

Recipe for Success

The Chafetz Chaim's daughter once related the following story concerning her grandmother. She said, "My grandmother was not a miracle worker. I do remember that at the end of her life, after her son, my father, had become renown throughout the Torah world as the saintly Chafetz Chaim, a number of close friends approached her with the obvious question: How did you merit to have a son that illuminated the eyes of the world? What was your recipe for success?"

She replied that she could not remember anything that she had done that would have catalyzed such success. After they pestered her some more, she added that there was one small thing that came to mind. Prior to her wedding, her mother had asked to speak to her. These were her words: "My daughter, listen to what I have to say. We are commanded to raise our sons to study Torah and have yiraas Shomayim, fear of Heaven. Therefore, I ask of you that every free moment that you have, take your Siddur in hand and pray to Hashem that you merit to raise your children to be G-d-fearing and observant Jews who will devote themselves to Torah study. Do not forget to shed tears when you pray." She gave her daughter a Siddur in which Sefer Tehillim was included.

The Chafetz Chaim's mother continued, "That is all I did. Whenever I had a free moment, I would take out the Siddur and recite Tehillim, crying out my heart to Hashem that my Yisrael'ke would develop into a talmud chacham, Torah scholar, and a yarei Shomayim."

Upon relating this story, Horav Eliezer M. Shach, zl, would add, "Rashi's rebbe was Rabbeinu Gershom Me'or Ha'boleh. He was greater than Rashi. Yet, Rashi merited to become the Rabbon Shel Kol Yisrael, quintessential Torah teacher of the Jewish people. Why? Because of his mother, the tzadekes, who was the sister of Rabbeinu Shimon Hazekein m'Magence and because of his saintly father."