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***Restored Story  
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***From "Likutei  
Shmuel"***

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**Do not judge your friend until you have reached his place** (derashot of the Ben Ish Chai)

It is said that a king had an only son, and the king wanted to teach his son many wisdoms so that he would be able to succeed him in the future. Therefore, the king gave his son into the hands of a sage who would teach his son all the wisdom and tricks of the kingdom. For several years, the sage taught the king's son, and at the end of his studies, he sent him to his father to test him. The king tested his son. He found him complete in all wisdom and rejoiced with great joy. The king commanded that one hundred thousand gold coins be given to the sage from the treasury and a badge of honor. The wise man said to the king, "There is one more thing that I need to teach your son, and only one hour is enough for that." The king sent his son to the sage's house; the sage closed the door, grabbed the king's son, and beat him fifty times on his legs until he began to bleed. The son cried out, but there was no savior for him. The sage then placed the king's son in a wagon and sent him to his father.

When the son came to his father, the king saw his son screaming and moaning, and blood dripping from his leg. The son told his father everything that had happened. The king was filled with anger and decreed that the sage should be hanged, but he ordered that before the sentence was carried out, the sage should be brought before him to explain to him the meaning of the matter. When the sage was brought before the king, the king said to him: "I have already decreed that you should be hanged, just tell me what foolishness you have done to harm my son in this way? You lost the reward and honor you would have received in your own hands." The sage replied: "I am faithful in my work; you have given me your son so that they may learn the tricks of the kingdom, and since a king in

judgment will establish a land, and every person who does evil will bring his judgment before him. However, the punishment must be according to the degree of the sin, and sometimes a person who stole a hundred dinars will be brought before him and he will be sentenced to strike him with a thousand plagues, because the king has never been stung by a flea because of his protection, and therefore he does not know how much the pain of the plagues is, and it is possible that if he is beaten 300 times, he will die, but since the king decreed a thousand plagues, the king's word should not be answered. And they beat him, and he died a strange death for stealing a hundred dinars, and there is an injustice here in the trial... Therefore, I have beaten your son to the extent that he can endure, so that he can estimate the extent of the pain of the plagues, and then he will know how to sentence the appropriate punishment according to the sin..."When the king heard the words of the sage, he was very happy with his words and added more gifts to him for what he had given him before...

**Moral of the story:** We do not always know what is going on in the heart of the other, what his mental state is, and what one word has influenced him. Sometimes we judge people without trying to be in their place, in their situation, in their life. If we were only allowed to feel a little of their grief, to be in their place, we would judge them in a more positive and considerate way. There is no person who can be in the place of the other, with all his problems and distresses; our job is to try to step into his shoes before we judge him, talk about him, and throw our anger at him... Before you become a judge, you will be the judge; perhaps then you will be able to understand the other, if only slightly, and change the assessment that you evaluated him a minute before...

***Don't let the blessing of a layman be easy in your eyes*** (Shabak Ytd Ne'eman Supplement – 2013)

This story happened on Simchat Torah 5758, in the middle of the recitation of Hallel. The Gaon Rabbi Natan Einfeld shlita felt pain in his left leg. The pain intensified until he was unable to participate in the Hakafot, and he barely dragged himself to accept aliyah to the Torah. In his essay Minchat Natan on Aggada, he recounts at length the details of the story, how he was carried home in a wheelchair, the agony of the inferno, and how the doctor examined him at the end of the holiday. He screamed at every touch of his leg. Eventually, he arrived at the hospital, where – at the end of a series of X-rays – he was diagnosed with a terrible illness in his leg. Now they were added to the physical anguish, and he turned to Rabbi Elimelech Firer, shlita, who referred him to Prof. Dekel of Ramat

Gan. In the meantime, he sent a messenger to Maran Hagaon Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky, shlita, to pray for his recovery. After an examination, Prof. Dekel mockingly rejected the diagnosis of the terrible disease, but claimed that with proper treatment, the pain would be forgotten after six weeks, but that physiotherapy would be needed for a whole year!

