

# Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim"



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PARASHAS  
CHAYEI SARAH

תשפ"ב

## Pearls of Emunim

## Pearls of Amen and Tefillah on the Parashah

### The Necessity of Tefillah

"ויאמר אליו העבד אולי לא תאבה האשה ללכת אחרי אל הארץ הזאת...; ויאמר אליו אברהם...; ה' אלוקי השמים... הוא ישלח מלאכו לפניך ולקחת אשה לבני משם" (כד ה-ז)

From these *pesukim* we can learn how necessary *tefillah* is for every single matter. We find that everyone held Avraham in esteem as the 'Nasi Elokim' (*Bereishis* 23:6) and through that, they even wanted to do a *shidduch* with him. As Chazal say (*Bereishis Rabbah* 45 1): "Hagar was the daughter of Pharaoh, and when Pharaoh saw the actions that were done to Sarah in his home, he took his daughter and gave her to him. He said: It is better that my daughter should be a servant in this house, and not a mistress in another home." And if he wanted her to be a servant in Avraham's house, how much more so did he want her to be a mistress in his home. Despite all this, when Eliezer expressed his concern: "Perhaps the woman will not want to go," Avraham did not discount his words, and immediately offered a *tefillah*: "*Hashem Elokei hashamayim...He will send His angels before you and you should take a wife for my son from there.*"

Eliezer also learned from his master about the necessity of *tefillah*, and therefore, as soon as he came to Aram Naharayim, he offered a *tefillah* for the success of his mission. And when he came with Rivka to the home of his master and told Yitzchak what had happened, he emphasized "that Rivka appeared to him as the result of his *tefillah*." (*Rashi*, 24:60)

Maalos Hatefillah

### Yitzchak Davened Between the Trees

"ויצא יצחק לשוח בשדה לפנות ערב" (כד סג)  
"Lasuach – a term for *tefillah*, like (*Tehillim* 102:1): 'Yishpoch sicho.'"

### The Reward of the Brachah Is 'Ten Gold Coins'

"ויקח האיש נזם זהב בקע משקלו ושני צמידים על ידה עשרה זהב משקלם" (כד כב)

Why did the *passuk* detail the weight of the bracelets?

Harav Yitzchak of Vienna explained in the name of his *rebbe*, Harav Yehuda Hachassid:

With the gift of the bracelets, Eliezer wanted to pay Rivka for the fact that in her merit, he would bless Hashem with the words (*passuk* 27) "*Baruch Hashem Elokei Adoni Avraham*," and because Avraham had taught him that the value of a *brachah* is ten gold coins, therefore, he paid her with two bracelets whose total weight was that of ten gold coins. This *passuk* is proof of the words of Chazal (*Bava Kama* 91b, according to *Tosafos* *ibid* ad loc. *vechivvu*) that the value of every *brachah* is ten gold coins.

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(*Rashi*, according to *Brachos* 26b)

*Maseches Brachos* (34b) relates that Rav Kahana condemned one who prayed in the field, because it is an open place, without partitions. *Tosafos* (*ibid* ad loc. *chatzif*) asked about this, because in this *passuk*, it states that Yitzchak davened in the field. They answer that according to Chazal (*Pesachim* 88a), we learn from this *passuk* that Yitzchak did not call the place of the Mikdash where he davened 'a field,' and as such, the *passuk* does not mean that Yitzchak davened in a field, literally, but rather, on Har Hamoriah, which is known as 'sadeh.' (according to

*Bach Orach Chaim* 90)

The *Bach* (*ibid*) further explained that indeed, that is why the Torah writes "And Yitzchak went out *lasuach basadeh*" and not "*lehisparallel basadeh*", to teach us that Yitzchak did not daven in an open place like a field, but rather among the trees and bushes that were there.

### Yitzchak Was Not Afraid That Eliezer Would Disrupt His Tefillah

"ותאמר אל העבד מי האיש הלזה בשדה לקראתנו ויאמר העבד הוא אדני ותקח הצעיר ותתכס" (כד סה)

Why did Rivka need to detail to Eliezer the place where Yitzchak was walking: "Who is this man walking *basadeh*" – did Eliezer not see that himself?

Harv Meir, the Rav of Shurzantz, explained:

Chazal say (*Bereishis Rabbah* 60:15) that Rivka asked the servant about Yitzchak because when she saw him davening, she realized he was a great person. Hence, she was surprised, that he was praying in a field in a place where passersby might disturb him (see *Bais Yosef*, *Orach Chaim* 90 ad loc. *velo yisparallel*). And in order that Eliezer should not answer that this was not a field where many people passed, she emphasized "who is walking in the field to greet us," meaning, this is a field where people tend to walk in, because we are walking in it. That is why Eliezer answered: "He is my master," and aside for me, it is not the custom of people to walk in this field, and Yitzchak is not afraid that I will disturb his *tefillah*, because a servant must not ask after the welfare of his master. (See *Shabbos* 89a)

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### Rabbeinu Yona Gerondi Toledano 28 Cheshvan 5024

The *chassid* Rabbeinu Yona Gerondi had many students, the most famous of which was the Rashba. He authored many *sefarim*, including *Shaarei Teshuvah*, *Aliyos D'Rabbeinu Yona* on *Bava Basra* and others. He passed away in Toledo on 28 Cheshvan 5024/1263. It is not known where he is buried.

