

Good Shabbos Everyone. The two American Yeshiva students Dovid and Chaim were on their way back from the airport near Tel Aviv. They had escorted a fellow student to the airport. As they sat on the "Sherut" (group taxi), on their way back to the Yeshiva in Jerusalem, each passenger descended at his destination until there were only three passengers left in the taxi.

"Can you drop us off at the Zichron Moshe shul?" Dovid called to the driver. "We didn't daven maariv yet." "No problem," the driver called back. "And maybe you know somewhere for this young man to stay the night?" Said the driver.

Dovid looked at the last remaining passenger. He had not really noticed him before. The young man appeared to be his own age. His features did not make him look particularly Jewish, but he was dressed like a Jew.

"Where were you planning on staying?" Dovid asked the young man. "I was going to go to the youth hostel, but they're very strict there. No one's allowed in after midnight. My plane came in hours ago," he explained, "and the curfew shouldn't have been a problem. But they thought I was some kind of terrorist—they interrogated me for over three hours at customs."

Dovid stuck out his hand. "Dovid Dwick. This is my friend, Avrohom Moshe. What's your name?" The young man returned the handshake. "Jeffrey Weinberg. I'm from California."

"So what brings you to Israel?" Dovid asked. "Oh, that's a story in itself! A few years ago, I had an early morning doctor's appointment at the hospital. Fortunately, I slept right through my alarm, and I was only awakened later by an earthquake. I found out later that the hospital building had collapsed, and there were a lot of casualties. Thank G-d I was safe! I pledged to myself right then that I would take a trip to Israel and find out more about G-d. "Recently, someone offered me a free ticket to Israel. I remembered my resolution, and I decided to take him up on the offer. So here I am."

The three young men continued talking as the driver made his way through the winding roads of Yerushalayim to Zichron Moshe. Jeff, they learned, had a brother learning at Yeshiva Kol Yaakov, a baal teshuva yeshiva in Monsey, NY. Dovid relaxed a bit—at least the young man was Jewish! Jeff seemed like such a refined fellow. So, after a silent conference with Avrohom Moshe, Dovid invited Jeff to spend the night in their rented apartment. That night, the two young men invested their remaining energy to inspire Jeff with stories of life as a Torah-true Jew.

The next morning, Dovid and Jeff embarked on a tour of the Holy City. The Mirrer Yeshiva was the first stop. Jeff attended a university with a student body of over twenty thousand, but the sight and sound of thousands of young men delving into Torah study dwarfed anything Jeff had ever seen.

"Next stop—the Western Wall!" Dovid announced. "It's the last remainder of the Holy Temple, where G-d's presence is the strongest." Jeff was moved by the elevated atmosphere at the Kosel. He eagerly agreed when Dovid offered to put tefillin on him. As Dovid wound the leather straps, he offered up a silent prayer that Jeff would find his way to Torah and mitzvos.

Following up on his thoughts with positive action, Dovid led Jeff up the steps to Aish HaTorah - the famous yeshiva for Jews with little background in Torah learning. Upon inquiry, Jeff and Dovid were directed to the heritage office, where Jeff was whisked away while Dovid was ushered in to meet with the rabbi in charge.

"So where did you find this guy?" the rabbi asked. Dovid told him about their providential meeting in the taxi on the way home from the airport. "He seems like such a refined person." The rabbi agreed. "From the little I saw, he appears to have a lot of potential. But is he Jewish?"

"I assume so. He told us his brother is a baal teshuva. He learns in Kol Yaakov in Monsey." Said Dovid.

"Okay, so we'll put him in our youth hostel. Their primary goal is to place him in a yeshiva that's appropriate for him."

Two weeks later, a call from the youth hostel director took Dovid by surprise. "The guy you sent us is not Jewish." Dovid was confused. "But how about his brother, the baal teshuva?" "We checked him out," the director answered, "and it turns out that his brother is a convert. We discussed the issue with Jeff. You and your friends impressed him so much, he wants to stay in yeshiva." Dovid had a long discussion with Jeff, and Jeff said that he wanted to live the life of a Jew, and nothing was going to deter him. Jeff did stay on in the yeshiva, and after intensive study, converted to Judaism. He reached great heights in his learning, dedicating many hours of the day and night to Torah study. And he achieved another one of his dreams—to join the thousands of Jews immersed in Torah in the Mirrer Yeshiva. Dovid has kept in touch with Jeff, now known as Ovadyah, throughout his journey to Torah. So when Ovadyah became engaged to a baalas teshuva, Dovid was one of the first to hear the news. "Wish me mazel tov!" Ovadyah announced joyously over the phone. "I'm a chosson! (engaged)

"Mazel tov, mazel tov, that's wonderful news! If there's anything I can do to help you out, please let me know." Said Dovid. Though Ovadyah didn't say anything, Dovid realized that Ovadyah really could use his help. After all, he needed to make a wedding and set up a new home. Dovid decided to help him get the funds together, to start Ovadyah off on the right foot. Dovid wasn't the only one to help Ovadyah. R' Chananya Beck was a rebbe in a cheder, who was not particularly wealthy himself.

Unfortunately, R' Chananya had been married for a number of years without any children, and he was always on the lookout to help others, in hope that Hashem would help him. When he heard about Ovadyah and his upcoming wedding, he jumped at the opportunity. R' Chananya scrimped and saved, denying himself the slightest luxury in his eagerness to supply Ovadyah with everything he needed. When the big day finally arrived, R' Chananya walked Ovadyah down to the chupah with tremendous joy. Today, Ovadyah has a family and has dedicated his heart and soul to Hashem and His Torah. He works actively to help others find the path to Torah and mitzvos. Within a year of Ovadyah's marriage, R' Chananya Beck became a father. And as if that wasn't payment enough, R' Chananya also won a lottery valued at ten million shekels! (Reb Yosef Weiss, Visions of Greatness #7 p.49) We see from this story how the Jewish nation is guided by Divine Providence. We find support for this concept in our weekly portion. Hashem tells us, *"You shall be holy for Me, for I Hashem am holy; and I have separated you from the peoples to be Mine."* (Vayikra 20:26) Hashem cares about the Jewish nation, because, as the above verse states, we belong to Hashem. Hashem, as it were, has invested in us and therefore we can say Hashem wants us to succeed. In order to help us achieve our spiritual mission in life of performing the mitzvahs, Hashem guides us along the way. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**