



The Path To Follow

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GUARD YOUR TONGUE!

Victorious in Battle

During the time of King Achav, although the conduct of the Children of Israel was reprehensible, they were victorious in battle because there was no Lashon Harah among them. Yet at other times, when the Children of Israel were at a high level in Torah and mitzvot, they were defeated in battle. The Sages attribute this to the fact that some among them spoke Lashon Harah. The power of Lashon Harah is such that it weakens merits so greatly that people cannot win in times of war. The Zohar states that due to the sin of Lashon Harah, Heaven does not accept our prayers, and even the holy words we recite become tainted. Because of this sin, the Temple in all its glory was destroyed. Therefore when a person is careful not to speak or listen to Lashon Harah, he hastens the deliverance of the Jewish people and the rebuilding of the Temple.

HOW CAN WE DEFEAT THE EVIL INCLINATION?

(BY RABBI DAVID HANANIA PINTO SHLITA)

During the month of Elul we all strive to overcome the evil inclination and chase it from our hearts. We all look for methods in which to achieve this and cleave solely to the good inclination. In looking at this week's parsha, we can find effective ways to conquer the evil inclination and chase it away once and for all.

The parsha states, "When you go out to war against your enemies, and the L-RD your G-d will deliver him into your hand and you take captives" (Deuteronomy 21:10). Commentators such as the Alsheich (in Torah Moshe) have explained that this refers to a Jew's battle against his material and perpetual enemy, the evil inclination. He also states that our parsha offers a great deal of advice on how to successfully carry out this battle. We shall cite these by following the text of the parsha.

The expression, "The L-RD your G-d will deliver him" alludes to what the Sages have said: "Man's evil desire gathers strength against him daily and seeks to slay him...and were the Holy One, blessed be He, not to help him, he would not be able to prevail" (Kiddushin 30b). This means that man does not, in and of himself, have even the slightest ability to conquer the evil inclination. On the other hand, he is obligated to fight against it, for Hashem will help him prevail when he does. As the Sages have said, "If [a person] comes to purify himself, he is helped" (Yoma 38b). At that point Hashem will certainly deliver the evil inclination into a person's hands.

We know that in general, combatants try to learn how their adversary's weapons work and devise the best way to overcome them, such as by using even more sophisticated and effective weapons. The same applies to man's war against the evil inclination, which possesses enormous strength and is familiar with every tactic of war. A person must attack it with an extremely effective weapon, that weapon being the Torah, as the Sages have said: "I created the evil inclination, but I created the Torah as its antidote" (Kiddushin 30b). It is the Torah that defeats the evil inclination and brings it down to the ground, a fact alluded to in the expression, "When you go out to war against your enemies." The word milchamah ("war") can be broken down into two parts: Lechem and mah. This designates the Torah, which is called lechem ("bread"), as it is written: "Come, eat of my bread" (Proverbs 9:5; Yalkut Shimoni). Furthermore, the numerical value of the word mah is the same as that of the word adam ("man"). As mentioned earlier, when a person goes out to war against his evil inclination, he will only succeed in conquering it with the Torah, for as the Sages said: "If it is of stone, it will dissolve; if of iron, it will shatter" (Kiddushin 30b). Our parsha continues: "And you see among the captives a woman who is of beautiful toar [form]" (Deuteronomy 21:11). This means that when you conquer the evil inclination, you will taste the Torah's sweetness, for the Torah enables you to conquer it. You will taste its glory and secrets, and it will be beautiful to you. Your desire for it will also increase, as it is written: "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" (Proverbs 3:17). There is also an allusion contained in the word toar ("form"), for by adding the number of its letters (4) to its numerical value, we achieve the word torah.

We now come to the expression, "And you have a desire for her" (Deuteronomy 21:11). In other words, your desire for the Torah will lead you to cleave to it, and you will truly acquire it in your soul, just like a wife, as in the verse, "The Torah that Moses commanded us is the morasha [heritage] of the congregation of Jacob" (ibid.

33:4). Here our Sages said, "Do not read morasha [heritage], but me'orasa [betrothed]" (Berachot 57a). The Sages have also said that the Torah is compared to a good wife (Yevamot 63b). This is: "You may take her as a wife" (Deuteronomy 21:11). In the following verses, we are given even more advice on how to defeat the evil inclination.

