

Good Shabbos Everyone. As we enter the Jewish month of Elul, we begin to increase our spiritual growth and improvement. It is especially important at this time to look back at the year gone past and to ask ourselves: What have my spiritual accomplishments been? What are my spiritual failures? As we approach judgment day on Rosh HaShana, we must make sure to correct all of our spiritual missteps and to resolve to be better in the coming year. The Torah tells us this week, "You shall be "tamim" with Hashem your G-d." (Devorim 18:13) "Tamim" can be translated as "whole, flawless, perfect, honest, upright." In order to learn a relevant spiritual lesson, we will read the above verse to say, "You shall be perfect with Hashem your G-d." The mystical Torah teaches us that every mitzvah gives life to a different part of the body. When one violates the Torah, he therefore damages the spiritual power in the part of the body which did the offending deed. For example, when one violates the mitzvah of Lashon HaRah, (speaking ill of others) he damages the spiritual force in the mouth.

Therefore, when the verse tells us "You shall be perfect with Hashem your G-d" it is possible to say that the verse is telling us to do teshuva – to correct our spiritual wrongdoings. Because, when one does teshuva, he repairs the spiritual damage he has done to himself. So, only after teshuva – correcting one's ways, can one's soul be complete or 'perfect' in its relationship with Hashem.

Amazing stories of divine providence have a tremendous power to awaken our hearts to do teshuva. Because, if we can internalize the idea that Hashem supervises the entire world, then it will be easier for us to want to do teshuva. Because, through amazing stories such as the following, we will know with a certainty that nothing goes unnoticed in heaven...

A group of four frum (religiously observant) businessmen from Cleveland had arranged to travel together by plane early one Sunday morning to a New York City trade show. It was Rosh Chodesh Elul (the first of the month of Elul). One of the businessmen Reb Mordechai, had assured the others that, provided their plane landed on time at LaGuardia Airport in New York City, they would be able to catch any of a number of minyanim for Shacharis (the morning prayers) in Manhattan and still be at the trade show when it opened at 9:00 A.M.

R' Mordechai was supposed to pick up the others at 5:00 A.M. to catch the flight an hour later. But he overslept, and at 5:30 his brother, a second member of the group, came frantically to his house to see what had happened. R' Mordechai awoke with a start and told his brother to get the others and go without him; he himself would have to make the next plane. The three others made their way to the airport as R' Mordechai frantically put his things together, dashing around to find his tallis, tefillin, attache case, trade samples and car keys. Equipped with a cup of coffee and his radar detector, he drove with abandon and got to the plane just as the doors were about to be closed. The others were surprised that he had made it.

The plane took off from Cleveland's Hopkins Airport in perfect weather. But shortly after the flight was in progress the captain announced that he had just been informed that there was a thick blanket of clouds and fog enveloping the New York City area. He promised the passengers to keep them informed of any developments. The men began to become apprehensive, for they had not really left much time to get from the airport to a minyan and still be on time to the trade show.

The flight continued as passengers tried to figure out alternate ways of getting to their destinations if they couldn't land in New York. Soon the captain's voice came over the intercom again. The news was not good, he announced. The fog had traveled westward over the New Jersey border, and not only was it impossible to land in New York, it would be dangerous even to attempt a landing at Newark Airport. They would have to land further south - in Washington, D.C.

On board with these businessmen was a small group of chassidim. They had come to spend Shabbos in Cleveland Heights with their rebbe, Reb Mechele, and were returning to New York that morning as well. When the plane landed in Dulles Airport, in the nation's capital, the chassidim and the businessmen decided that perhaps they had better form a minyan right there, for by the time they could catch a connecting flight and land in New York, the time for reciting Shema would be long gone. They counted to see if they had ten. Indeed, the chassidim were six, and then they counted the businessmen: one, two, three - and R' Mordechai made four! They had their minyan -and only because R' Mordechai had caught the plane!

A member of the airline personnel designated a corner of the waiting room where they could say their morning prayers. The ten men congregated there, each in his tallis and tefillin. All this was in perfect view of any passersby who could watch the proceedings through the glass partition behind which the men stood.

As they were saying Hallel, a well-dressed man slowly and hesitantly walked into the area where they were davening (praying). A few heads turned to see what he wanted. "Would you mind if I said Kaddish?" the man asked softly.

One of the businessmen, R' Yankel, was taken aback. The man hardly looked Jewish. How did he even know about Kaddish, and what did he want with it? It was then that R' Yankel noticed that the man was wearing a black ribbon on his lapel.

R' Yankel motioned to the man to wait for a few moments and he did so. At the appropriate time R' Yankel went over to the man, gave him a prayer book and a yarmulke, helped him put on a pair of tefillin and said, "You may begin the Kaddish." The man looked around uneasily, then began. "Yisgadal veyiskadash ..." he whispered, and burst into tears. He regained his composure and continued, "... shemei rabbah ..." The men answered "Amen" with reverence. The gentleman struggled through the remainder of the words, as the men of the minyan helped him get through the entire Kaddish.

When he finished, he nodded his head in thanks and asked, "Is there another one to recite later?" They told him that there was. He waited patiently and then after the davening they motioned to him once again to begin. And once again as he said the Kaddish he burst into tears. All in the minyan could not help but be touched by the sensitivity and sadness of the man.

When Shacharis (the morning prayers) ended, one of the chassidim went over to the gentleman and introduced himself. After a few moments of conversation the chassid said, "I couldn't help but notice that you were so emotionally torn as you prayed. Is everything all right with you?"

It was then that the gentleman told this incredible story. "You see," he began, "my father died just a few days ago, and last night he came to me in a dream and said to me, 'Robert, how come you're not saying Kaddish for me?'"

"In my dream I replied, 'Dad, I hardly know how to say Kaddish, and besides, there are no synagogues where I live and I am always traveling:

"I need you to say Kaddish,' my father insisted to me. I kept repeating that I just could not get to a place where I could say Kaddish for him. It was then that he asked me, 'But what if I send you a minyan? Would you then say Kaddish?'"

"Of course I would,' I replied, and that's when I woke up. I couldn't believe that dream. I was trembling as I awakened. As I was getting dressed I managed to convince myself that there was really nothing to that dream. But then I came to the airport to catch a flight, and there, to my unbelieving eyes, were all of you praying in a minyan -in the minyan that was obviously meant for me!" (R. Paysach Krohn, p. AROUND THE MAGGID'S TABLE)

Hashem supervises all of the Creation. Hashem has kept an exact accounting of all our deeds. Let us use this time before Rosh HaShanna wisely, to repair our spiritual missteps. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**