**Shmuz #4 – Understanding our relationship with Hashem**

Binyamin Silver was a wealthy Israeli man who was very successful in business and worked very hard to get to the top of the corporate ladder. His son was born later in his life and was a bit spoiled. As they say, he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth and expected everything without working very hard for it. Unfortunately, this son’s lack of enthusiasm expressed itself in his religious commitments as well.

His son, who was now an older teenager, walked into his father’s office and asked his father to fund a vacation through several European countries so he could “find himself.” Binyamin told his son he would be happy to fund the trup as long as the son promised to put on tefillin every single day. The son promised and even shook his father’s hand on it. Binyamin was a shrewd businessman, so he told his son he would give him an advance to pay for part of the trip now, and if he received confirmation that his son had indeed donned his tefillin every day, he would transfer the rest of the money the son would need to cover the rest of the trip. “How will you transfer the money?” he asked.

“I will find a way,” the father said. The son took the money, made his ticket with an open ended return ticket and was on his way. A few days later he was down to a few euro, so he called his father and asked him to please transfer the funds. “Are you wearing your tefillin every day?” his father asked. “Dad! I promised I would, didn’t I?” he replied. “Then don’t worry, the money will be there,” his father replied.

A few days later it happened again. The son called Binyamin and asked him to please send him the funds and that he had not received anything yet. The same thing happened. Binyamin asked him if he was wearing tefillin and his son insisted he had been. “Okay,” said Binyamin. “Then the money will be there.”

The money never came. The son was so upset at his father he didn’t know what to do with himself. He had been stranded in Europe with absolutely no money and had no choice but to use his return ticket to come home. He went straight to his house and began shouting at his father, “How could you abandon me without any money?! Where were you? You promised me you would send me money and you lied to me!”

Binyamin ignored his son’s cries. Calmly, he said, “Did you put on Tefillin every day?”

“I told you a thousand times, I put on tefillin! What do you want from me?”

“Please bring me your tefillin.”

Binyamin’s son unpacked his bag and took out his tefillin. “See? I had them the whole time!”

Binyamin picked up the tefillin bag and slowly unzipped it. He withdrew a large wad of cash from the side of the tefillin bag – and his son shriveled in shame. He realized he had just dug his own hole and he promised his father (sincerely this time) that from then on he would wear tefillin every single day.

Can you put money in a tefillin bag to teach your child a lesson on life? That is a shaila that Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein deals with. But let us make this into a mashal and take something big out of it.

We ask Hakadosh Baruch Hu for everything we need and we have high expectations for what we will get, for good reason. We know we have done many good things and we try our best, but Our Father knows what else we could have done. There’s a tefillin bag sitting waiting for us that He has asked us to put on, and we just don’t have the time. Not because we don’t want to, but because it’s hard and we don’t think it will help. So we plod along on our trip to Europe, wondering when Hashem will help us out a bit, throw us the siyata dishmaya we so badly need… but it doesn’t come and we wonder why – what did we do wrong? We get angry, we start to yell, we cannot understand why this is happening to us – and then after 120 we go up to shamayim and Hashem shows us the tefillin bag filled with money, just sitting there waiting for us.

The treasure buried in our backyard. The pen we were looking for which was sitting there the whole time.

What are we asking from Hashem? For siyata dishmaya. That we should know what to concentrate on and what not to concentrate on. We should ask Hashem to give us exactly what we need so that we deserve everything we get. And we should be zoche to truly receive that siyata dishmaya in the best possible way. Gmar v’chasima tovah.