We read, "If a man will have two wives, one beloved and the other hated" (v.15). Here the Torah is teaching us that when we study the wisdom of the Torah, we must be careful to always study it for its own sake, as the Sages taught: "Whoever occupies himself with [the study of] Torah for its own sake merits many things" (Perkei Avot 6:1). Even if we do not study Torah for its own sake, we must still put an effort in that direction, as it is written: "For out of [doing good] with an ulterior motive, there comes [doing good] for its own sake" (Pesachim 50b).

However we must be careful not to have another "wife" besides the Torah. This means that we must not grow proud, for "Whoever is boastful, if he is a Sage, his wisdom will depart from him" (Pesachim 66b). This is deplorable to Hashem, for "Every haughty heart is an abomination to the L-RD" (Proverbs 16:5). In fact only one wife – the Torah – is loved by Hashem, while the other – pride – is hated.

Now we come to the verse, "You shall not see the ox of your brother, or his sheep.... You shall surely return them to your brother" (Deuteronomy 22:1). How is a person's true spiritual level revealed? How can it be known if he is studying Torah for its own sake and that his focus is only on the wife he loves, not the one he hates? We see this in regards to returning a lost object, for this mitzvah consists entirely of intention. In fact there are no witnesses to speak of in such a case, for only a person and his Creator know if he has found something or not, and if he returned it or not.

The parsha ends by telling us, "Remember what Amalek did to you" (Deuteronomy 25:17). Amalek is the Satan, the evil inclination that always casts doubt into our service of Hashem. It attempts to weaken us and chill our enthusiasm for Hashem. The Torah states, however, that Amalek only succeeded with those who were "weak," meaning those whose faith was feeble. On the other hand, when those who dwelled in the Beit Midrash saw this deficiency (the evil inclination) attacking them, they ran to the abode of Torah that was in their heart. This is because the Torah protects a person, saving him from sin and misfortune in this world and in the World to Come (see Sotah 21a).

When a person diligently studies Torah and performs mitzvot in joy, he fulfills the verse: "You shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under Heaven" (Deuteronomy 25:19). He can then erase the memory of Amalek and the evil inclination within him, as King David said: "My heart has died within me" (Psalms 109:22). That is, he had killed the evil inclination within his heart (Yerushalmi, Berachot 9:5). A person who does this can serve Hashem with all his heart and progress in studying Torah and performing mitzvot. He will then experience good in this world and in World to Come, forever and all time. Amen, may it be so.

MUSSAR FROM THE PARSHA

The Language of the World to Come

It is written, “This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He does not listen to our voice” (Deuteronomy 21:20).

The Gemara states: “A favorite saying of Rav was, ‘In the future world there is neither eating nor drinking... the tzaddikim sit with their crowns on their heads feasting on the brilliance of the Shechinah’” (Berachot 17a).

Rabbi Nachum Velvel asked what Rav’s intention was in constantly saying this. It would seem that it is only an important teaching, nothing more. Rabbi Nachum Velvel responded by using himself as an example: “I earn my living by engaging in commerce. For this I am forced to attend trade fairs in Leipzig and Danzig for about 15 days out of the year. Attending these fairs requires me to understand German, for otherwise I wouldn’t be able to speak to anyone. In fact I have learned to speak German, and during these fairs I conduct my business in that language.”

Rabbi Velvel continued: “Does the fact that I need to know German require me to understand it in every detail? Obviously not. This is because I live in Kelm, and the language that I use on a daily basis is the local tongue, not German. The fact that I attend trade fairs for 15 days out of the year does not obligate me to understand German to perfection.”

This is what Rav wanted to constantly keep in mind, namely that a person’s permanent dwelling place is with celestial beings in the World to Come, a world that has its own language. This is the language of constantly feasting on the brilliance of the Shechinah, a language that we must understand in every detail, for it is our native tongue.

The fact that man was sent down to a trade fair – the present world – for 120 years is nothing compared to living for eternity in the World to Come. True, this world has its own language, “eating and drinking,” and we must understand it, but not in every detail!

The World to Come has its own language, and just because we are in this world and obligated to speak the language of men, we are not forced to learn it to perfection. That is, we do not need to know all the particulars pertaining to eating and drinking, or any other earthly pleasure. The rebellious son represents the very opposite of this idea, for he is completely subservient to the language of this world, yielding to it in every way. Hence the Torah tells us that even here in this world, where we live, our true desire must be directed toward the World to Come, for that is our real abode!

