם this *gevaldiga* נס that she had a child, this was the merit: he broke his מידות.

### ***The title צדיק***

There is a *moridicker* תנחומא at the beginning of פרשת נח. There are two אידן in the תורה called צדיק, toady on every letter and paper everyone is called "הגאון" but in the תורה not everyone gets a title of צדיק, the only two people who receive this title is "נח איש צדיק" – and in יוסף when the פסוקים speak about "על מכרם בכסף צדיק", הצדיק, it says,

It's not a free ticket to be called a צדיק, why were only these two זוכה?

"ולמה נקרא שמו צדיק הואיל: מדרש: " – They gave food to others! ל"ה tell us how even when נח was hungry, but before he ate himself he thought about others and gave others whether people or animals to eat first.

This is פשט in the מדרש: they were more worried about feeding others than feeding himself, this is something which the תורה respects, this is something which the תורה gives a person the title of "צדיק", breaking the מידות.

We find the same thing later on in "ויזכור אלקים את תורה" when it comes to "רחל", and as רש"י tells us that "הקב"ה remembered the מעשה סימנים which רחל gave over to לאה. And the question is: What took so long? The מסירת סימנים took place a long time ago? לאה had already had many children! What was the long wait all about?

Before the מעשה, ויזכור אלקים את רחל, with the דודאים took place, and it was then when לאה said to רחל, "המעט קחתך, את אשתי" – *was it not enough you took my husband?!<sup>2</sup>*

יעקב was only married to לאה because she gave her the סימנים! לאה says, "המעט קחתך את אשתי" and nevertheless רחל kept her mouth shut!

We cannot fathom or comprehend what מדריגה this was. She could have exploded - fallen to pieces! Life was already hard enough at her end. What did she ask for already? A few flowers!? Nevertheless, after hearing such an insult she didn't say a word.

"You're only here because of me! You're only here because of me!" could have been the response. Yet, she kept

quiet. Not a sound. Immediately, after this, teaches the תורה, "ויזכור אלקים את תורה", she broke her מידות, she kept quiet, she didn't want to make לאה feel bad in any way whatsoever! This is what broke the door in שמים!

It's a *moridicker* line from the סאלי which we should try to remember, "If we break מידות we can break the doors in שמים!"

### ***500 balloons***

When we think about others we never lose out. I once saw a beautiful story: there was a professor who would teach to big class, a total of five hundred students.

One day he comes in with five hundred balloons. He gives each student a balloon, tells them to blow it up and write their name on it and then to throw them out of the window into the yard outside.

He then took all the students outside and he told the students, "Now go and find your own balloon..."

He put his stopwatch on and after five minutes he exclaimed, "Stop!"

<sup>2</sup> See 11 פרשת ויצא תש"פ גליון 11 where we spoke about this in length.

Six people managed to find their own balloon, everyone else could not find theirs.

Then he told those six students to put their balloon back.

Then he told his students, "I'm giving you all five minutes, this time, the first balloon you take, take it and give it to the person whose name is on it."

Within four and a half minutes everyone had their own balloon.

The professor brought out the following **לימוד**: Everyone is looking for happiness in life, if you're looking for your own happiness you won't find it, but if you're

looking to give other people happiness you will find happiness in yourself.

You're not going to lose out, a person will only feel good when he cares and thinks and does good for others.

Often there are many situations where we are **עומד** on our **מידות**, we don't want to give in, it can be social areas, it can be **חברותות**, it can be other areas, but today we heard a *moridicker* **נקודה**: if we go against all of this, if we go against our natural **מידות** of thinking of ourselves, we will receive *gevaldiga* **ישועות** and **ניסים**, for ourselves and for all of **ישראל**.

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