



HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

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The King's Garden: Understanding the Duality of Body and Soul

This week, we continue the series of ten Haftorot that are connected to the time of year rather than a haftorah thematically related to the weekly Parsha. The seven Haftorot that follow Tisha B'Av are known as the Shiva d'Nechemta, the Seven Haftarot of Consolation. This week's Haftorah is the third of the Haftorot of consolation.

וְכָל-בְּנֵיךָ לְמוֹדֵי ה' וְרַב שְׁלוֹם בְּנֵיךָ

And all your children shall be disciples of the LORD, And your children's peace will be abundant.

The Midrash Aggadah on Vayikrah 5:1 describes a dispute between the soul and the body. Each one claims innocence from sin - the soul blames the body for acting on the devious thought and the body accuses the soul of its nefarious plans. The Midrash offers a parable to appreciate the tension between the body and soul. A king has a garden with beautiful fruit trees. As he is worried that his workers will steal the fruit, he hires two watchmen - one who is blind and cannot see the beauty of the trees and one who is lame and is unable to easily move around. When the two men are left alone however, they come up with

a clever plan to steal the alluring fruit. "Climb up on my back", says the blind man to his lame partner in crime. "You will guide me and I will carry you and we will be successful in our mission". Together they are successful and steal the fruit. When the king realizes that the fruit was stolen, he calls the two guards and accuses them of the crime. Each one denies the accusation, the blind man claiming he can't see and the lame man saying he can't walk. The king, no fool, says, "Perhaps alone you would be unable to accomplish this heist but together...you certainly can."

This parable describes the relationship between the soul and the body, the Neshama and Guf. While each cannot act on its own, together they are able to sin. When Hashem will ask the soul why it violated the Torah strictures, the soul will claim that it was that the body sinned while the body will blame the soul. Hashem however recognizes that it was the two together that sinned and will judge the soul and body together as one. The Midrash cites our posuk in Yeshayahu to describe the ultimate and ideal soul and body relationship. When all of your

actions are as your children and are the teachings of G-d, there will be Shalom, peace between the soul and the body as they both engage in the holy mission of serving Hashem. With the month of Elul approaching let us work to this spiritual synthesis between body and soul and may all of our actions be the true teachings of Hashem and usher in an era of everlasting peace. ■



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Real Life Rescues

3-Days-Old Baby Chokes on Breastmilk, Saved by United Hatzalah Volunteer EMT

Tel Aviv - Just before 2 PM on Wednesday a 3-day-old newborn choked on breastmilk at an apartment in north Tel Aviv. The baby and her mother had just gotten back from the hospital that day, and the panicked new mother immediately alerted emergency services.

United Hatzalah volunteer EMT Jeremy Hirsch was shopping in a nearby Superpharm when his communications device beeped, notifying him about a baby choking in the area. While he was wearing flip-flops, a bathing suit, and a tank top, the volunteer did not hesitate to drop everything and respond to the call. "I usually don't go on calls when I'm dressed like this, but for a choking baby, I go no matter what," he later recounted. "I'm a father, and I know what it means."

He hurriedly left Superpharm and rushed on his bike to the apartment where the baby and his family were located, arriving just a few moments later. Upon approaching the building, Hirsch found the baby's mother anxiously waiting downstairs. He asked about the baby's condition and age. The mother said that her 3-day-old infant was still choking, causing Hirsch to spring into action with an extreme sense of urgency.

Inside the room were the mother, grandmother, and aunt, who was holding the baby in an upright position. Observing the infant's distressing condition, Hirsch noted, "Bubbles were coming out of her nose, she was conscious but not breathing, her skin was dark red and turning purple in the lower extremities."

Hirsch positioned the baby face down, making sure to always support the infant's head and neck, and prepared to perform the necessary back blows to clear the airway. Suddenly, Hirsch felt something warm on his hands.

"I looked down on my hands and saw white fluids and understood that the baby had just expelled some of the milk she had choked on," Hirsch explained.

Hirsch lifted the infant upright, and she began to cry and regain a normal color, signs of a cleared airway. As they waited for the intensive care ambulance to arrive, Hirsch handed the baby back to the mother and reassured her that the danger had passed and that the baby was safe once more.

The volunteer later said, "I respond to a lot of calls involving babies in my area. I had to perform the same maneuvers on my 6-month-old child once, and I know what it means for a parent to see their baby in this situation. I feel sorry that this is how this new mother's first day out of hospital after the birth looked like but am glad I was able to be there to help."