A Pearl From the Rav

It is written, “When you go out to war against your enemies... veshavita shivyo [and you capture its captivity]” (Deuteronomy 21:10).

In his book *Pahad David*, Rabbi David Pinto Shlita asks why the verse states, “And you capture its captivity” instead of, “And you take captives.”

We already know that this verse deals with the war against the evil inclination, man’s greatest enemy. When a person studies Torah and completely devotes himself to it, he will overcome the evil inclination and capture it as his prisoner. Not only that, but he will “capture its captivity,” meaning that he will take from it what it took from others! Such a person will acquire merit for himself and help others as well, so they too can be instantly saved from the evil inclination and grow stronger than it. However this only happens when a person studies with all his might. If instead he studies lackadaisically and brings the evil inclination with him to the Beit Midrash, of him it is written: “If he says, ‘I have not labored but still have found,’ do not believe him” (Megillah 6b).

Go Out and Fight!

It is written, “When you go out to war against your enemies, and the L-RD your G-d will deliver him into your hand” (Deuteronomy 21:10).

Our teacher the Chafetz Chaim explained this verse as follows: “When you go out to war against your enemies” refers to the war against the evil inclination. If

a person puts an effort into fighting it, he is promised: “The L-RD your G-d will deliver him into your hand.” It is then certain that he will be stronger than the evil inclination and able to defeat it. Thus a person’s job is to go out and fight.

Where We Learn or What We Learn?

It is written, “When a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not listen to the voice of his father or to the voice of his mother” (Deuteronomy 21:18).

Commenting on verse 11, Rashi explains: “If he marries her [the attractive woman captured in war]... he will ultimately father a stubborn and rebellious son through her.”

Here the author of *Avnei Ezel* notes that a child’s education can only yield productive results when we do not pay attention to external beauty, but only to what is on the inside. It is not where we learn, but what we learn that is important. It may be that there are study halls that are large and pleasant to learn in, however if the content of such learning is devoid of the spirit of Torah or Judaism, it cannot produce an upright and faithful child. He will instead become rebellious.

If a man paid attention to a woman’s external beauty and was not worried by the fact that she was a foreigner, it means that he placed form over substance. Hence “he will ultimately father a stubborn and rebellious son through her.”

An Enemy Becomes a Friend

It is written, “You shall not see the donkey of your brother or his ox falling on the road” (Deuteronomy 22:4).

Concerning the mitzvah to help our fellowman (azov ta’azov imo), in Parsha *Mishpatim* it is written: “If you see the donkey of someone you hate crouching under its burden” (Exodus 23:5). Here our verse states “the donkey of your brother” in order to teach us that by the mitzvah of helping others, those we hate will be turned into brothers. Thus hatred will fade away and love will grow.

– Rabbeinu Bechaye

You Shall Lift With Him

It is written, “You shall surely lift with him” (Deuteronomy 22:4).

In proportion to the help that a person offers others by sharing their burdens, he will merit improving himself and correcting his ways.

This is alluded to in the language of the verse: “You shall surely lift with him” – the lifting will be done with him, with the help you gave to your fellow.

Our Sages have said, “The poor man does more for the master of the house than the latter does for him” (*Vayikra Rabba* 34:8).

– Sefat Emet

Who is Called an Edomite?

It is written, “You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother” (Deuteronomy 23:8).

The author of *Yesod HaTorah* notes that faults and sins are called Edomi (“Edomite”) because of the verse, “If they have become red [i.e., adom] as crimson” (Isaiah 1:18). The Torah is therefore saying: Do not consider your faults and sins as abhorrent things that cannot be rectified, for you can transform them into “your brother.” You can turn them into merits by repenting through love, as the Sages have said: “Repentance is so great that premeditated sins are accounted as though they were merits” (*Yoma* 86b). In other words, they can still intercede on your behalf. The expression *ki achicha* (“for he is your brother”) is formed by the first letters of the phrase *Im yiheyu chata’eychem kashanim kasha’eg yalbinu* (“If your sins are like scarlet, they will become white as snow”).

Afraid of Being Alone

It is written, “When a man has a sorer u’moreh [stubborn and rebellious] son who does not listen to the voice of his father” (Deuteronomy 21:18).

