

Good Shabbos Everyone. This week's parsha Shlach describes many of the sacrifices which we were commanded to perform in order to gain atonement for misdeeds. The Sages tell us that these days, when we cannot bring sacrifices, we can attain atonement by giving tzedaka - charity. The following story illustrates this principle.

"Rebbe help please! My wife and baby are in terrible danger!" Pinchos ran into the Nadvornier Rebbe's shul in Tzefas crying bitter tears. His wife had been in labor for many hours, and the doctors had started to suspect that things were not going well. Her blood pressure had risen to a dangerously high level, and they told him that unless there were some drastic changes, both she and the baby were not going to make it.

The panic-stricken Pinchos begged the Rebbe to daven for him and his family. He could hardly control his emotions. The Rebbe looked at Pinchos and tried to calm him. Finally, he declared, "Pinchos, everything will be all right. I promise you. Everything will be fine!"

Although Pinchos was startled by the Rebbe's optimistic proclamation, he was not about to question it. He thanked the Rebbe and ran back to the hospital to be with his wife. Moments after he arrived, the doctors told him that they could not explain precisely what had happened, but that his wife's blood pressure was once again normal and she and the baby would be fine. Sure enough, an hour later his wife gave birth to a healthy baby boy.

The chassidim informed the Rebbe of the wonderful news, and the Rebbe wished them all a "Mazel tov." One of the more curious chassidim wondered aloud how the Rebbe could have possibly known that the mother and baby were going to be all right.

While some declared it a miracle, the Rebbe himself brushed this thought off as nonsense. Then, as the chassidim gathered around, the Rebbe began to explain how he knew that all would be well. It was a lesson they would never forget. "You see, a few days ago I was sitting in the front of the beis midrash when I noticed a poor person come into the room.

Pinchos was sitting in the back of the room, preparing for Minchah. We took out our siddurim, put on our gartlech, and began to recite Ashrei. "The beggar walked around the room, collecting. His face was an image of brooding and discontent. He obviously had a very difficult life. One by one, the men placed coins in his hand.

As soon as Pinchos placed a coin in the beggar's hand, however, there was a huge clattering of coins as they dropped to the floor, causing a commotion in the beis midrash. Everyone thought that the beggar had dropped the coins, but one quick look revealed otherwise. He had not dropped the coins, but had thrown the entire handful at Pinchos.

Besides the fact that the coins had hurt Pinchos, now everyone was staring at him. The man stared at Pinchos; it seemed as if his gaze would bore a hole right through him. None of the others said a word, hoping that the distraught man would just leave them alone, but it was not meant to be.

Suddenly, he lashed out at Pinchos with a verbal assault the likes of which they had never heard before. He was obviously channeling his anger at Pinchos only because he had been the last one to give a coin. The tirade lasted for a few minutes, with everyone looking on in horror. As the shul began to fill with more people, each individual who entered was treated to a whole new diatribe aimed at Pinchos. The man would ask them if Pinchos was always so cheap and despicable or if it was just this time. His invective tore through Pinchos' heart.

At this point, many tried to stop the beggar's unfair and unwarranted criticism. Everyone knew that Pinchos was one of the nicest and sweetest people in town. However, that day he demonstrated that he was more than just nice. He was a gibbor — a man of true might — and thus able to control himself in an unbelievable fashion. While everyone else was trying to get the man to stop, Pinchos sat there quietly.

The Rebbe continued telling the story to the large crowd. The next detail was the most amazing one.

"Then, Pinchos pulled out his checkbook and walked over to the beggar! .. "I am so sorry you felt that I was slighting you ... what would I be able to give you to help?"

The beggar himself was shocked. "Pinchos is not a wealthy man by any stretch of the imagination, but he felt the tzaar - pain of another Jew in a real way. He knew that this man lived a pathetic life and was terribly embarrassed after the scene he had created. He also knew that the yelling was not directed at him personally. Rather, the poor man was lamenting his own sad situation.

Pinchos wrote him a check for a sizable sum and wished him well, as he escorted him on his way." The Rebbe concluded, "The Gemara in Chullin (89a) tells us that the world is upheld in the merit of those who are 'bolem (seal)' their lips at the time of a quarrel, as the pasuk states, 'Toleh erez al bli mah — He suspends the earth on nothingness' (Iyov 26:7). I reasoned that if the entire world is upheld in the merit of these great individuals, then most certainly Pinchos' restraint would be able to save his wife and child." (A Touch of Warmth, P. 94, Reb Yechiel Spero) **Good Shabbos Everyone.**