

Good Shabbos Everyone. Last week we began telling the amazing true story of how a fellow lawyer and I were trying desperately to get to Eretz Yisroel in time for Shabbos. In route to the Holy Land on early Friday morning, our plane experienced some sort of trouble and we had to make an emergency landing in Rome.

By about 10 am they fixed the plane, however, by the time we were actually ready to take off, it was about 1:00 p.m. Eretz Yisroel time, and Shabbos was to start just after 4:00 p.m. and the flight was supposed to take about two and a half hours from Rome. The pilot announced that he could not guarantee exactly what time the plane would arrive in Eretz Yisroel, and therefore, anyone who was concerned about arriving in time for Shabbos should consider deplaning and remaining in Rome, although Continental would not take any responsibility for anyone who chose to do so.

Shraga Feivel and I made a "cheshbon" an accounting... We figured that at the worst, we could spend Shabbos the airport in Tel Aviv and at least there we could have kosher food. But staying in Rome would be risky, because we didn't know our way around and we didn't know the language and who knows where we would end up for Shabbos. It seems that our fellow Jewish passengers agreed with us and thankfully, none of them chose to deplane. If they had, our flight would have been even more delayed because it is well known, that a plane will not take off carrying the baggage of a person who is not on the plane (due to security concerns.)

In any case, the plane finally took off and the rest of the flight to Eretz Yisroel was uneventful. We watched the clock carefully. Every minute counted! We ended up landing a few minutes after 4 pm local time, mere minutes before candle lighting. It is important to note that while in America candle lighting is generally at 18 minutes before sundown, the custom in Eretz Yisroel is to light candles even earlier, usually about 30-40 minutes before sundown.

While the airplane was taxiing, I turned on my cell phone and attempted to call a friend in Ashdod, thinking that maybe we could make it close to him in time and walk the rest of the way. Thankfully, he didn't pick up, because there are many more closer places than Ashdod to the airport. I called a friend in Yerushalayim and his wife picked up. She was holding the match in her hand ready to light the Shabbos Candles! She told me to forget about Ashdod and to go to Bnai Brak.

Continental was courteous enough to announce that the Shomer Shabbos passengers should be given a preference when exiting the plane. Thankfully most of the passengers obliged. Once off the plane, Shraga Feivel and I hit the ground running, literally. When the security personnel saw me rushing off the plane, they parted like the splitting of the sea.

Anyone who has been to the new airport in Tel Aviv knows that it is a long way from deplaning to the passport control. Shraga Feivel and I both had one carry- on bag. We ran the whole way. Between my panting for breath I kept saying to myself quietly "Shabbos Koydesh" - the "Holy Shabbos." I had had nightmares many times of being stuck somewhere around sundown time before Shabbos, and now, it was really happening. Finally, we made it to the passport control. After a short wait, we made it through.

I told Shraga Feivel that we would have to leave our luggage there because there was no time. He didn't have anything to wear for Shabbos, but I told him that that was the least of our worries. We ran out to the street towards the taxis. I jumped into a waiting taxi but was quickly rebuffed by the driver who chastised me for not waiting in line. (Boy, has Israel changed over the years!) I kept running towards the last taxi in the line of taxis and amazingly, I found just what we needed... an Arab cab driver. It was truly one of the miracles of the day, for it would have been very tricky to drive so close to sundown with a Jewish (non-observant) driver, because he would no doubt have to violate Shabbos to drive away from wherever he would take us.

In short order, Shraga Feivel and I, along with a couple the Benders from Lakewood jumped into the Arab's cab and... what do you know? The Arab cab driver also refused to take us because we didn't wait in line!!! Thankfully, a police officer was there and understood what was happening and he told the cabbie to take us. The driver protested a little more but finally agreed to take us. He drove like a maniac to Bnai Brak, racing against the clock. On the way, I was able to call home to tell my wife what happened. We made it to the Bnai Brak in record time. It took us about 34 minutes from the time we landed to the moment we were standing on the street next to the bridge which leads into Bnai Brak! At first the cabbie didn't want to take dollars, and we had no shekels. Finally he relented and took the dollars. The streets

were closed already for Shabbos by then and he let us off by the bridge by the highway across the street from the Coca Cola plant in Bnai Brak. The streets were full of young people wearing their Shabbos finest. We were an odd sight, carrying our luggage on the street at that time. Initially we planned to walk with the Benders to the Vishnitz area, where they had friends who could put us up for Shabbos. However, on the way, a kindly Bnai Brak resident asked us if we had where to stay. I told him no, and he promptly invited us to stay with him for Shabbos. We accepted and parted ways with the Benders.

