

TORAS REB KALMAN



סיפורי צדיקים

Captivating stories full of Yiras Shamayim taken from Shmuessin that Reb Kalman Krohm z'tl gave in Adelpia Yeshiva

An Audience with the King

Yehuda felt a special connection to Shabbos, and worked on himself to elevate Shabbos and to observe the holy day in the loftiest of ways. He kept his mind determinedly focused only on inyanim of Shabbos, not allowing his thoughts to wander to mundane matters. Sleep? How could he sleep on Shabbos, the holiest day of the week?

In his efforts to honor the Shabbos as best as possible, Yehuda accepted upon himself to say the entire tehillim without interruption each Shabbos. He wanted to dedicate this day toward praising Hashem. He would recite tehillim with tremendous devotion, not allowing himself to become distracted or interrupted at all.

We know that the yetzer hara works to ensnare each individual specifically in the areas in which

he excels. That is precisely what the yetzer hara did in the case of Yehuda.

One Shabbos morning, Yehuda was sitting at the table, reciting tehilim with great concentration when a shadow fell over him. Looking up, he was shocked to find Leib, an old friend from his childhood, standing before him. “Shalom aleichem,” he cried, forgetting himself for a minute.

“Shalom aleichem,” Leib responded warmly.

Suddenly remembering the tehillim in front of him, Yehuda gestured to his guest to wait a minute. He was standing before the King, praising Him. How could he brazenly stop in the middle to speak to an old friend?

He said a few more pesukim but couldn't manage to maintain his focus. He hadn't seen Leib in years! What was he doing in town? Forcing the thoughts out of his head, he continued with the next perek.

His concentration lasted for a total of five minutes. “Where are you staying?” he asked his friend, looking up from his tehillim. “How long are you in town?”

“I came for a simchah,” Leib explained. “I'm staying at my brother's home.”

The two schmoozed for a couple of minutes before Yehuda remembered his tehillim. Angry at himself for falling prey to his temptation, he said tightly, “Leib, you are causing me to be mafsik my tehillim. Please leave. Now is not a good time.” He turned back to the small volume before him and resumed reciting the pesukim until he finished the entire thing.

When he finished the tehillim, his family gathered for the seudah. Afterward, Yehuda decided to take a quick nap. Having stayed up the entire

Friday night, as was his custom, he was tired. He was also a little down that he allowed his concentration to be broken while reciting tehillim, but tried to put the thought out of his head and soon fell asleep.

As he slept, he had a dream. He saw three angels standing to his right. They were beautiful, glowing malachim and he realized that they were his. These were the angels that were created from his mitzvos.

Then he turned his head and noticed three black angels to his left side. He shivered, understanding with a dawning sense of trepidation that these were the angels created through his sins.

Suddenly, one angel said, "Hey, look at this sefer tehillim. Can we give this to Hashem?"

The other angels peered into the volume he was holding. "This tehillim?" they scoffed. "How can you give this to Hashem? Look at the mistakes in the tehillim! And look there, there are pictures of avodah zarah between the words!"

"How can that be?!" Yehuda asked the angels. "Avodah zarah? In my tehillim?!"

"Doesn't it say that one who gets angry is as though he served idols?" the angels reminded him. "You said lots of tehillim, true, but you got angry when someone interrupted your concentration. And therefore, there are small idols dotting this tehillim."

"And look here," another angel pointed out. "Look how these pesukim were ruined. You were in middle of talking to your King, and you say shalom aleichem to your friend? You asked him how he was and where he was staying? What is such tehillim even worth?"

Yehuda shook his head in a mixture of fear and helplessness. How could this be? How could it be

that his weekly Shabbos tehillim, something he had always thought was his purest gift to Hashem, was so despicably ruined?

"How can we give this sefer tehillim to Hashem?" the angels asked in disgust. "Let's ask the one who created the tehillim if this is a worthy gift for the King of Kings."

An old man appeared and the angels asked him, "Tell us, can we give this sefer tehillim to Hashem?"

"Absolutely not!" the man said, shaking his head. "Chas v'shalom! This has avodah zarah inside it and must be burned immediately."

The black angels turned to their white counterparts. "Are you allowed to burn the tehillim on Shabbos?" they challenged.

"No, you're right, it is forbidden," the white angels responded.

"Well, then," the black angels concluded. "This tehillim is muktzah. It cannot be brought to Hashem, it needs to be burned, but it can't be burned on Shabbos. Drop it! It's muktzah!"

The white angels let go of the tehillim but instead of it falling to the floor, it was grabbed by the angels in black. "We'll know what to do with it," they said smugly, taking off with the sefer in their hands.

Yehuda stirred. The angels of destruction were taking his tehillim, and who knows what they were planning on doing with it! He ran after them, yelling as loud as he could. "Give me back the tehillim! Give me back the tehillim!"

It was at this moment in his dream that Yehuda suddenly awoke. He realized with a dawning clarity that he had blundered in his efforts to devote his Shabbos toward praising Hashem.

With an anguished heart, he went to see his rav and related his dream.

His rav listened closely and was quiet for a few minutes before responding. "I want you to understand, firstly, that the reason your sin is so great is because you are very great, and therefore a very high standard is demanded from you. For so many years, you have recited the tehillim without your thoughts wandering for even a second. It behooves a diamond like you to be above mistakes like the kind you made today. Indeed, it is a terrible sin.

"However, the path to teshuvah is open to all, and now is the time for you to repent. You must say three times how much you regret the sin you have committed and determinedly resolve never to allow your thoughts to be interrupted while praising Hashem. This goes for all praise of Hashem, not just tehillim and not just on Shabbos. With Hashem's help, this will atone for your sin and everything will be fine."

On the spot, Yehuda did teshuva, crying bitter tears over the disrespect he had shown Hashem and his tehillim. He made a firm commitment to avoid all interruptions whenever he said shiros v'sishbachos, any kind and on any day of the week.

When he went to sleep that night, motzei Shabbos, Yehuda once again had a dream. In this dream, he could see the same angels holding his sefer tehillim. They gave it to Yehuda and allowed him to fix the mistakes and erase the idols, beautifying the sefer tehillim once more.

When this was done, they placed the sefer tehillim together with the hundreds of others that Yehuda had recited over the years to be sent as gift for Hashem.

Often, we underestimate the power of our tefillos. We don't fully comprehend the magnitude of the

praises we say when davening each day. If only we understood the temerity of interrupting our audience with the King to conduct mundane discussions, we would never dream of breaking our concentration during davening.

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

This story is taken from tape # A293

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Toras Reb Kalman
Lakewood New Jersey
609.807.1783
torasrebkalman@gmail.com

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