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When Hair Grows On My Palm

This story was related by Reb Yehuda Leib Kramer, who established Beth Rivka and Pardes Chana in Montreal. Rabbi Kramer was personally involved in this story. The individuals' names have been omitted to protect their privacy.¹

A couple visited me many years ago. They poured out their hearts, telling me that they had been married for more than two years and had not been blessed with children. After some time, they had gone to a doctor, whose diagnosis was far from reassuring. He stated that due to a medical condition present in the husband, the couple would never be able to have children, G-d forbid.

The couple belonged to a traditional congregation and the husband had studied in the Lubavitch Yeshiva's afternoon classes as a boy. So now he came with his wife to see if I could help them with their problem.

"My opinion is," I told them, "that you should go to New York and have a *yechidus* with the Rebbe. Now, getting an appointment for a *yechidus* any time soon is not possible, but you have another option. It's almost Pesach, so you should travel to New York for Pesach—or at least for the second half of Yom Tov, and then, as guests, you will have the opportunity to join a *yechidus* after Yom Tov.

They listened to my advice and right after Pesach, when the guests entered the Rebbe's room for *yechidus*, they did so as well.

They told the Rebbe about their situation and asked the Rebbe to help them and bless them with a

child. The Rebbe gave them a *bracha* and suggested that they visit a certain doctor for an examination.

The couple made inquiries about the doctor and found out that he was away and would only be back in town in a week's time.

The husband, a businessman, wanted to hurry back to Montreal and his business—he did not want to wait in New York for the doctor's return. His wife, however, said, "No. The Rebbe told us to go to the doctor in New York, and so we must do that." They reached a compromise: They would meet Rabbi Hodakov, the Rebbe's *mazkir*, and do as he would tell them. Rabbi Hodakov met them and told them to write their question to the Rebbe.

So they wrote to the Rebbe: Seeing as the doctor will not be in town for another week, they wanted the Rebbe's opinion whether they should wait in New York or return home to Montreal. The Rebbe replied that they should go back to Montreal and visit a doctor there, and the Rebbe specified which doctor they should visit.

After receiving this answer, they returned to Montreal. The wife, however, was still troubled by the fact that they had not heeded the Rebbe's original instructions to visit the doctor in New York. They once again came to visit me and before they entered my office, I could hear them arguing about something. When they walked in, I asked them, "What happened? Why were you arguing outside?"

The wife replied that she still disagreed with her husband, and maintained that because the Rebbe told

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ומשפחתם שיחיו
שפאלטר

them to go to the doctor in New York they should have listened and done precisely that. "Yes, it would have been difficult to remain away for so long, but if we have to wait, we have to wait!" she said. "If we want to be helped, we need to put in the effort and go out of our way."

The husband's stance, however, was that the Rebbe told them that they could go see a doctor in Montreal, and doing so would be the same as going to the doctor in New York—so it would still be following the Rebbe's instructions.

What did they want from me? They wanted me to get them an appointment. They had called the doctor and he had refused to see them. As it turned out, the doctor was a close friend of mine, so I called him and said, "Listen, my friend. When the Lubavitcher Rebbe sends you patients, it should be a tremendous honor for you! But instead I'm hearing that you don't want to give them an appointment. I don't understand."

The doctor replied, "Rabbi, you know me very well. You know that I am a straightforward person. I know this couple came to Dr. ..., who shares an office with me. I know they came and I know this man can't have children. I don't want to take their money for nothing."

I replied, "That all makes sense and such an argument should be taken into account; but not when the Rebbe sends someone to a doctor. When the Rebbe sends a patient to a doctor, it is a totally different matter. You must see them and do what you can and they will be helped."

"What do you want?" the doctor asked me. "That I should make a miracle?" "No," I told him. "You don't have to make a miracle. You need to do what a doctor needs to do. Take them in for an appointment and examine them and Hashem will make the miracle."

"Alright, let them come to me," he finally agreed.

That same week, I happened to visit New York. I had the *zechus* of going in for a *yechidus* with the Rebbe and I told the Rebbe about my conversation with the doctor. The Rebbe told me, "I heard about this doctor and couldn't believe he could be so foolish as to think that I expect him to make miracles. Hashem will make miracles, and he has to do what he has to do."

The doctor took them in for an appointment, examined them, and reached the same conclusion: that they were unable to have children, G-d forbid. *Nu*, he did what he could.

Time went by. On Erev Yom Kippur I met the doctor and told him, "You know, doctor, in a few days I'll be officiating at the *bris* of that couple's newborn son." "Unbelievable!" the doctor exclaimed. "It can't be!" Showing his palm to me, he said, "Just like hair can grow on my palm, so can they have children! Impossible!"

"What do you mean, 'impossible,'" I asked. "Come, let's go to the *bris* together."

In time, that couple had many more children. **1**

1. Printed in *Reshimas Sippurim* p. 1.