



## MAKING THE IMPOSSIBLE, POSSIBLE

*Erev Shabbos Parshas Vayera , 57823*

Dear Parents,

*Klal Yisrael* and especially the world of *Chinuch* lost a precious treasure this week with the passing of *R' Avi Shulman zt'l*. Mr. Shulman (he did not allow anyone to call him "Rabbi") was a First Grade *Rebbi* who taught generations of young boys and then expanded his enormous influence on generations of adults; parents and teachers alike, through his talks and writings.

***"One key to R' Avi's success was his belief in people's potential to accomplish great things."***

One key to R' Avi's success was his belief in people's potential to accomplish great things. He had the unusual blend of wisdom, personality and sincerity that motivated people to take risks and try things they otherwise may have thought were beyond their abilities. He promoted the concept of self-esteem before the concept was popularly known.

In this week's *Parsha* we see a hint of that *Midah* in *Avrohom Avinu*. As he was journeying towards *Har HaMoriya* to carry out *Hashem's* command to offer *Yitzchak* as a *korban*, the *Midrash* tells us (*Bereishis Rabbah 56:4*) that *Avraham* was repeatedly confronted by the *Satan* trying to dissuade him from his mission. *Avraham's* response to the insidious and pointed arguments of the *Satan* was to simply say: "– ועל מנת כן am doing it with this understanding," or in other words – I'm doing it anyway, no matter what you say.

*Our Rosh HaYeshiva, HaGaon Harav Henach Leibowitz zt'l*, asked why did *Avraham* not respond with his very legitimate reasons. The *Satan* was in essence claiming that *Hashem* did not really command *Avraham*, so why didn't *Avraham* respond to the *Satan* that *Hashem* did indeed command him? The answer is that when one is facing a dilemma, although in his heart he knows he should proceed, however since he can be easily dissuaded, the most effective next step is to move forward and not even engage with the nay-sayers.

People faced with a challenging task – be it public speaking, giving a shiur, accepting a responsibility, pursuing a job or career, applying to a school or program, writing a book etc. all too often give up without trying. They lack the self-confidence to push themselves to reach their goal. All sorts of "Satan" - type obstacles confront them along the way. This is where R' Avi Shulman zt'l came in.

***"People faced with a challenging task ... all too often give up without trying."***

He conceived of and successfully encouraged *Torah Umesorah* to undertake the SEED program, a novel concept at the time, which has provided summer enrichment for children and adults in a Torah atmosphere for hundreds of communities worldwide. It has now been around for fifty years and going strong. He was one of the first to promote and teach professional development workshops for *Rebbeim*. He encouraged hundreds if not thousands of young people to start new endeavors, take on new challenges, pursue dreams they thought impossible. His concern for others and *Klal Yisrael* did not stop there.

He took his own time and resources to actively assist those he encouraged, to prepare that presentation, refine that lesson, begin writing that book, all with good cheer, patience and usually with minimal or no compensation. He saw talent and abilities in others that the person himself did not see, appreciate or believe. He genuinely cared and wanted to hear how you were doing. It was his encouragement that enabled scores of *Mechanchim* and *Rabbonim* to accept and usually succeed in challenging positions.

***"... he saw, he encouraged and actively helped make the near impossible, an achievable goal."***

R' Avi Shulman was a master *Mechanech* and a dispenser of both wisdom and practical guidance through his myriad lectures, recordings and books. He was a parenting expert, a life coach and an eminently approachable cheer leader for anyone who had a willingness to stretch himself and attempt to move out of his safety zone.

As one of the countless many who so greatly benefited personally from his encouragement and insight, I am humbled by the opportunity *Hashem* granted me to be a recipient of support, Chizuk and knowledge from the great *Avi Shulman*. It is my hope and prayer that his legacy will be that every parent, teacher and child will learn to appreciate themselves just a little more and thereby achieve goals that otherwise would have gone unfulfilled.

יהי זכרו ברוך

Best wishes for an uplifting Shabbos,



Rabbi Kalman Baumann  
Principal