

Good Shabbos Everyone. Hashem tells us this week in Parshas Re'eh, "For you are a holy people to Hashem, your G-d and Hashem has chosen you for Himself to be a treasured people, from among all the peoples on the face of the earth." (Devorim 14:2) One of the definitions of the word "holy" is "separate, set apart." We are truly a nation which enjoys a supernatural existence, with an extra special supervision from above. The following amazing true story illustrates that we are a "holy people to Hashem."

The pain and frustration of not having children had taken their toll on Dovid and Sarah Goldwasser. They had tried nearly every medical procedure, visited with almost every top specialist and had of course spent much effort and tears at the holiest sites in Eretz Yisroel. But, alas, they were married twenty-two years and still did not have children.

The anguish would have crushed most people's spirits. But Dovid and his wife refused to give up hope and one day decided to go to Reb Chaim Kanievsky in Eretz Yisroel for a brocha - blessing. Reb Chaim was warm and caring, as well as sensitive to their needs. He asked a number of questions regarding whom they had gone to see and what procedures they had tried.

Finally, Reb Chaim looked at them and sadly explained that sometimes Hashem in His Infinite Judgment does not grant someone a child. The couple both sat silently, contemplating the words which Reb Chaim had spoken.

"But Rebbi, there must be something to do. There has to be—" Dovid's plea carried with it so much hurt and aching for a child. Reb Chaim thought for what seemed like an eternity and finally spoke. "Maybe there is a way. The Gemara (Shabbos 88b) speaks glowingly about someone who is able to endure the shame of someone embarrassing him and does not respond. Perhaps—" Reb Chaim spoke with a tinge of hope in his voice, "if you receive a berachah - blessing from a person who has endured humiliation and not responded in kind, then — maybe —"

It was all they needed. It was — if nothing else — a glimmer of hope. But the problem they now faced was how to find someone who has suffered embarrassment at the hands of another, not responded and is prepared to give them a berachah. They resolved to do whatever they had to, whatever would help them...

Baruch Lipnick and his wife Rifka gave their new apartment a final once-over and were pleased that they had found a home in which they would be comfortable. Relatively new to the Bnei Brak area, they were pleased that their apartment search had come to an end. But as they opened the door to leave, they came face to face with a middle-aged woman standing at their door. "You're not buying this apartment, are you?"

The couple looked at the woman and then looked at each other. Neither of them knew who this woman was and could not figure out what she could have possibly intended when she issued her warning about the apartment. "I happen to know for a fact that this apartment has had a curse placed on it."

This announcement piqued their curiosity and alarmed them. They did want to buy the apartment but not at the expense of a shadowy curse. "How do you know that the apartment has been cursed?" They did not doubt her claim, rather they were just inquiring to get the full story. She looked at the two of them and defiantly declared, "Because I'm the one who cursed it."

She went on to explain that she lived in a neighboring apartment and a previous owner of this apartment had built an extension which she felt intruded on her privacy, and therefore she had placed a curse on the apartment. The woman seemed to be overreacting but before they were going to buy the apartment they wanted to make sure that they were not doing anything wrong.

They approached Rav Nissim Karelitz and explained the situation to him. Rav Nissim smiled and totally dismissed the woman's ludicrous claim, and justified his decision by explaining that the previous apartment owners had been given a permit by beis din - Rabbinical Court to proceed with their extension; hence the woman's claim was completely unfounded and contrary to a ruling of beis din.

In fact, Rav Nissim concluded, he had been a member of that beis din. Based on their conversation with Rav Nissim, Baruch and his wife were relieved and decided to go ahead with the purchase of the apartment. Within a month they moved in and before long were completely settled.

Although they were happy in their new living quarters, they still hadn't made many friends in the area. And so, when they were invited to a local Bar Mitzvah, Baruch was happy that his wife would be able to meet some of the other women in the neighborhood.

But unfortunately his happiness at the prospect of his wife meeting new women from the neighborhood quickly turned into a nightmare. In the middle of the Bar Mitzvah meal, the woman who had cursed their apartment burst into the room. She looked around and when her eyes finally locked onto Mrs. Lipnick's she let loose with a tirade directed at Mrs. Lipnick and her husband, claiming that they were "liars and cheaters, insensitive and uncaring." The entire barrage lasted for only about 2 minutes, but it felt like an eternity. Mrs. Lipnick was mortified and was about to react to what had happened when someone tapped her urgently on her shoulder, "Please, I beg you, don't respond." Mrs. Lipnick turned toward the woman who had tapped her and realized that she had never seen her before. The woman introduced herself quickly as Mrs. Goldwasser and again begged Mrs. Lipnick not to respond. So Mrs. Lipnick sat there quietly and suffered the terrible shame and indignity.

The crazed woman finally left and Mrs. Lipnick sat in her chair, feeling humiliated. "Please allow me to explain..." Mrs. Goldwasser sat down next to Mrs. Lipnick and told her about the entire meeting with Reb Chaim Kanievsky. "I've waited four and a half years to meet someone like you and I beg you to give me a berachah for a child." Mrs. Goldwasser's eyes were filled with tears and so were Mrs. Lipnick's.

And with heartfelt emotion, Mrs. Lipnick blessed her newfound friend that her years of suffering should end. And miraculously, twenty-six and a half years after they were married Dovid and Sarah Goldwasser cried tears of joy as they held their newborn baby boy in their arms. (Touched by a Story, Reb Yechiel Spero p. 235) We are truly a nation which enjoys a supernatural existence, with an extra special supervision from above. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**