

found the courage and physical strength, but once I had finally resolved to help the girl, I became strangely transformed. I ran behind the bushes and pulled the assailant away from the woman. Grappling, we fell to the ground, where we wrestled for a few minutes until the attacker jumped up and hastily ran away.

Panting hard, I scrambled upright and tried to relax my incessantly pounding heart. After a moment, I approached the young lady, who was crouched behind a tree, sobbing. In the darkness, I could barely see her outline, but I could certainly sense her trembling shock.

Not wanting to frighten her further, I at first spoke to her from a distance. "It's okay," I said soothingly. "The man ran away. You're safe now."

There was a long pause and then I heard the words, uttered in wonder, in amazement. "Father, is that you?" And then, from behind the tree, like an apparition, stepped my youngest daughter.

TORAH GEMS

וכתב את האלות האלה הכהן בספר ומחה אל מי המרים וגו' (ה-כג)

Chazal tell us that *Hashem* did not just give the *Torah* to *Bnei Yisroel* to learn and fulfill the *mitzvos*. Rather, just as the Jewish people are required to say שמע, put on *tefillin*, *daven*, and fulfill all of the *mitzvos*, so too, the Holy One Blessed Be He, is actively engaged in performing the *mitzvos* - obviously in a sublimely, spiritual sense.

Tikkunei Zohar says that this is what *Chazal* mean when they say that man is created, "in the image of G-d." By wearing *tefillin*, saying *shema* and with every *mitzva* that we do, we merit being, "in the image of G-d." The question is: If *Hashem*, so to speak, keeps all of the *mitzvos*, how would He fulfill the commandment of *Kiddush Hashem* - Sanctifying His Name, to actually give over one's very life rather than commit murder, idolatry, or incest? The answer, though, is found in this week's *parsha* regarding the *מי סוטה* - *Water of the suspected adulteress*, where a wife suspected of being unfaithful to her husband was warned before witnesses and eventually brought to the *Kohen*. He then writes the ineffable Name of *Hashem* on a parchment and places the parchment in a vessel filled with holy water. The holy name is consequently erased by being washed off in the water and the woman is made to drink from this water. If she is truly guilty, she will die an unnatural death and if she is innocent, she will merit righteous children. From here we find a situation where it is actually a *mitzva* to erase *Hashem's* name into the *Sotah* water, and in this sense, the Holy One fulfills the commandment of *Kiddush Hashem*, giving over His holy name for a *mitzva*.

המכפר. וכמה גדול מעלת החזן שמתפלל לשם שמים ובכוונת הלב, ולהיפך, כמה גדול עונו כשאינו מתפלל לשי"ש ואינו מביא תפילת הכלל לרצון לפני השי"ת, אלא כדי שיהללו קולו ולקבל שכר ממנו.

וכתב הגמור"ר נפתלי אלטשולר זצ"ל מלובלין, בס' אמרי שפר, משל למלך שהיה לו זמר גדול ונפלא והיה מחבב המלך את נעימותיו. פעם בא אדם לפני המלך וסיפר לו שהזמר הרג נפש. אמר המלך אניה לו בגלל כבודי. כעבור זמן בא אחר ואמר שהזמר זנה עם אשת איש. אמר המלך אל תדברו גנאי על זמר שלי. וכך הלך המעשה עד שבאו ואמרו שהזמר התקוטט עם אדם ובשעת הריב נקצצה ידו. מיד צוה המלך לתלות את הזמר. אמר המלך "אל תחשבו שמחלתי אותו על כל הרעות שעשה. אלא מפני שהיה מנעים לי זמירות חכתי עד שאפרע ממנו. עכשיו שנקצצה ידו ואינו מסוגל לנגן ולתופף בתוף, אפרע ממנו על כל העבירות הקודמות שעשה." כמו"כ החזן, וה"ה בכל אדם שיש לו תכונה וכשרון שאחרים יכולים ליהנות ממנו, שכל זמן שיועד לנגן ולעשות מה שעושה, כולם מכבדים אותו ונותנים לו מעות וכסף, ואפי' אם עושה כל דבר רע שבעולם, שותקים הם כיון שמנעים להם הניגונים וכשרונו. אבל כשקולו יאבד או אינו מסוגל עוד לעשות מעשיו, ועתה אין לו שום חשיבות בעיני העולם, אז לא יסתכלו עליו כלל ולא יושיטו לו ידם.

מעשה אבות.... סימן לבנים

יברכך ה' וישמרך. יאר ה' פניו אליך ויחנך וכו' (ו-כד' כה')

The *Medrash* tells us that with *Hashem's* blessing, comes a very special שמירה (Divine) protection. What is the definition of *Hashgacha Pratis* - Personal Divine Intervention? A man was once the guest of honor at a charity function and he related the following true story.

I was walking down a dimly lit street late one evening when I heard muffled screams coming from behind a clump of bushes. Alarmed, I slowed down to listen and at once stopped in my tracks. It was then that I panicked when I realized that what I was hearing were the unmistakable sounds of a struggle: heavy grunting, frantic scuffling and a person being thrown to the ground. Then I saw it. Only mere yards from where I stood, a woman was being attacked. My first thought was, "Should I get involved?" I was frightened for my own safety and rebuked myself for having suddenly decided to take a new route home from *shul* that night. What if I got involved and ended up in the hospital, or worse: what if I became another statistic? Maybe I should just run to the nearest phone and call the police? Although it seemed an eternity - the deliberations in my head had taken only seconds - but already the cries were growing weaker. I knew I had to act fast. How could I walk away from this? No, I finally resolved, I could not turn my back on the fate of this damsel in distress, even if it meant risking my own life.

I must confess, I am not a brave man, nor am I athletic. I don't know where I