

“He shall dwell in it until the death of the Kohen Gadol.” (35:25)

What connection is there between the unintentional murderer and the *Kohen Gadol*? *Rashi* explains that the *Kohen Gadol* should have prayed to Hashem that such a tragedy in which one Jew kills another Jew, albeit unintentionally, does not occur during his tenure as *Kohen Gadol*. It is interesting how the *Torah* emphasizes that *davening* is not enough. One must know what to *daven* for. The *Kohen Gadol* should have prayed for the spiritual welfare of the people of his generation. Had he done so, the tragedy that occurred would have been circumvented. The *Chafetz Chaim*, z.l., draws a powerful analogy to demonstrate this idea.

The Kaiser decided one day to visit one of his infantry battalions. The soldiers all lined up at attention to present themselves before their commander-in-chief. Their shoes were shining brightly; their uniforms were in perfect condition. They stood erect and marched in perfect cadence. They succeeded in impressing the Kaiser. As a show of gratitude, the Kaiser announced that he would grant each soldier one wish. One “astute” soldier jumped forward and declared that he had a favor to request of the Kaiser. “What would you like?” asked the Kaiser.

“My request is that the Kaiser grant me my daily meals,” the soldier responded.

The other soldiers were shocked at his request. Is this what you bother the Kaiser about? It goes without saying that a soldier in the Kaiser’s army who performs his duties as ordered will certainly be fed three meals a day. Even his uniform is provided by the Kaiser. Once one becomes a soldier, his needs are addressed because he serves the king. The “brilliant” soldier should have had the common sense to ask for something special, something unique and out of the ordinary, something that he would not normally receive. The mere fact that he wasted such an incredible opportunity is in itself the greatest loss. Now, he could no longer have his request granted by the king.

The *Chafetz Chaim* explains that this same idea applies to our daily *Tefillos*, prayers. Let us face it: What do we really *daven* for? We pray for material sustenance, material success – everything to enhance our material and physical status. Do we ever ask for Divine Assistance in performing *teshuvah*, repentance, or success in Torah study and *yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven? Do we shed tears for our spiritual dimension, or are we so preoccupied with the mundane, the physical, the material components in our lives that we fail to focus on what is really important?

Are we any different from the “foolish” soldier who asked for the food he would receive anyway as long as he served with dignity and fidelity? Should we not understand that our prayers should focus on our spiritual health and our ability to serve Hashem properly and to carry out His *mitzvos* correctly? Is there any doubt that if we perform properly in the spiritual arena that Hashem will provide our material needs? I guess for some people that is not enough.