

Hashem remembered Sarah as He had said...And she (Sarah) conceived. (21:1,2)

Rashi quotes *Chazal*, who explain the juxtaposition of Sarah's conception upon Avraham's prayer on behalf of Avimelech and his family. As punishment for Avimelech's abduction of Sarah, he and his household were subjected to a complete cessation of their reproductive functions. Avraham prayed for them and, in turn, was himself blessed. The inference is that, if one prays for another, if he himself is in need of that same cure/help, his prayers will soon be answered.

The *Tiferes Shmuel* interprets this statement with a slightly different twist, providing an important lesson. He reads the dictum in the following manner: If one prays for another as intensely as he would pray for his own personal needs, he will soon be answered. When a person shows that the concern he has for a fellow Jew is equal with that which he has for himself, then he merits a quick response from the Almighty.

"*V'ahavta l'reicha kamocho*," "Love your fellow as you do yourself." The Golden Rule is meaningful, but how many of us can say that we achieve this plateau? Can we say that when we pray for someone who is sick, that we expend as much *kavanah*, concentration and feeling, as if it were for ourselves? Avraham *Avinu* set the standard. He prayed for Avimelech, a gentile who had abducted his wife - as if he were praying for himself. This is the paradigm of *chesed*. Do not ignore your family - as a Jew, your family has just been extended. The concern you demonstrate for others is what you may come to expect from Hashem.