A week had passed since Simchat Torah. The anguish was increasing, while the pills – and even the injections – did not ease the pain. It was on Thursday when his wife went shopping for Shabbat, and he suggested that she lock the door from the outside because he was unable to access the door anyway. Suddenly there was a loud knock from the door, and it was Rabbi Epstein – the trustee of the house of Maran Rabbi Kanievsky shlit"a – who exclaimed: "The rabbi is downstairs in the car and wants to go up to visit!" In the end, the brief visit took place behind the locked door. On one side, the Rabbi Natan stood and cried out: "Rabbeinu, I have terrible suffering!" And beyond the door came the wish: "Rabbi Natan, a complete refuah! A complete remedy!" From there, Rabbi Natan turned to the balcony to look at the great guest returning to his car, and once again the wishes were heard, "A complete recovery!" When the car drove away, he entered the house and suddenly noticed that he was walking on both legs, "Is it possible? Not! This is nothing but imagination! I lifted my left leg – and nothing, no pain... I felt it with my hand, I remembered how I had cried bitterly last night, when the doctor touched my leg lightly, and now, nothing... There is no pain." In response, he burst into a spontaneous dance that was all thanks to God. Only ten minutes later did his wife enter the house and find the patient... Dancing! "I'm completing the dances of Simcha Torah," he explained to her. Rabbi Natan immediately called Rabbi Epstein to update Maran HaRav Ach Shlita – and when he finished hearing this, he said simply: And what is the wonder? After all, this is an explicit Gemara: "Do not make the blessing of a layman easy in your eyes"!

### ***Don't be afraid to ask.***

About 100 years ago, there lived in Europe a wealthy man, whose name was Rabbi Eisel Harif of Slonim. The rabbi's daughter reached maturity, and her father began looking for the most successful young man, who would marry her. In those days, the meaning of "the most successful man" was usually the most successful yeshiva student. Rabbi Eisel then traveled all the way to the city of Volozhin, which was under the Torah responsibility of the famous Rosh Yeshiva, the Netziv (it is said that in the days of the Netziv of Volozhin, about 10,000 students were studying

in his yeshiva!) When Rabbi Eisel arrived there, he entered the beit midrash, knocked the central table, and announced aloud: "I have a very complicated problem about a certain issue in the Gemara. Whoever succeeds in answering my question will be privileged to meet my daughter for a match!"

There was a great commotion in the hall of the beit midrash. A real chance to marry Rabbi Eisel's daughter! Soon a long and orderly line was formed, and each of the students in the yeshiva was allowed to provide the rabbi with the answer. One after the other, Rabbi Eisel rejected all the answers that were heard from the students. The process continued like this for several days, with some of the students standing in line even two or three times. But still, none of the students were able to provide the rabbi with the correct answer. When the students had finished all their answers, Rabbi Eisel began to pack his belongings, intending to return home.

He reached the edge of the city when suddenly he heard a voice behind him shouting in his direction: "Rabbi Eisel, Rabbi Eisel!" The student explained: "Rabbi Eisel, I know that I have not been able to fulfill your condition and that I will not be able to marry your daughter, but only for me, can you please tell me what is the correct answer to your question?" "Ahh!" shouted Rabbi Eisel in a loud voice. "You'll be my son-in-law!"

In our lives, the search for truth can be hindered if we don't dare to ask. When we ask for help from others, we are, in fact, admitting that we do not have all the answers. Sometimes we are required to ask embarrassing questions, questions that we are not comfortable asking. Sometimes we are required to admit that we do not know, or even risk being thought to be ignorant. But all of these risks, very small for a lifetime, are based on lies and falsehoods. The yeshiva student acted with courage of exactly this kind; Such behavior is a sign of personal and intellectual honesty.

**"Do not be afraid, Avram, for I will protect you from your reward very great" (15:1)**

In a city in Germany, there was an assimilated Jew, the owner of a private bank, and he had an only son. The son fell ill, and his father rushed specialist to his bed, but they were unable to help, and the illness worsened. The father remembered that his father used to turn to the synagogue in times of distress, to conduct the "Mi Sheberach" prayer; he went to the synagogue and turned to the gabay, asking how much such a blessing would cost him for his son's recovery. There was a guest

there, a Jew from Galicia who came on the occasion of his business. He heard and was interested. He asked, "Have you been to Sanz yet?" "Sanz? What's in Sanz, a hospital? A renowned professor?!" "Much more," he replied. "There's a 'Wanderer Rabiner' there, a rabbi who does wonders. A worker of salvation, a miracle worker; people from all over the world are flocking and coming!" He returned home and told his wife. She urged him to go.