Why is the rebellious son described as sorer u’moreh? What is the meaning of the word *moreh*? The *Yalkut HaGershoni* states that one who takes to an evil path generally does not want to remain in *Gehinnom* alone. He always wants more company, which is why he teaches (*moreh*) his ways to others.

Fingers and Earlobes

It is written, "You shall have a shovel in addition to azenecha [your implements]" (Deuteronomy 23:14).

The Gemara teaches, "Do not read azenecha [your implements], but rather aznecha [your ear]. ... If a man hears something improper, he should plug his finger into his ear. This is the same as Rabbi Eleazar said: 'Why do the fingers of man resemble pegs?'" (Ketubot 5a-b). The Chatam Sofer asks, "Is it not written, 'You shall go back and cover your discharge' [Deuteronomy 23:14]?" He notes that the Gemara also states, "Why is the whole ear hard and the lobe soft? [So] that if a man hears something improper he shall bend the lobe into it" (Ketubot 5b). Why are these two things – fingers and earlobes – necessary to avoid listening to Lashon Hara? The answer is that when we are studying Torah and someone speaks Lashon Hara, we cannot place our fingers into our ears because it is forbidden to study Torah if the finger touches any discharge of the ear. What must we do in that case? If we bend the earlobe into the ear, it will immediately pop back out. Therefore we must use our fingers to hold the lobe in place within the ear. It is with respect to this that it is written: "You shall have a shovel in addition to azenecha...and [you shall] cover your discharge," meaning the discharge of the ear.

Breaking the Oath?

It is written, "That which has gone out of your lips, you shall observe and do according to what you vowed to the L-RD your G-d" (Deuteronomy 23:24).

The story is told of a man who came to spend Rosh Hashanah with the Rav of Viznitz, Rabbi Chaim Meir. After the prayer service ended, the guest noticed that people were reciting some verses from LeDavid Mizmor (Psalm 24). The guest also saw that the Rav was weeping when he reached the verse, "Who has not sworn in vain by My soul, and has not sworn deceitfully" (v.4), yet he couldn't understand why. After people finished praying and wished the Rav Chag Samayach, he turned to his guest and explained: "The Gemara states that before a person comes into this world, he is made to take an oath that he will be a tzaddik, never a rasha [Niddah 30b]. That's why I wept when I read, 'Who has not sworn in vain by My soul, and has not sworn deceitfully.'"

Hidden Allusions

It is written, "A perfect and a just weight" (Deuteronomy 25:15).

The Vilna Gaon once told his students that every name carried by a Jew is alluded to in the Torah. One of his students arose and asked where the name of the Gaon himself appears in the Torah. The Gaon looked at him briefly and said, "My name and my father's name are alluded to in the words of Parsha Ki Teitzei: 'A perfect and a just weight.' This alludes to my complete name, Eliyahu ben Shlomo." His student continued to press him: "The name of our teacher's father – is it not Zalman as well?" The Gaon immediately replied, "You will find this name in the remaining letters." The dozens of individuals who were present to hear this did not understand what he meant. It was only afterwards that one of his students, Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin, told them that the name of the Vilna Gaon's father, Zalman, was alluded to in the words even sheleima ("perfect weight"). That is, once the first letter of each word is removed, what remains is ben leima, which has exactly the same numerical value (127) as Zalman.

REASONS FOR THE MITZVOT

The Lesson of the Stubborn and Rebellious Son

It is written, "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not listen to our voice" (Deuteronomy 21:20).

Our Sages have said, "There has never been a 'stubborn and rebellious' son, nor will there ever be. Why then was the law written? That you may study it and receive a reward" (Sanhedrin 71a). Although this passage has no practical application per se, there is much that we can learn from it.

When a son disobeys his parents, yet they are lenient with him, fail to reprimand him as they should, and set no limits to his behavior, then "He will not listen to our voice." In that case he is likely to become a "stubborn and rebellious" son.

A man who had committed theft and murder was arrested and sentenced to death. As he was being led to the gallows, a huge crowd gathered to watch. Included among them was his mother, who had come to see her son in his last hour to grieve for him. As is usually the case in such situations, the man was asked if he had a final request. He replied that he wanted to approach his mother so he could say goodbye to her before dying.

