

Change the World

“**A**nd (Hashem) said to him (Avram) ‘I am E-l Sha-dai. Walk before me and be perfect.’” (Bereshis 17:1). We know that Hashem has many names. Why did He choose to refer to Himself as “Sha-dai”? The Malbim zt”l explains that this name is a contraction of the phrase, “I said to world, ‘dai’ (enough).” He created the world, and then stopped the creation at a certain point. The world was not yet finished but Hashem said “dai”. Leave the world unfinished. Man will complete the job.

The name Sha-dai is used in conjunction with the *bris mila*. Just as the world was created incomplete, so too the man is created imperfect. His first mitzvah is *mila* - perfecting his physical body. He begins his life by fixing himself, and he continues throughout his days to fix and perfect himself and the world around him.

There is a famous story told about the Chofetz Chaim zt”l. When he was a young boy he wanted to change the whole world. He tried, but became frustrated. So, he revised his goal. He was only going to change Poland. He soon saw that this was also a bit too ambitious, so he decided to just change his little town of Radin. Alas, this also proved to be too much, so he decided to change just the Beis HaMedrash where he prayed and learned. He soon realized that the only person he was capable of changing was himself. So, he got to work. As we all know, he succeeded in becoming a big talmid chochom and a tzaddik. People began gravitating toward him and his Beis Medrash soon filled with people eager to learn from him. Soon, his name spread through Radin. The small town became a Torah center by virtue of the great tzaddik who lived there. Sure enough, the Jewish population of Poland began heeding the words of this tzaddik and *Godol HaDor* (Torah leader). He wrote many *seforim* (books). His masterpiece of *halacha* (Jewish Law), the *Mishna Brura* is used by *poskim* (halachic authorities) worldwide as the final word in

halacha. His works, “Chofetz Chaim” and “Shmiras HaLoshon” have revived the all-but-forgotten mitzvah of proper speech. It has become a cornerstone of *Avodas Hashem* (serving Hashem). His multitude of *seforim* cover all aspects of Jewish life, and anyone who wants information or inspiration on practically all aspects of Torah need only turn to him. Yes, Rav Yisroel Meir succeeded. He changed the whole world.

Kinderlach . . .

You can do it. You can change the world. Where do you begin? With yourself. See yourself as who you want to be. Who is that big tzaddik walking down the street? It is you --- 30 years from now. How do you get there? One mitzvah at a time. Wake up in a good mood. Pray well and get to school on time. Learn well and help your friends. Help Imma when you come home. Give Abba a warm welcome when he comes home. Go to sleep on time. Each mitzvah is another brick in the wall. You're building a big tzaddik. “Tzaddik yesod olam.” A tzaddik is the foundation of the world. Become a tzaddik. Change the world.

Beautiful Scent

“**Y**oel, how nice of you to come visit me.”

“My pleasure, Mordechai.”

“Come into the garden. We can relax outside in the shade.”

“Mmm... What is that beautiful smell?”

“That is my cinnamon tree, over there in the corner.”

“That small, old, dried-out tree?”

“Yes, that’s it.”

“How can an old tree produce such a wonderful aroma?”

“The cinnamon tree is unique. As long as you fertilize it and hoe it, the scent is beautiful. Even if it is old and dry. Why? Aroma is the spiritual ‘fruit’ of the cinnamon tree. It is not dependent on the age or strength of the tree. The cinnamon can be spiritually fruitful long after its physical strength has gone.”

“**I** (Hashem) have established a

cinnamon tree (Avraham Avinu) in the world” (Bereshis Rabba 46:2). He continues to produce spiritual fruits long into his old age. As his body grows weaker, his *yetzer hora* (evil inclination) weakens. Therefore, his *yetzer hatov* (good inclination) can prevail and produce beautiful *mitzvos*. The Malbim zt”l carries this one step further. Hashem wanted Yitzchak Avinu to be holy from birth. Therefore, he waited until Avraham was 99 years old and physically weak. He was weakened further by undergoing *bris mila*. Only in this frail physical state was his spiritual level strong enough to produce our holy forefather Yitzchak - the spiritual giant who was to father our nation.

Kinderlach . . .

Who doesn't love the sweet smell of roses? Or the freshness of carnations? How about the delicious aroma of fresh fruit? Or freshly baked bread? The world is full of wonderful scents. Kinderlach, we can produce something much better. Mitzvos. They are spiritual fragrances. But they are much more valuable than even the most expensive perfume. Give tzedaka (charity) and smell like a rose. Make peace with your brother and freshen the air in the home. Play properly and brighten the whole shul. Spread the beautiful scent of fresh mitzvos everywhere.

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