

Good Shabbos Everyone. One of the greatest Tzadikim (righteous people) of recent history was the Holy Baba Sali, of blessed memory, who left this world almost 21 years ago. Of Sephardic descent, the Baba Sali was popular among all strains of Judaism. Chassidim, Sephardim, Litvish and even secular Jews flocked to great Rebbe for blessings, advice and requests that the Rebbe intercede with his influence in heaven to achieve a good outcome of the specific problem facing the petitioner. The following is just one of many of the Baba Sali's amazing stories.

One day, a woman and her teenage son came to see the Baba Sali in Netivot, a small town near Beer Sheva, in Eretz Yisroel, where the Baba Sali lived after moving from Morocco. Obviously theirs was a strained and tense relationship. Everything about the young man said "Rebell!" His appearance and attitude made it clear that he was neither studious nor religious. His long straggly hair and his wild, flashy clothing were dirty. It was apparent that there was turmoil and a frustrated rage within him.

From time to time mother and son would exchange curt sentences and the son would angrily tell his mother "leave me alone." Finally, it was their turn to see the Baba Sali, and Rav Eliyahu ushered them into the chambers of the great Sage.

The boy entered the room with hesitating steps. When he saw the Rav, his knees trembled and, even with his mother's firm hand in his, he could not calm down. The Baba Sali looked at the teenager with compassion and asked him to sit down.

With his mother not too far away, the trusty gabbai Rav Eliyahu said to the Baba Sali in Arabic: "The mother of this boy asks the Rav to bless her son with attributes that he lacks, through words of encouragement and strength, especially emphasizing the commandment of giving honor to one's parents."

The Baba Sali's eyes filled with tears while he listened to the request of the mother. As tears streamed down his cheeks he whispered to himself, "If my mother were alive, I would carry her on my shoulders, and dance with joy."

The youth heard this and shivered. After a moment he lowered his head between his hands and sobbed bitterly. With a tear-stained face he went outside the room to his mother and begged that she forgive him for the grief he had caused her. When the teenager had calmed down, the Baba Sali motioned for him to return to the room. He wanted to tell him a story.

Before we finish the story, let us discuss briefly the mitzvah of honoring one's parents. The Torah portion this week parshas Noach, tells of the shameful incident of Noach. Two of Noach's sons Shem and Yefes seek to minimize the shame of their father. Noach's third son Cham, however, takes advantage of his father's drunken state and violates him in the ugliest way. When Noach wakes up from his stupor to realize what Cham did, he curses Cham saying that he and his descendants are destined to be slaves. Noach then blesses Shem and Yefes for their honoring of him. Sufficed to say, that the Jewish nation descends from Shem - read Semitic.

We see from here the greatness of the mitzvah of honoring one's parents. Because, it is through one act of the mitzvah of honoring one's parents that generations were affected for better or worse. Let us now return to the Baba Sali...

When the Baba Sali was a young man both he and his older brother took care of their father, Rebbe Massoud. One day, when their father complained of certain pains, his older brother, David, turned to his father and said, somewhat rudely, "Why do you complain so, father?" In David's words and tone, Rebbe Massoud detected a trace of annoyance, and so he turned to his son and said, "Until this moment, I thought I had a diamond. I imagined that I had a holy son in you. I see that I was mistaken. Now I know that I've lost that diamond!"

When Rav David heard this, he was devastated. He decreed upon himself a punishment of leaving his father's house for one year. In this time, he would not speak to anyone and would not appear in public. He acted as one who has been ostracized from the community. He spent the year engrossed in prayer and studies.

At the end of the year, he went to the home of the governor of the city. The governor was very friendly with Rav Massoud. When Rav David entered the home of the governor, there was great excitement. Everyone knew that the year was over and that Rav David had not come to discuss mundane matters. The governor would be the first person that would break the silence of the Rav's son. Excitement sparked the visit.

"Sit with me and partake of something, son of my holy Rabbi," begged the governor. But Rav David refused the governor's request. "I cannot eat with you; please go to my father's house and, in my name, ask for my forgiveness."

The governor went at once to the house of Rav Massoud and told him what his son had said. "Now I know that I have truly brought up my son properly; he is indeed a true diamond, set in gold. Tell him that his sins have been erased!"

The governor returned to his home and relayed the message to Rav David. Rav David hurried to his father's house. And, from the door of the house, he crawled to his father on his knees. When he reached his father's side, he removed a knife from his tunic and, with tears streaming from his eyes, said, "Father, Father, see this knife? I am ready to be sacrificed if that is what you want."

Rebbe Massoud lifted up his broken son, held him and kissed him tenderly. Everyone around him stood silent at this moving scene.

The Baba Sali finished telling his story and a murmur of astonishment went through the youth, his mother and the gabbai Rav Eliyahu. The words of the Rav affected the boy deeply and he wept. The Baba Sali spoke again to encourage him and to console him on his past misdeeds. "If you promise that you'll change your ways, I will bless you with all good," said the Rav. "You will be happy with everything, if you obey and observe the commandment to honor your mother and father," he added.

From that time on, the boy changed completely and when he walked by, people applied to him the words of the Mishnah: , "Praiseworthy is she, who bore him." (From, Baba Sali, our Holy Teacher, C.T. Bari, p. 204) **Good Shabos Everyone.**