When the man's request was granted, he approached his mother in tears, as if to kiss her. Yet when he got close, he bit his mother as hard as he could, tearing off her ear with his teeth. All who saw this revolting spectacle were horrified. When the judge asked him why he had done such a cruel and shameful thing, the man replied: "My mother's responsible for my execution and everything I've done up to now, since she didn't give me the proper education or guide me along the right path. When I was young, she didn't watch over me or prevent me from spending time with the wrong kind of people, which led me to the life I lived. She never reprimanded or scolded me for any wrongdoing on my part, wrongdoing that she heard of and saw for herself. Although she's crying over the death of her son, her tears are deceitful and serve no purpose! If she had shed true tears while I was growing up, and if she had reprimanded me, her tears would have broken my heart. Her words would then have done some good, for they would have prevented me from straying and helped to correct my attitude. What I've done to her, let it serve as an example and a lesson to all mothers! Let them make the education of their children their top priority, in which case they won't have to cry over their bitter fate."

We must educate our children with loving firmness. It is forbidden to neglect their education on account of pity, lack of time, or any other excuse.

Such is the lesson of this mitzvah. Although in practice it was never actually carried out, there is much we can learn from it in terms of education.

EISHET CHAYIL

When to Wear Her New Dress?

It's not every day that a woman purchases a new dress, at least not a hundred years ago. Wearing a new dress was a special occasion, a time for rejoicing.

In the childhood home of the gaon Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner Zatzal (the author of Pachad Yitzchak), his mother asked his father, given that she had purchased a new dress, when it would be best to wear it: On Shabbat, a holiday, or some other occasion?

The father of the young Yitzchak, who wanted his wife to be involved in her son's Torah and to be infused with a love for it, said to her: "Next week Yitzchak will finish tractate Bava Kama. You should wear your new dress at the siyum [completion ceremony]."

This answer filled his mother's heart with joy, for she realized that this dress, made from golden fabric, was being dedicated for the honor of Torah. As her heart overflowed with joy, she said to her son: "My dear, I'm going to wear my new dress next week for the siyum of your tractate." The young Yitzchak looked at his mother with such delight that a tear fell onto his Gemara and made a deep impression on her soul.

A TRUE STORY

Both the Dress and the Wages

It is written, “You shall not oppress a hired worker” (Deuteronomy 24:14).

The wife of Rabbi Zusha of Anipoli had given a tailor some beautiful fabric so he could make her a dress. When the tailor completed the dress and brought it to the Rebbetzin, he let out a deep sigh. When she asked him why he was so sad, he explained his problem: “My daughter became engaged not long ago, and her fiancé recently visited me and thought that the dress I was making was really for her. When he learned that he was mistaken, however, he became extremely upset.” The Rebbetzin immediately felt sorry for the tailor and gave him the dress as a gift for his daughter. When she recounted this story to her husband Rabbi Zusha, he asked: “Did you pay the tailor for his work?” Taken aback by this question, his wife said: “I gave him all the fabric as a gift. Do I also have to pay him for it?” Rabbi Zusha replied, “This poor man worked an entire week for you, not for his daughter. He impatiently waited for the job to be finished so he could bring you the dress and get paid. Now what will he buy his food with? If you were kind enough to give his daughter a gift, does that allow you to deny a worker his salary?” At that point the Rebbetzin immediately followed her husband’s instructions and paid the tailor all his wages.

– Hizharu B’Mamon Chavrechem

YOUR EYES SHALL BEHOLD YOUR TEACHER

Rabbi Tzadok Hacohen of Lublin

Rabbi Tzadok was born in 5583 to Rabbi Yaakov, the Av Beit Din of Kreisberg. From his youth he was known as a child prodigy, and by the time of his Bar Mitzvah he had already learned the entire Talmud. He engaged in Halachic discussions with the great Torah figures of his generation, men such as Rabbi Shlomo Kluger, Rabbi Yosef Shaul Nathanson, and Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan. However because of a certain incident, he was drawn to Chassidut and became the main disciple of the saintly Rabbi Mordechai Yosef of Isbitza, who in turn was among the greatest disciples of the Kotzker Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel (known as the Seraph).