He went on their way, crossed countries, crossed districts, and reached Sanz. He came to the Rebbe and asked what he wanted; his son was sick... And may the Rebbe heal him. The Rebbe inquired about where he came from, from Germany. What is his business? A bank manager? Is the bank closed on Shabbat? Of course not. All the banks are open on Shabbat and closed on Sunday. The Rebbe understands, the competition is fierce, and most of his customers are non-Jews. In general, even in his home, Shabbat is not observed. And kosher? Not either. In his parents' house, they kept it. Today, there is no kosher butcher shop in his city. And purity? He doesn't know what it is. The Rebbe explained. Oh, so no. "Good," sighed the Rebbe. "Well, listen. Someone misled you; I don't do wonders: I can't heal your son." "No? If so, he came for nothing. He asks for forgiveness for the bothering. But why is the line so long?" "I will explain to you," the Rebbe continued, "people know that trouble comes from above, and they believe that my prayer is accepted before God and that I can act to cancel the decrees. Your son has also been decreed, and I am willing to turn to the Creator and ask Him to fulfill your wish and heal your son. But then the Creator will ask: Is He doing My will, asking me to do His will? And what can I answer?! Therefore, I propose a deal: You will take upon yourself to keep Shabbat kosher and pure, and I promise that Hashem will do your will and your son will be healed!" The banker heard and considered the deal. He answered: Regarding kashrut, I understand that there is no problem. Let's move on to vegetarianism. Regarding purity, I will ask at home. But regarding Shabbat, there is nothing to talk about. If I close the bank on Shabbat, customers will leave me and the business will close. "As you wish," the Rebbe replied. "We didn't make a deal." They shook hands, parted as friends. He returned home, and his son was dying. "Well, what was there?" the mother asked. "A tough Jew," the banker answered, "you can't do business with him, he's not willing to compromise!" and told me about the meeting. The mother was shocked: "Murderer! The bank is more important to you than your son?! You immediately run to the post office and send a telegram that you agree to the three conditions." He hurried, sent the telegram, and when he returned, the child was already healed.. And the city was

furious: the bank was closed on Saturdays, people heard the story, were astonished and appreciated, and the business only prospered.

His wife sent him to pay the Rebbe 300 marks as a visit fee to the professor, and he refused to take it, like Elisha Shaman, who refused to take money from Naaman, to increase the glory of Heaven. After he insisted, the Rebbe said: "If so, there would be shluchi, in the beit midrash there would be yeshiva students sitting and studying, divide the money among them and bless your son." He went on and on. One of the students heard this and hurried to the Rebbe. A long time ago, his wife fell ill, and her illness worsened, and the Rebbe made do with a blessing. He asked painfully: "Does the Rebbe save only those who desecrate the Sabbath?!" ... The Rebbe looked at him: "Are you my Chassid?" "Of course!" and he loves me?" "Love of soul!" "If so, why don't you understand! The Holy One, blessed be He, decreed that who am I to annul it? And if I perform a miracle and force me to cancel the decree of Heaven, I arouse anger and meticulousness, and I am liable to pay dearly for it. But everything is worthwhile, to increase the glory of Heaven. So that in Ashkenaz they will see a bank closed on Shabbat, and they will know that there is G-d in Israel! But that you will demand it from me...?!")

### **Don't be discouraged (good things – judges)**

The Argentine writer Jorge Damián related that when I was a child, I loved the circus very much. At every opportunity I would go to see the fascinating shows, enjoy watching the acrobats walking flexibly on thin ropes, jumping into burning hoops, and climbing on each other's backs with feline flexibility. I especially liked the animals. They fascinated me. There were monkeys, dogs, a real tiger, a lion, and an elephant. The elephant was a special favorite of mine; I was fascinated by it. There was something special about the elephant's flexibility and the complicated actions it was able to perform despite its enormous size. Then I noticed something interesting: during the intervals between shows, the elephant is tied up in one of the corners of the circus. A large iron chain is tied to a medium-sized wooden peg stuck in the ground. I was amazed. The elephant is big. Its strength is even greater. And what exactly is holding it there? I knew that a large elephant could uproot an entire tree by the roots; how come it didn't think of uprooting the small tree clipping to which it was attached and running away? What exactly kept it there?! At first, they explained to me that it was just tamed. I bought the explanation. But when I grew up a little, I asked myself, if he is tamed, then why tie him up at all? Years passed, and I didn't get an answer. I almost forgot the question until I met

someone smart who explained the matter to me: The elephant doesn't run away for one reason. It's been tied to a wooden peg like this since it was born. It doesn't know anything else. Then I was able to imagine the little elephant. I saw it in my imagination, a moment after it was born, when it had just been tied with a large chain to the wooden peg. I imagined it pulling, moving back and forth, trying to break free, trying to tear the chain, to remove the wooden peg from its place. For long hours, he fought the chain that restricted his movement, depriving him of freedom. He did everything he could to break free until he got tired. He tried the next day, too. The day after, too. Until he got used to it. He realized that there was no way, that he couldn't break free, that he had to stay chained there, forever. Since then, he hasn't tried again. He just gave in to the given situation.

