

DID THE GREAT RAV KADOURI CURE MY MOTHER?

The downtown Jerusalem roads are closed to traffic as over 200,000 mourners, Rabbis, politicians and TV personalities pay their last respects to Rav Kaduri who died yesterday from complications of pneumonia. The funeral procession marches from his run down hovel of a home in the Bucharim neighborhood to Har Hamenuchot, his final resting place.

Rav Kaduri is the last of a generation of Sephardi Jewish mystics. He wrote amulets to heal, enhance fertility and bring financial success and had a very high success rate in exorcising dybbuks. These services were available from his home and online.

Jerusalem is a haven for blessing. There are an abundance of healers and mystics that open their doors to the general public. The most well known are the Mezuzah Rebbe Rabbi Ben Tov, who checks mezuzah for blurry words and smudges. He believes that a mezuzah reflects ailments of the soul and thus by seeing which words are hazy, he can give a spiritual remedy. Another popular rabbi is the Amshinover. The only problem to seeking an audience with this zaddik is that he only sees people in the middle of the night. One has to wait in line from two o'clock in the morning when the rabbi has finished davening shacherit.

Twenty years ago, at the peak of my spiritual fervour, I remember standing outside Rav Kaduri's house with tens of people seeking blessing. We stood there in the relentless sun and waited and waited till the shammes came out to call our names.

I had gone to see Rav Kadouri for my mother z'l, who has suddenly taken ill. I wrote her name on a piece of paper and gave it to the shammes. The prognosis was that my mother had been afflicted with the evil eye. I had been warned that I might be given an unintelligible incantation as a blessing, but was fortunate that the Rav wrote an amulet for my mother's recovery and gave me three glass bottles filled with holy water for her to drink.

Getting the bottles over to London was the least of my problems. I soon found a shaliach, a fellow yeshiva student, desperate to perform a mitzvah who agreed to deliver the heavy load. I persuaded my mother to accept the amulet and suggested she wear it under her shirt, knowing how the appearance of this strange looking necklace, a square piece of cloth wrapped in masking tape hanging from a string would clash with her astute fashion flair. It was convincing my father, a staunch Litvak, that was the problem.

The supernatural didn't appeal to my father and as a follower of the Gaon of Vilna, the tradition in our family was not even to perform the psychodrama of Tashlich, throwing our sins into the river on Rosh Hashanah. Nevertheless, due to my passionate enthusiasm for the rabbi and his powers, I managed to get my father to agree to administer the medicine to my mother. Needless to say, she recovered quickly.

I can't help thinking that even though Rav Kaduri was 106 years old, his death is untimely. Surely we could do with his help warding off hatred from Hamas and the Arabs who voted for them, since the curse he put on Saddam Hussein seemed to have worked rather well. Or maybe we can rely on the powers of right wing activists who have taken credit for Ariel Sharon's coma claiming it is a result of the Pula Denura, the death curse they placed on him hoping to stop Disengagement. Personally, I hope Rav Kaduri will be pulling strings for us in heaven. Baruch Dayan Emet.

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