



"PRAYER ON A YACHT"

Farbrenge – 11 Nissan, 5743-1983

It may be that the person in this story didn't even notice, and may still not be aware of his own accomplishment.

This is a story that happened, here in the United States, this very year.

There is a Jew, he is present here today may he continue to enjoy a long and healthy life together with his family, who is endowed by G-d with many possessions. Including a boat, may he use it in good health, a yacht.

This Jew was taught not to be ashamed to live his day-to-day life as a Jew, in front of other Jews and non-Jews. He had begun to act with Jewish pride.

When he set out, as he does from time to time, for a few days vacation on his yacht and it came time for prayers, he knew that the Amidah prayer must be recited facing Jerusalem.

So he needed to ascertain which direction was east. At home, he knows which way is east. When traveling on a boat, however, he needs to know, before beginning his prayers, which way is east, to face Jerusalem.

How can one find this information on a yacht? There's one option: To ask the captain which way is east. And that's what he did.

The first time he asked the captain dismissed it as insignificant: For whatever reason the owner wanted to know which way was east, so he asked.

After the second and third time, however, the captain wondered: "Why do you suddenly ask? You're not the captain; not even a sailor. You don't have to steer the ship; that's not your job. That's done by the captain."

The ship owner was "not intimidated by scoffers" and when one acts as a Jew there is nothing to be ashamed of. On the contrary: Jewish pride dictates we not hide our Judaism, so he told the captain the truth.

Since he has to pray to G-d, and the prayers ascend through Jerusalem, through the Holy Temple which stood in Jerusalem, thus to be facing G-d. and prayers must be said with a "recognition of before Whom you stand" he needed to face Jerusalem.

Said the captain: If you, who are so successful in business —the captain is himself an employee— find it important to think about G-d three times a day, and not an idle thought, but you ready yourself, turning away from all other matters, and care to pray specifically



פרשת לך-לך

facing east so that the prayer will be proper... If so, said the captain, "I will also start thinking about G-d!"

—Since I heard this story second-hand, I don't know if he concluded that he too would say a prayer, but in truth thinking about G-d is itself a prayer!

This Jew was unassuming in his behavior, it was a simple act; there were no deep intentions of mystical secrets no intention to influence non-Jews. He simply did as he should.

When it is time to pray, and prayers are supposed to be said facing east, there is no reason to be ashamed to inquire which direction is east, even of a non-Jew.

What resulted from this simple act? He involved the non-Jew with the Mitzvah, that precludes idol worship, a prohibition contained in the seven universal Noahide commandments.

Since every Mitzvah has the nature of leading to another Mitzvah, surely this good deed had a continued effect on the captain.

There is no doubt that if you inquire by the captain about the events in his life in the following days and weeks, you would witness Divine providence.

The effect that the Jew's asking about east had on this non-Jew, on this captain, led him to think about G-d.

As a result, later when he considered doing something which was perhaps not proper and just, he remembered the "Eye that Sees," and this stopped him!