### draweR elbuoD

"At the time when the *shaliach tzibbur* repeats the *tefillah*, one is obligated to answer amen to every *brachah*. He should have *kavanah* with each *brachah*, so that he should know which *brachah* he is answering amen to, and he receives double reward for this. It is like he davened twice, one after another, and Chazal say in the *Midrash* (see *Midrash Tehillim* 27) if you davened and didn't have *kavanah* in your heart, and then davened again, you will be informed that your *tefillah* was heard." (*Iggeres Hateshuvah* [Rabbeinu Yona] 9)



## They Gates of Gan Eden Are Opened for Him 4

### A Compilations of Insights

*Chazal* (*Shabbos* 119b) promise wonderful reward for one who is careful to answer amen properly. They say: "Reish Lakish said: Anyone who answers amen with all his might has the gates of Gan Eden opened for him, as it says (*Yeshayah* 26:2): '*Pischu she'arim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim*' – do not read it '*shomer emunim*' but rather '*she'omrim amen*.'" In this segment we will present additional insights and explanations from the *gedolim* through the generations on this concept.

### Generate Nachas Ruach with Mesirus Nefesh

Rabi Eliezer Papo, author of *Pele Yoetz*, said: The tremendous reward promised to one who is strict about answering amen with all his might – "the gates of Gan Eden are opened for him" – teaches us about the lofty virtues of answering amen, and the great *nachas ruach* for HaKadosh Baruch Hu that is generated by answering amen properly. We see that a person must certainly be happy with the fact that he merits to bring *nachas ruach* to his Creator, and it is virtuous for every Jew to be *moser nefesh* to do so. (*Chesed L'Alafim* [by the Pele Yoetz] 56:1)

### Seeing What Happens in Gan Eden

Harav Pinchas of Koritz once remarked about one of the *tzaddikim*: "I see him in Gan Eden, but he has not yet reached the path of truth." One of the listeners was surprised by this, and asked: Isn't Rabbeinu in this world; how does he know what is happening in Gan Eden? Rav Pinchas then replied:

"*Chazal* say (*Shabbos* 119b): 'One who answers amen with all his might, the gates of Gan Eden are open for him.' They did not say '*yiftechu*', they will be opened – in the future tense, but rather, they are open, in the present, to teach us that while a person is still living in this world, he merits to have the gates of Gan Eden open to him, and he can see what is happening inside. However, all this is conditional on him answering amen – with all his might," he concluded. (*Shomer Emunim, Ma'amar Pischu Shearim* 2)

A similar story was related about Harav Baruch Frankel-Teumim, the Baruch Ta'am:

Rav Baruch was once sitting at the *seudah* of a *bris milah*, when he suddenly smiled. In response to those who asked him why, he replied that he had smiled at something he had seen in the Upper World. One of those present mustered up the courage and asked: "And why do I not merit to see things happening in the Upper World...?" Rav Baruch replied: "*Chazal* tell us (*Shabbos* 119b) that 'when one answers amen with all his strength then the gates of Gan Eden are opened to him.' Not 'will be opened' in the future tense, but rather 'are opened,' meaning that while he is still living in this world, he merits to have the gates of Gan Eden opened for him so that he can see what is happening there as long as he is careful to answer amen '*bechol kocho*', with all his strength.

"You, too," the Baruch Ta'am said to the person, "can merit to have the gates of Gan Eden opened to you if you answer amen with all your might, and you will merit to see what is transpiring there." (*Eshel Baruch* [Lodz 5693] 47)

## The Apartment That Waited for a Prayer

Anyone who has ever done it will agree that selling an apartment is no minor matter, especially if it is being done independently, without agents. Those who have been there can go into extensive detail on the subject. The headache begins with the decision, they say, and then continues with determining the price – both desired and minimum – and then handling the calls, most of them from seasoned agents looking to have a part in the detail. A minority of calls comes from potential buyers.

Among those potential buyers, most suffice with a perfunctory conversation expressing interest, but few actually advance to the stage of seeing the apartment, deliberating, negotiating on the price, and sometimes even appear to be ready to close a deal... Often, even at this advanced stage, many will back out of the deal for one reason or another.

The road to selling an apartment is generally a time-consuming one, and if you are not pressured with time, then ultimately, the right buyer will turn up, *b'ezer Hashem*. The problem begins when you find yourself "stuck." When you must sell, then you'll find it very hard to stick to the guidelines you set at the beginning of the process. Mavens in the real estate field will warn you to do everything possible not to get to this point, but if you're already there, there's not much you can do.

