

Sensitivity to Mitzvot

Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, relates a story that occurred which should sensitize us to the power of a mitzvah and its effect. The story is about a mashgiach, kosher supervisor, at a large meat plant in Eretz Yisrael. Everyday he organized a minyan at the factory to daven Minchah. It happened one day that he was missing a "tzenter," tenth man, to complete the required quorum. He went outside looking for a Jew to complete the minyan. After a short while, he met a farmer dressed in short pants and tee-shirt who gave the appearance of being a simple, unschooled Jew. He asked the farmer to join them for a minyan for Minchah. The Jew had no idea what the mashgiach was talking about. After a few moments, however, he succeeded in convincing the farmer of the importance of tefillah b'tzibur, praying with a minyan, and the importance of saying Kaddish in memory of the departed. He emphasized that today he was saying Kaddish in memory of his father, whose yartzheit it was.

The farmer joined the minyan until a few moments later, when another Jew entered, thereby enabling the farmer to leave. The farmer did not remain long enough to daven with the minyan. Ten years passed; the mashgiach had assumed a new position elsewhere and moved to Bnei Brak. One night, as the mashgiach was sleeping, he had a dream. In the dream, the farmer who had completed the minyan appeared to him with a shining countenance. He explained that he had been called from this world during the previous month. He said that the reward that he received for joining the minyan that one time was overwhelming. Furthermore, in recompense for the mitzvah that he performed, he was granted the opportunity to appear to the mashgiach and ask for a favor. It seems that he had a totally non-observant son who lived in Yerushalayim. Could the mashgiach please go to his son's home and implore him to say Kaddish for his late father. The mashgiach took note of the address and went the next day to locate the son. After some persuasion, the son acquiesced to say Kaddish. All of this occurred because a Jew who was himself not observant was willing to be the tenth man in a minyan, so that another Jew could say Kaddish on his father's yartzheit. Can we even begin to imagine the awesome reward awaiting for he who performs mitzvos all of the time?