

**Good Shabbos Everyone.** This week's Torah Portion Vayakhel, speaks in detail about the splendidly constructed Mishkan, the portable tabernacle wherein the Bnai Yisroel served Hashem in the wilderness. Today we are sadly lacking the Bais Hamikdash, however, Hashem did not leave us "empty handed;" today we can serve Hashem through davening - prayer. Prayer means different things to different people, but for most people, prayer can be a tremendous source of strength in life. The following amazing true story involving prayer and the mitzvah of tefillin, illustrates this concept.

Chaim used to take the subway with four of his friends to the sky-scrapers in the heart of Manhattan and go visiting offices one after the other looking for Jews that perhaps wanted to put on Tefillin.

Generally they got positive responses and a few Jews even put Tefillin on for themselves. But one law firm was like an impenetrable iceberg.

The non-Jewish lawyers at that particular firm were friendly and good humored but the Jewish ones had no time. And those that might have been interested were quickly discouraged by the head of the firm. He was a no-nonsense every-moment-is-precious hard as nails attorney that was worth several hundred dollars per hour. When he was anywhere in the office, even in his room, there was no chance that our heroes could even pass the front desk. And if the boss chanced to come out of his office he would have them evicted; he'd mumble something to the receptionist on the way to his room and in a few minutes she would politely ask them to leave.

This went on for about a half a year, the yeshiva bochurim made zero headway but they didn't give up. In any case it was only one of the offices on their route and some Jews have to be asked a thousand times before they agree. At least they would get in the first few hundred.

One Friday they arrived just as their subway was pulling out and were waiting for the next to come when one of the vendors there, a Mexican fellow who set up a table and sold pens and other small items, approached them, pointed to Chaim, held up a black tie and said, "You need a tie."

"No thanks." Chaim said politely. "But thanks anyway." "No, NO!" The Mexican insisted "You NEED a tie. You are an important person with a white shirt. Such a person need a tie. Here I sell you the tie for less. I give you a reduction. Five dollars instead of seven. Good? Take it!"

"Nope! Sorry. I don't want a tie!" Chaim protested calmly. "But thanks anyway. Okay? But sorry. I don't want it!"

But the fellow wouldn't take no for an answer. For the next five minutes he kept it up. "This tie is just for you! If you wear it you will look good! I know what I am saying. You need it." etc etc.

Chaim tried to protest more assertively, "Hey! I don't have money for a tie, okay? But to no avail. The Mexican was not giving up. Finally Chaim's friends decided the only way to get rid of him was to simply buy the tie. Each put in a dollar, gave the man the five dollars and Chaim took the tie happy to finally have a little peace and quiet. "Okay?" one of the bochurim said to the salesman: "Now are you happy we bought the tie. Okay?"

"No, NO!!" The salesman said. "I'm not happy! You must WEAR the tie! What, you think I sold for me the tie? No! it's for you! You MUST wear it. It will make you look good. See?" As he grabbed for the tie.

"Look," Said Chaim exasperatedly, "It's my tie now and I'll do what I want with it. If I want I don't have to wear it. Okay! Plus I am not good in making a tie."

"Oh! No problem!" he answered "I show you how to tie it. Here, look. Give me the tie, bend over a bit ... I put you collar up like this.

See! And before Chaim knew it the fellow had done it! Chaim was wearing a tie! (thinking to himself that as soon as he gets on the train he'll take it off.)

But the salesman knew his business. "Ahh! It is beautiful!!" he stepped back and said admiring his own work. "Now you must promise me that you won't take it off." "What? You mean I can't have to wear it the rest of my life?!" They all laughed including the salesman. Chaim was wondering why the Subway was taking so long.

"No no!" he answered. "Just promise me you will wear it today. So you give it a chance. Good? Promise? You see it looks so beautiful! You must promise!" "Listen" Chaim said "Who are you anyway? Did my mother send you or something?" But for some reason he suddenly blurted out "Okay! Okay! I'll leave it on today."

At that moment the subway came roaring in, they all got on and twenty minutes later they were in Manhattan involved in putting Tefillin on Jews and forgot the Mexican and the episode with the tie.

Finally came the turn of the 'ice berg' law firm. They got out of the elevator on the fifteenth floor, entered the large marble-floored reception room and smiled at the receptionist.

A few of the gentile lawyers passed them by and said hello as they rushed from room to room. Then appeared .... the boss! "Who are they?" he said to the receptionist. Then, not waiting for an answer turned to them and said sternly, "Who are you? What do you want here?"

"We're from the Lubavitcher Rebbe and we came to see if there are Jews here that want to put on Tefillin," one of them answered, preparing to get evicted as usual. He looked at them silently for a second or two like a wolf about to pounce on his prey, pointed at Chaim and said: "YOU! I want you to follow me!"

It didn't look good. After all, this guy knew all the laws. He was the head of the firm! It could be that somehow they were trespassing. Maybe he would call the police. But Chaim, without thinking too much, followed him down a wide, highly polished corridor into his plush office. The lawyer closed the door behind them, turned to Chaim and said. "I want to put on Tefillin."

After a few years of outreach nothing really surprised Chaim anymore and after five minutes he had finished putting on tefillin with the Attorney. "You probably want to know why I put on Tefillin, right?" The attorney asked. "Well, I'll tell you." "I might look like a successful man but the fact is I'm having several big crisis in life. Our firm is loosing several very big cases and suffering other financial setbacks. Not only that but I'm having some personal problems as well. I'm not used to being on the helpless side but I needed help. I didn't know to whom to turn, I mean, someone who really cared. As lawyers, we live a pretty cold life sometimes.

"Then, yesterday I happened to see one of the cards you fellows left here with the Lubavitcher Rebbe's picture on it and it struck a note. I began to wonder if perhaps he could do something. After all, I did put on Tefillin after my Bar Mitzvah for a while.

"Anyway, maybe you won't believe this but last night I had a dream. "I dreamt that I saw the Lubavitcher Rebbe. He smiled and I asked him if he could help me. He answered, 'But I send you a group of young men every Friday with Tefillin!' To which I replied. 'What, those ragamuffins? They look terrible, like a bunch of bums! Why none of them even wears a tie!'"

"Then the Rebbe looked at me and said 'You want a tie? Okay, I'll send someone with a tie! And I woke up.'" "So when I saw you with a tie I knew that it wasn't only a dream." The attorney began putting on Tefillin regularly and a close friendship developed between him and the fellows. He gained great solace from his daily "ritual" of putting on Tefillin and davening to his Creator. As far as anyone knows his problems were alleviated! **Good Shabbos Everyone**