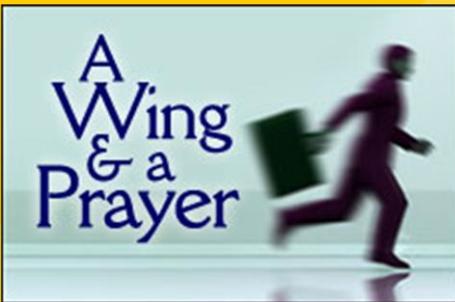


PRAYING with *Fire*

PRAYER POINTS



A Wing and a Prayer

Rushing to my grandfather's funeral, I got in sync with my GPS.

by [Danny Verbov](#)

6:15 a.m. I come back from morning prayers to hear that my 95-year-old grandfather has died in London. Thousands of miles away in Israel, I desperately want to be at the funeral.

I turn on the computer to check for flights. It is two days before Yom Kippur, and I have to be back home for the holiday. If this is going to work, I have to get to England and back in 24 hours. I don't know what time the funeral is yet... my mother says it will be sometime this afternoon.

One website has a flight in seven days' time.

I try another one -- there's an El Al flight to London at 9:15 a.m. I call but the reservations office only opens at 8. If I have any chance of making the funeral, that's the flight I have to catch.

I have no time to waste.

I live about an hour and a half from Ben-Gurion Airport. Two hours is reasonable driving time at that time of the morning. The flight itself takes about five hours, plus time to get to the airport and to the cemetery in England...

I think of all the travel agents I know, and my sister reminds me of Dawn, an appropriately named mutual friend.

"Can I call her at 6:30?"

"Wait till 7," she says.

I call her at 6:45. Without a moment's hesitation, she asks me how long it will take me to get to the airport. I wishfully say an hour and 20 minutes, and she checks if there's a seat available on the plane.

She books me a ticket ASAP but warns me that they close the gates for boarding at 8:25, 50 minutes before take-off. It's a hard-and-fast security rule.

It's now 6:55.

I grab what I can -- briefcase, a book, my shaver, change into a suit (forget the tie), some British cash and a pad to write my eulogy. I shout goodbye to the family and rush out the door.

"Have you got your passport?" asks Boaz my neighbor, who is going to accompany me in the car.

Right. Good idea.

It's 7:00. We're aiming to get to the airport by 8:25. The odds are not very good.

I realize at this point that it's out of my control. I let go... and put myself totally in God's hands.

We choose what's likely to be the fastest route. The Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road is out of the question at this time of the morning.

"The road past Ariel will be full of trucks now," says Boaz. "Let's go via Tapuah Junction."

I'm now relying on GPS. *God's Personal Service.*

I'm driving, mumbling a quiet prayer the entire way, and the going is smooth.

Until 8:25, the time they've closed the gate for boarding. And we're stuck in traffic near Elad.

But I'm still on GPS.

I call my ex-boss's husband, a senior security official at the airport. I have his number in my cellphone. I haven't spoken to him in years.

He answers, understands, but doesn't hold out much hope due to the strict 50-minute pre-boarding rule.

"Call me back in 10 minutes," he says. "I'll see if I can find the head of security. Keep going."

8:40.

I call him back. "No luck yet. Call me when you get to the airport."

We arrive at the airport at 8:55. The flight is at 9:15.

I rush out of the car, say goodbye to Boaz who promises to wait to see if I make it, and rush into the departure hall.

Not a passenger in sight. Just security personnel. As if they were all there just there for me.

As if God had built the whole airport for this moment.

"Sir," a security guard stops me as I rush like crazy to check-in. "Can I help you?"

I tell her I need to catch the London flight at 9:15, grandpa's funeral, etc., and she points me to a clerk.

9:00.

"Can I have your ticket please, Mr. Verbov?"

"I don't have one. I just ordered it a couple of hours ago."

She looks at the passenger list.

"You're not on here."

"What?"

The computer obviously hasn't registered me yet.

And then, from nowhere, appears a suit and tie, wire behind the ear.

"Where's Verbov?"

My ex-boss's husband had found the head of security.

9:05.

He speaks to the check-in clerk, looks at my passport, and tells one of his people to personally escort me all the way to the boarding gate.

No security check. No ticket. Not even on the passenger list.

9:10.

Boaz calls me. I forgot all about him. "I made it. Thanks."

On the plane, the very first page I open, in the one book I bring, gives me the idea I need to write the eulogy.

Landing at Heathrow, I find the British Isles amidst a torrential downpour. I jump in a taxi, arriving at the cemetery with a good hour to spare.

And the sun comes out to stop the rain at the very moment we take my grandfather to his grave.

I raise my eyes heavenward and thank God.

In letting Him take over, He's teaching me that He created the whole world just for me.