We went straight to the apartment of a neighbor so that I could borrow a Bekishe - a Shabbos coat, which I had sent in my luggage under the plane. (My shtreimel and a shtievel I did have, thankfully). The neighbor of our host was surprised to see us carrying what we were carrying at that late hour and I hurried into one of his rooms where I unloaded my "muktzeh" items (forbidding to handle on Shabbos) onto his floor. Among the things I dropped there was a large sum of cash and my passport. It was amazing, here I was emptying my pockets onto the floor of a person I never saw before in my life!

When I went upstairs to our host, I saw that Shraga Feivel was busy trying on the host's Shabbos suit. Miraculously, the suit and even the host's shoes fit. It was also a miracle that our host happened to wear a short suit on Shabbos like Shraga Feivel does.

Still wanting to catch a mikvah that day (it is the custom of Chassidim to go to the mikvah daily, as well as on Erev Shabbos), Shraga Feivel and I walked to a nearby mikvah. We managed to go to the mikvah, then daven mincha and still daven with a minyan Kabbalas Shabbos and Maariv! By the time we walked home after davening to the host's house, we were walking on air. We were shaking our heads in disbelief that we had actually made it! It was not exactly the Shabbos we had planned, but we made it! Kiddush had a special meaning that night, and I was very moved by the words I recited over the cup of wine. "And Hashem blessed the seventh day and He sanctified it..."

Besides the fact that we had barely eaten the entire day, we were thankful to be eating a hot Shabbos meal, instead of subsisting on dry bread, potato chips and nosh like the 9 passengers who we later learned were unfortunately left stranded in the airport in Tel Aviv. (Some had waited for their luggage others just couldn't handle the rush...)

We tremendously enjoyed Shabbos in Bnai Brak. Our host's hospitality was unforgettable. When I told him that I would be memorizing the event in my weekly publication, he asked to remain anonymous. On Motzoi Shabbos, I snapped a picture with Shraga Feivel (on the left) and our host. I partially obscured the host's face to protect his identity! (so he shouldn't be inundated with guests for



Shabbos!) Motzoi Shabbos we picked up our bags in the airport. The rest of trip was amazing. We experienced a true spiritual uplifting from the events surrounding that Shabbos. We hope not to descend from the "aliyah" we experienced then. We have told this story this past two weeks in the hope that those who read it will be influenced not to "test it," i.e., to avoid flying so close to Shabbos.

The importance of Shabbos is evidenced by the fact that Shabbos appears in the Ten Commandments, which is the seminal creed of the Jewish people. As we read in this week's parsha Yisro in the fourth commandment: "You shall remember the Shabbos day to make it Holy. Six days you shall work and you shall do all of your labor. But the seventh day is Shabbos for Hashem your G-d, you shall not do any work..." (Shemos - Exodus 20:9) Many people are willing to accept upon themselves the Ten Commandments. However, one who does not keep Shabbos is only observing nine of the Ten Commandments. (Shabbos, Rav Aryeh Kaplan)

The Sages have told us in many places about the greatness of Shabbos. For example, "Whoever is careful with Shabbos observance will be forgiven for all of his sins, even idol worship." (Ibid, citing Shabbos 118b) And, "Respecting Shabbos is greater than fasting 1000 days." (Ibid., citing Tachuma, Bereishis 3) Also, "Whoever takes pleasure in the enjoyment of the Shabbos will be granted all his heart's desires." (Ibid., citing Shabbos 118b) And, "Observing Shabbos is equal to fulfilling all the mitzvahs of the Torah." (Ibid., citing Pesikta) And, "Proper observance of just one Shabbos is equal to having observed every Shabbos since the time of Creation." (Ibid., citing Mechilta, Ki-Sisa 31) **Good Shabbos Everyone.**