

In the spirit of Thanksgiving I would like to share with you the following story:

Two months ago I received a phone call.

“Hi, my name is Igor, I need you to pray for me”.

Igor was in Marin visiting his friend Vlad.

He grew up in the former Soviet Union and knew very little about his Jewish roots.

He called to tell me that he had lost his job a few months ago and he was still searching a few months later...

In addition, members of his family had been going through some serious health issues and the situation at home was deteriorating fast.

I invited Igor and Vlad to come over and pray together with me.

We talked for a while, he shared with me that he never had a chance to connect with his Jewish heritage, and how difficult things were at home.

We concluded that the best thing for Igor to do right now is to create for himself a few minutes a day where he could find inner peace.

He decided to start putting on Tefilin every day, while reserving those few minutes to talk to God.

He paid for part of the Tefilin and we found a generous donor to sponsor the rest.

While Igor and I were talking, his friend chimed in and expressed his interest in reconnecting with Judaism as well. He mentioned that he even owned his own pair of Tefillin which he had not used in a while.

A few weeks later they joined us for a Holiday dinner at Chabad.

Soon after, we connected Igor with his local Chabad house where he has been thriving ever since.

A few days after Igor got his Tefillin, he sent me a selfie of himself wearing the Tefillin. His face radiated with joy.

Together with the picture he wrote:

"Waiting for G-d to respond, called and left him a message this morning:)"

A month has gone by, and I checked in with Igor to see how he was doing, he told me that things were improving Thank G-d.

His attitude has completely changed, he is feeling great, and looking positively toward the future.

And most importantly he discovered who he really is.

As for Vlad, he asked me to come put up a Mezuzah on his new house and has become a regular at Chabad.

Thank you for bringing light and connection to Igor and Vlad.

Wishing you a happy Thanksgiving!

Warmly,  
Rabbi Mendel