

A TESTIMONIAL FROM SHIMMY'S "ZEIDY"



Moishie is our fourth child. By the time he got married, I had already acquired quite a few hard-earned silver hairs in my beard. I had learned many of life's lessons the hard way and as I stood at his chupa, my prayers were more heartfelt than they had been at the weddings of my previous children. Maybe I had some kind of premonition that Moishie would be in need of his parents' prayers for quite some time.

We bought an apartment for Moishie and his wife in one of the far away cities and enjoyed their company for Shabbos once every few weeks. We had nachas seeing that they were happy and that things seemed to be going well for them.

Unfortunately, as more time passed, no matter how hard they tried to hide it, we saw that everything wasn't exactly fine and happy. We realized that under their smiling faces was a deep pain, a very deep and very raw pain.

B"H, we have other children. Moishie is not our youngest, nor our oldest. Meanwhile, there were simchas, new babies, brisses, etc, and we had much to be thankful for. Our daughter, 3 years younger than Moishie, got married and had a baby boy a year later. When Moishie and his wife served as *kvatters* at the bris, their pain was palable.

We are a close-knit, family-oriented type of family and really appreciate the times we spend together – Purim seudahs and Chanuka parties included. But one day I noticed that something was definitely putting a damper on these well-attended family

celebrations. I would be giving out Chanuka gelt and notice from the corner of my eye how Moishie "just happened" to be intently looking for something in the bookshelf or how his wife "just happened" to disappear, at that moment, into the kitchen or wherever. I so longed to be giving Chanuka gelt to Moishie's child too....

Then, there was the Seder night. Again, the whole family was gathered in their Yom Tov finery in our newly enlarged dining room, intended to make room to accommodate all the grandchildren. One by one, the grandchildren stood on their chairs, in order of age, to recite the *Ma nishtana*. What nachas, but also, oh, what pain! Moishie's eyes didn't look up from his haggada, but I didn't have to see them to understand that they were brimming with tears.

Last year, on Lag B'omer, we all went up to Meron. Our youngest son was cutting his three year old *bechor's* hair. Moishie and his wife were there, too, but I kept my distance. I couldn't bear to see him crying to Rebbe Shimon and begging for a child. I just couldn't take it. It's been six years already, six long years, which feel like an eternity for our Moishie. And here I am, a father that cares so much, loves so much and worries so much, yet feels so helpless. Is there anything more I could possible do?

I searched for a quiet corner in the crowd where I could cry unnoticed and direct my prayers to Hashem that in the *zechus* of Rebbe Shimon, we, too, would see our *yehsua*. Just then, I suddenly came across

the Bonei Olam booth that was distributing drinks to people on their way up to Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai's *kever*. Someone must have noticed that I looked like I needed some refreshment and presented me with a cup of juice. When I got closer to their booth, I realized that I could make a contribution to Bonei Olam for the famous "*Chai Rotel*" of beverage. I didn't hesitate for a minute. I made out a check to Bonei Olam and handed it over, hoping that Hakodosh Baruch Hu was "looking" and hearing my pleas for His help.

My story has the best possible ending. Three weeks ago, I attended the most exciting *bris* of my entire life. There was my Moishie, holding his firstborn son and no one held back their tears. Naturally, they named him . . . Shimon, what else?

Lag B'omer will be here this week again. Thousands of people will travel to Meron to *daven* for a *yeshua*. Some are *davening* for *shidduchim*, for health, for *parnassa*, and some are *davening* for their own little Shimon.

I want everyone to hear my story and to know that no prayer by Rebbe Shimon is wasted and also to remind people about the *segula* of *chai rotel* that brings so many *yeshuas*. And I want to wish you that you, too, will travel to Meron next Lag B'omer to sing praise and thanks to Hashem for all His kindness.■

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