

Elul WhatsApp / Telegram Messages

15th Elul – 15th September

In one of his books, the late Stephen Covey, spoke about a plane flight. This was in the 1990s and it may have changed since then. But he said that before take-off, the pilots have a flight plan. They know where they going, and they know what direction to take. But in the course of the flight, all sorts of factors drive the plane off course: wind, rain, turbulence, air traffic, human error and other causes. The result is that for more than 90% of the journey, the plane is not exactly on the prescribed flight path. There are constant slight deviations. Bad weather or congestion may cause major deviations. Yet, with very few exceptions, the plane will arrive at its destination. Why? Because the pilots have a flight plan, because they're getting constant feedback from the instruments, because they're making constant adjustments. Autopilot systems work very similarly. And so, he suggests, does life.

We may be off course 90% of the time. But will still arrive at our destination if we know exactly where we are going, if we have ways of discovering whether we are off course, and if we are capable of making adjustments.

We don't need to get it right all the time. That's the point. If God thought we needed to get it right all the time he would never have created human beings in the first place. The stories of the Torah are about failure after failure. Which is why God built *Teshuvah* into the system. *Teshuvah* is course correction. It's reminding ourselves where we are supposed to be going, checking whether we are actually going in the right direction, and if not, making the appropriate adjustments.

If we listen with the inner ear to the voice of faith, we hear God saying, "I never asked you not to make mistakes. I only asked you to acknowledge they are mistakes. I am here to lift you when you fall. I am here to forgive you when you fail. I am here to tell you I believe in you. You can do great things. Just believe in my belief in you."