After the passing of Rabbi Mordechai Yosef, the saintly Rabbi Leib Eiger (the grandson of the gaon Rabbi Akiva Eiger Zatzal) began to lead the Chassidic community. Rabbi Tzadok, who by that time was already a great Torah figure, placed himself in his shadow like a faithful servant before his master. He turned neither to the right nor to the left of what he said, and his teacher’s every word was like a sacred directive to him at all times. Rabbi Leib showed him a great deal of honor, and as a cohen he sometimes gave him the “gifts of priesthood.” In 5648, after the passing of Rabbi Leib Eiger, the chassidim put a great deal of pressure on Rabbi Tzadok to assume leadership of the community.

Rabbi Tzadok feared no man, and he brought many closer by the kind hand of Chassidut and the service of Hashem. He was a prodigious writer, and from his hand emerged dozens of profound books on the subject of philosophy. Among them are Pri Tzaddik on the Torah, Machshavot Charutz, Divrei Chalomot, Tzidkat HaTzaddik, Otzar Hamelech on the Rambam, Sichat Malachei HaSharet, Poked Akarim, Sichot Shedim, Levushei Tzedakah, and others. After serving as Rebbe for 12 years, Rabbi Tzadok Hacohen of Lublin passed away on Elul 9, 5660 and was laid to rest in the new cemetery of Lublin, Poland. May his merit protect us all.

THE DEEDS OF THE GREAT

The Decree of the Tzaddik

Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa had goats. On being told that they were doing damage, he exclaimed, “If they indeed do damage, may bears devour them. If not, may each of them at evening time bring home a bear on their horns.” In the evening each of them brought home a bear on their horns.

How did Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa have goats, given that he was poor? Furthermore, did the Sages not say, “We may not rear small livestock in Palestine?” Rabbi Pinchas said, “Once it happened that a man passed by his house and left hens, which the wife of Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa found. Her husband, however, did not allow her to eat of their eggs. As the eggs and the chickens increased in number he was very troubled by them. He therefore sold them and purchased goats with the money. One day the man who had lost the hens passed by again and said to his companions, “It was here that I left my hens.” Overhearing this, Rabbi Chanina asked him: “Have you any sign [by which to identify them]?” He replied: “Yes.” He gave him the sign and took away the goats. These were the goats that had brought bears on their horns.

Once a woman neighbor of Rabbi Chanina was building a house, but the beams did not reach the walls. She then approached him and said: “I have built a house, but the beams do not reach the walls.” He asked her: “What is your name?” She replied, “Aiku.” He then exclaimed, “Aiku, may your beams reach [the walls].” A Tanna taught: They projected one cubit on either side. Some say that new pieces joined themselves [miraculously] to the beams. ... Polemo says, “I saw that house, and its beams projected one cubit on either side, and people told me: ‘This is the house that Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa covered with beams by his prayer.’”

– Taanith 25a

IN THE LIGHT OF THE HAFTORAH

Sing Out, O Barren One!

It is written, “Sing out, O barren one, for not having born children” (Isaiah 54:1).

Should a woman sing for joy because she cannot have children? Rather, “Sing, O community of Israel, who resembles a barren woman, for not having born children...for Gehinnom” (Berachot 10a). Why does the Gemara focus on the expression “for not having born children” rather than on the word “barren”?

The Sages revealed to us that the Matriarchs were barren because Hashem wanted to hear the prayers of the righteous. However this is only because, after their prayers, they had children, a sign that the Holy One, blessed be He, desired their prayers. If they had not merited to have children, however, this explanation would be groundless.

Hence it is impossible to focus on the word “barren,” for it may be that the Creator desired her prayer, which would give her reason to rejoice. However if she has never given birth, should she rejoice? (Mahari Hacohen).

On this subject, the daughter of Rabbi Shemuel of Kaminka once went to see the tzaddik Rabbi Raphael of Bershad Zatzal for a blessing to have children.

Rabbi Raphael replied, “Joy is a segula for having children.” When the girl recounted this to her father, he said: “Rabbi Raphael learned this from the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. In the Torah it is written, ‘And Sarah laughed’ [Genesis 18:12], after which Isaac was born. In the Prophets it is written, ‘Sing out, O barren one’ [Isaiah 54:1], and in the Writings it is stated, ‘A joyful mother of children’ [Psalms 113:9]. That being the case, if Sarah laughed because it was a segula, then why was Hashem angry with her?”

Rabbi Shemuel answered, “We only need a segula when a tzaddik promises us something. However when the Holy One, blessed be He, is the One promising, we do not need a segula. That is why He was angry with Sarah.”