

SEGULOS

My teenage girls have gotten very into segulos, and each week, they inform me of something else that I 'must' do in order to merit hatzlacha, bracha and yeshuos. My own attitude towards these trends is cynical, but I am wondering if I should pass this on to them.

On one hand, they are excited and passionate, which is a good thing. On the other hand, I don't want them to be disappointed when their hopes aren't realized (or at least not due to these practices) and I have a responsibility to be mechanech them according to our mesorah.

I feel that this week's topic is more in the realm of *hashkofa* and *halacha* rather than *chinuch*, and has been debated by the *Gedolei Yisrael*. Who are we to mix into such *inyanim*? There are many *segulos* that border on superstition and therefore might even be completely *assur*. Some have absolutely no value as no one knows where they originated or what the *segula* is supposed to accomplish, such as the wearing of the red *bendel* which a lot of our teenagers are doing. It might have a negative effect because many children might rely on it for certain things to happen and when they don't, they are very disappointed. They are not mature enough to understand that everything we ask for, we do not necessarily receive. Their desire for instant gratification and quick results, is not attainable. We must work at what we are seeking and internalize the improvement needed in order to make it happen.

Segulas that are given by great people to individuals for their personal problems would fall into a different category as we find in *halacha* that a *kameya* made by a *mumche*, an expert, may be worn in *rishus harabim* on *Shabbos*. On the other hand, an amulet made by a novice, may not be worn on *Shabbos* because it is considered as carrying - *chilul Shabbos d'oraysa*. This is an example of a negative, useless, and ineffective *segula* which may lead us to contradict our *Torah* way of life.

Why not train our children and *talmidim* to follow and work toward *segulas* that are written in our *Torah* where *Hashem* promises us long life? And when *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* fulfills that *segula*, He is certainly not going to give us a miserable life. It will definitely be a life of *refuah*, *nachas* and *parnoso*. I am referring to the *segula* that we say everyday in the *Shema*. If we love *Hashem* " *bechol levavcho uvechol nafshecho* ", then *Hashem* will give produce from the land, and with it, *parnosa*. " *Velimadtam es bneichem* ", and if you teach your children *Torah* at all times and in all places, " *le'maan yirbu yemechem uvnei veneichem* ", you and your children will live long. We see clearly that to have a long, productive and healthy life, one must love *Hashem* and teach our children *Torah*. This is the best *segula* for a long life with health and *parnosa* – the *Torah*-given *segulas*. It is certainly more effective than a man-made one. You want long life? Then " *Kabed es Avicha v'es Imecha* ", says the *Torah*. However, this is a life-long project and not easy to come by. Instant *segulas* may seem easy and satisfying for our 'instant' generation but certainly do not have the same effect.

I heard from Rabbi Osher Mintz, the Rosh Kollel of Kollel Keser Torah in Montreal, that a great Rebbe once said that when one partakes in a *seuda* of a *Pidyon HaBen*, it is considered as if one has fasted for forty days, according to *Chazal*. Then, containing oneself from anger even one time, would be considered as if one fasted for a thousand *ta'aneisim*. It is the effort invested that counts. *Lefum tzara agre*.

A *Torah segula* and promise holds more value than an ambiguous unknown source which might be made up by a person who is in the red thread business. Are we then smarter than the *Torah* command of " *VeOhavta* ", and " *velimadetem osam es beneichem* "? Of course the *segula* that asks for more *davening*, *Tehilim*, and *kiyum Hamitzvos* will certainly be helpful as that is what *Hashem* wants us to do at any rate.

What I have written is based on my personal opinion and what I grew up with and has various applications. I have tried in the past to explain to many girls that the "red *bendel*" should be discarded. However, since it is in the realm of the unknown and much emotion is involved, I usually lost my case. I assume that their thinking was probably that it can't hurt and might help. *Shomer pesoim Hashem*.

I would therefore advise you to do what you can to discourage your children's *segulos* but not to make a big *esek* out of it. They should understand that it is not your *minhag* nor in your *mesorah* to have all these *segulas*.