Of course, the elephant doesn't exactly interest us. What interests us is us. Aren't we sometimes like this big elephant? Didn't we have desires, aspirations, desires that we wanted to fulfill, things that we wanted to achieve that we tried to achieve but didn't succeed, even though we tried? And then we gave up. We gave up, we lowered our heads and told ourselves that this is how we always stay. But they have already said 'unconscious despair', despair is outlawed. A person has to try always, again and again and again. It means that he is alive, it means that his will is pulsating. It means that he is capable. That he can go far.

### *Foster Mother*

Baby Tamar was left alone in the hospital, waiting for someone to come and pick her up. She lay alone, wrapped in a hospital blanket in the crib. A sweet baby, with a pair of smart, questioning eyes, a tiny nose, and curls. A foster mother talks about her first meeting with little Tamar.

One day, the phone rang with the best news we could get. And no, it wasn't Erel. It was a social worker who informed us that a little girl was now in the hospital and needed a foster family. We drove there and found a sweet baby, with a pair of smart, questioning eyes, a tiny nose and curls, wrapped in a pack of blankets in a hospital crib. Like a lightning strike, a minute and a half, maybe a little less. We fell in love with her completely.

This story is really not what we expected or planned. When we were offered to become a foster family, we didn't imagine Tamar (a pseudonym), such a sweet baby. We were no longer young at the time, and we had a completely different picture in our heads: we thought of small, frightened children who desperately needed a home and a lot of love. In our wildest imagination, we didn't come up with this sweet, featherweight

package - beautiful. Healthy, whole, with slender fingers, who happened to be born at the wrong time, in the wrong place, to a world and situation that could not contain her, and she was left in the hospital waiting, alone, until someone came to pick her up.

For the past four years, we have belonged to a very special group of families who have decided to become foster families. The initial decision stemmed from a fairly natural process of a couple in the second half of life, with children, some of whom have already grown up, who were debating whether it was still possible to do something meaningful in life. Is it time to conquer the Himalayas or run to the million? Or alternatively - maybe something can be done for someone? Perhaps to help a child in need? While we were deliberating, we did a short search on the Internet. Quick registration on the Orr Shalom website, and we were already deep in the process. An efficient array of social workers who are responsible for some of the organization's extensive activities conducted comprehensive screenings for us. We found ourselves filling out forms, coming to meetings, acquiring new vocabulary, giving interviews, and most of all, telling the biological children that this is what they want most. After a few months of preparation and another course in MA (a course dedicated to future foster parents), we got a new perspective and a lot of insights into the foster care process. A few more months of anticipation (and one disappointment) passed before the long-awaited phone call arrived.

This crying can no longer be stopped until after a while, when the commotion of reception and the organization of the room for the little one subsided, we realized that something was missing. The beautiful eyes are silent, penetrating the soul without sound. No babies is chattering, no crying, no burping, no sound. Silence and silence. A baby who forgot how to cry, because she knew that even if she cried, no one would come. We developed a great concern. For hours, the children and I turned the crib on tiptoe. We approached carefully, listened, and hoped, maybe a little girl would come out. About a week passed before the long-awaited sound was heard. Without prior warning, the house was flooded with baby crying, a real cry of a tiny soul that had experienced great distress. Maybe hunger, maybe a diaper? Who remembers what it was about. Our sudden crying sounded like the sound of bells, and with it came a deep consciousness. This crying can no longer be stopped! This new cry already has an attentive ear. Then she "went all out", a big, deep, throaty and expressive cry, with huge tears, rolling on her eyelashes, which have no end. We cried too, but with excitement and joy.

Days pass, months and years. The love at home only intensifies and grows, and happiness is enduring happiness. The power of discovery – the first step, a trip, a zoo, winter puddles, the pleasure of the first words. The intensity of the words "Mom" and "Dad" rolls in a tiny mouth that chats freely without worries. All this happiness in a family setting where nothing is taken for granted – this is the unique story of foster families.

## **A huge heart and endless love**

And there were also the small bonuses, such as the responsibility and mobilization of the extended family – uncles, grandparents, the concessions and insights of the older children, as well as the mixed feelings of pride and jealousy of the younger daughter. We thought we had taught them a real lesson in social awareness when we enlisted to serve as a foster family, and when they grew up, they would have turned the world upside down. And lo and behold, no. They are the ones who taught us that you don't have to climb barricades to bring about revolutions. It is also possible in daily life to see the change happening inside the home. To see them become human beings full of sensitivity and dedication and giving to others, with a huge heart and endless love.