There are "real estate sharks" who wait precisely for this moment. That's when they swoop down at you, and based on their experience, tempt you with an offer that you can't refuse, which can help extricate you from the rut you are in. And if you just agree to go down in price to the sum they have determined, then you can sell in no time.

This is exactly what happened to Reb Shlomo, a distinguished *yungerman*, who, for personal reasons, was compelled to sell an apartment he loved so he could move to another area. Reb Shlomo had bought an alternative apartment "on paper", and the contractor laid out a payment plan over a relatively long term. He signed on the contract, confident that his beautiful, highly desirable apartment would be snapped up in no time, which would make it very easy for him to meet his payments for the new apartment. But he quickly discovered that without *stiyata diShmaya*, nothing is certain.

Indeed, people took and interest, and came to see the apartment. They promised to call him with an answer, but nothing panned out. When a few months passed, and the apartment had not yet been sold, Reb Shlomo had no choice but to seek the assistance of agents. But even after they tried their best, they could not explain why this apartment was just not moving. Some advised Reb Shlomo to upgrade the appearance – hang curtains, put scent diffusers in the rooms, paint the rooms, and other such suggestions that he felt exceeded the boundaries of *hishtadlus*. But nothing helped.

The contractor was demanding payment, and Reb Shlomo was fast running out of time. He had paid the first payment by taking a loan from a relative, and the second by taking a loan from a big *gemach*. But as the time for the third payment drew near, he was filled with dread. This payment was ten times bigger than the average loan, and he had only two choices: the first was to take a short term bank loan with a high interest rate, and the second, to significantly lower the asking price for his apartment.

Both options were bad, for him, but after considering at length, Reb Shlomo decided to go with the second option.

He knew very well that there were a few experienced dealers waiting for this moment. One of them was honest enough to say that the minute he agreed to reduce his price by NIS 100,000 from his asking price, he would purchase the apartment immediately. At the same time, the meaning of such a reduction in price was that he would have to take a loan for that amount to make up the shortfall in the price of his new apartment.

Distraught, he turned to his Rebbe, and asked for advice and a *brachah*. The Rebbe patiently heard the difference sides and said: "You must not go down in price if it means you will have to take a loan."

"So what should I do?" Reb Shlomo's voice broke. "It's been nearly a year that I've tried every way to sell the apartment, but it hasn't happened. I've taken loans that I have to repay, and I am very worried about the huge sum that I have to pay the contractor within three days."

The Rebbe listened patiently but did not change his mind. "You haven't davened *Maariv* yet," he said to Reb Shlomo. "My advice to you is when you stand up to daven, and to speak to Hashem, share your troubles with Him. Explain all your deliberations, and tell Him how desperately you need the money. Hashem is a compassionate Father, Who hears every *tefillah*, and is strong and capable of anything. He will surely hear your cry."

Upon hearing this, Reb Shlomo was stunned into silence. He hadn't expected such an answer. The Rebbe noticed this and added: "Why are you surprised? Isn't this exactly what *tefillah* is made for?! Specifically at a time when everything looks locked and blocked, when a person can do nothing more, that is when he raises his eyes Heavenward in *tefillah*, and the *tefillah* can open the Gates of Heaven and bring about a *yeshuah* for him."

Reb Shlomo left the Rebbe's room with a warm *brachah*, and he felt a lofty feeling spread through him. He sensed that the concept that the Rebbe had planted in his heart was one that would carry him through his life, even after this story was resolved. The Rebbe's words resonated in his ears – that specifically at a time of distress and helplessness, that is the best time to share one's troubles with the Ribbono Shel Olam, and the *yeshuah* will come.

From the Rebbe's house he went straight to the nearest shul. He davened from the depths of his heart, sharing his problems with his Creator, and how worried he was about the upcoming payment, and the proposal from the potential buyer that he really didn't want, but that seemed to be the only option that would make it feasible for him to meet his payments. For many long moments, he stood and davened with *kavanah*. When he finished, he felt refreshed with new energy.

The surprising turnaround came the very next morning. The phone rang early, and on the line was a person with a familiar name, who had expressed interest in the apartment a few months earlier. He had even come to see it. Now – seemingly ignoring the fact that a long time had passed since then – he had decided that he was ready to close a deal – in cash, for the price they had discussed. Reb Shlomo was stunned at this most unexpected development and agreed right away.

A short time later, they were sitting in the lawyer's office, and the deal was signed to the satisfaction of both sides.

"I don't understand why I was delayed till now," the buyer remarked to Reb Shlomo as they walked out of the office. "I liked the apartment already then, the price was within my budget, I do not understand what took me so long to decide. This morning I got up with a determined decision to close the deal right away. I was so happy to hear that the apartment was still available. I saw that as a sign from Above that it was waiting specially for me..."

Reb Shlomo listened and smiled. He actually had a very logical reason for the prolonged delay. The apartment hadn't been sold because it was waiting for his *tefillah*. The minute he offered a *tefillah* from the depths of his heart, the barriers were removed and the sale went through.

Heard firsthand, and printed in *Peninei Parashas Hashavua, Vayigash* p. 82