We have all been privileged and still get to take part every day anew in transforming this little girl we received as a gift from the organization and from life into a wise and talented being, beautiful and captivating. We see her growing in front of us, a musical girl, dancing lovely, full of energy and joy of life. We all love her with all our hearts; we pamper her at every opportunity, and she, for her part, asks for more and more hugs and kisses all the time and also receives. Foster care is a rare privilege to do something important for a child who needs a warm home and especially for your own family. As of today, Erella hasn't called yet, but even if she never calls, we've already won the big lottery.

## **Mother was not wrong (Sweet of Honey, Rav Baruch Bokera Shlita, Issue 104)**

The Brin family lived in the Borough Park neighborhood of Brooklyn. At the end of 2001, the father of the family decided to thoroughly renovate their old home. For this purpose, they had to move to a rented apartment for a few months when the renovation work began. The father was supposed to transfer a \$20,000 advance to the contractor. This sum, which he had saved with great effort over several years, was deposited by him for safekeeping with one of the owners of the Gemach funds in his area. Mr. Brin asked his wife to go to the Gemach offices and redeem the sum in order to pay the contractor. Early in the morning, Mrs. Brin entered the Gemach offices, received the entire amount, placed it in a white envelope, tucked it deep in her bag, and went out to buy a few more purchases needed for the temporary apartment.

Late in the afternoon, she returned home. Her husband waited impatiently for the envelope to be delivered to the contractor the next morning, but as soon as his wife entered, he realized that something was wrong. With a pale face, his wife told him that she didn't understand how it happened. At some point, she noticed

that her bag had disappeared with the envelope inside; she tried to reconstruct where it happened, but without success. The family members tried to search all the places where the mother was, but they found nothing. They returned to their home hunched over, and the father suggested that everyone sit down and pray for God's salvation. All the members of the household sat and recited Psalms with emotion and from the bottom of their hearts. After a long time, a man named 'William' called. The man said that he is not Jewish and that he had found the bag on the street and wanted to return it to them. He asked for their address and announced that he would arrive at their home late in the evening.

The family members waited and prayed that the money would indeed be found in the bag. At eleven o'clock at night, there is a knock on the door. A dark-skinned gentile stands in the doorway with the lost bag in his hand. He hands the bag to Mr. Brin. Mrs. Brin asks for their forgiveness and goes to the bedroom with the bag. She opens the envelope and finds that indeed all the money is found and not even a single dollar is missing. How can we repay you for your kindness?" asks Mr. Brin, and the man replies that he is not asking for anything in return. "Just one thing... I ask that you bless me for a good life, blessing and success. Look," the non-Jew added, "my late mother used to tell us from childhood that the blessing of a Jew has a special value, so I ask that you bless me from the bottom of my heart and that this was my reward. Of course, all the members of the household greeted him with endless blessings; the man thanked them excitedly and turned to return home.

When he arrived at his home, the non-Jew told his wife everything that had happened to him. Instead of rejoicing in his joy over the blessings he received, the woman mocked him, 'You fool, what are the blessings of these Jews worth? It would have been better for you to take the money... I knew my husband was stupid, but I didn't imagine it was that much.' And here in the middle of the night, William wakes up from his sleep, clutching his stomach and moaning in great pain, the woman who has woken up, instead of sharing his grief with his pain. What good did the blessings of the Jews do you?' and he replies, in the midst of his terrible pain, 'My mother never made a mistake, and this time I am sure she was not wrong. William doesn't sleep all night, writhing in pain and not realizing where it comes from. At first light, William calls the manager at his workplace and informs him that he is not feeling well and therefore will not come to work this morning; at the same time, he calls the medical center and arranges a home visit from a doctor. A long hour has passed, and the doctor is embarrassed to come... William

didn't understand and began to think, 'Maybe my wife was right? Perhaps there is really no real blessing for the Jews. While thinking about it, the phone rings; on the line was his sister who sounded completely hysterical, "Oh, thank God... William, my dear brother, are you at home? Everything is fine with you.

What happened is that that morning, September 11, the terrible attack on the Twin Towers in New York by Al-Qaeda terrorists took place. The office where William worked was located on the eighty-ninth floor of one of the buildings, and all its occupants were buried along with thousands of other people in one of the most terrible disasters of all time. Gripped with chills and moved to the depths of his soul, William called the Brin family and thanked them warmly for the 'stomach aches' he had 'merited' their blessing. Then he went on to say, 'Now I know that my mother was not wrong; a Jew's blessing is worth much more than money... It is worth life literally. The gentiles know this, but do we know it?