

TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

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PARSHAS CHAYEI SARAH

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

PRAYING FOR OTHERS

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Part I. Actions and Prayers

Business Strategy 101

When Sarah our mother passed away, Avraham Avinu desired to purchase the cave of Machpeilah as her burial place from Efron ben Tzochar. But we see from the *pessukim* that at first Avraham didn't approach Efron. **וַיָּקָם אַבְרָהָם מֵעַל פְּנֵי מֶתוֹ** – *Avraham got up from his dead, from Sarah, וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל* – *Avraham got up from his dead, from Sarah, וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל* – *and he spoke to the Bnei Cheis (Bereishis 23:3). Instead of speaking directly to Efron he appealed to the townspeople, to Efron's neighbors: שְׁמָעוּנִי* – “If you would please listen to me,” Avraham said to them, **וּפָגְעוּ לִי בְּעֶפְרוֹן בֶּן צֹחַר** – “and approach Efron and make this request on my behalf” (*ibid.* 8).

“Be my agents,” said Avraham, “and try to get Efron to consent to the sale.” That's what the *Medrash Rabbah* (58:7) says about this expression **וּפָגְעוּ לִי**. Avraham was asking them, **סְרָסְרוּנִי לִי** – “Act as middlemen for me. Do what you can; apply some pressure, maybe sweet-talk him too, and make it happen.”

And we understand right away what Avraham's strategy was. Maybe if he would have asked directly it would have been more difficult for Efron to acquiesce. He would have been more hesitant and made difficulties. But when it was the people of the community coming to make the request it would be easier for Efron to yield. Sometimes a group of people can more readily gain their request than an individual.

Whatever the reason, that's what Avraham did. He said to the Bnei Cheis **וּפָגְעוּ לִי בְּעֶפְרוֹן בֶּן צֹחַר** – *Do me a favor and meet up with Efron on my behalf.* That's what it means **פָּגַע**. Like it says elsewhere about Yaakov Avinu, **וַיִּפְגַּע בְּמָקוֹם** – *and he met up with a certain place.* Here too it means the same thing: **וּפָגְעוּ לִי** – *Meet up with Efron for me.*

Prayer Strategy 101

But the *Medrash* goes on and adds something; it tells us that there was more to the conversation: **וְאִם לֹא** – “And if not,” Avraham said to the Bnei Cheis, “if you're not able to accomplish that for me, **צִלּוֹ לִי עֲלוּיָה** – then at least pray for me about my problem.” That's another intention our Sages saw in Avraham's words; because we find elsewhere

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that **פגע** means prayer; like when Hashem told the *navi*, **וְאַל תִּפְגַּע בִּי** – “Don’t plead with Me.” (Yirmiyahu 7:16). And so here too Avraham said **וּפָגְעוּ לִי** – “You people should pray for me.”

Now, we have to understand what’s being said here because it’s not just a story about how Avraham Avinu purchased a field; it’s intended as a model for us to follow. After all, **אַבְרָהָם גִּדּוֹל הָעוֹלָם** – *Avraham was considered the greatest of his generation* (Midrash Mishlei 9:1). Even the gentiles recognized him. The townspeople of Cheis said to Avraham, **נָשִׂיא אֱלֹקִים אַתָּה בְּתוֹכֵנוּ** – “You are a prince of Elokim in our midst” (Bereishis 23:6). But *nasi* means more than prince. It means one who’s elevated. Everybody looked up to Avraham Avinu as a very important personality in the land, as a model for proper living; his ways of thinking and acting were always a teaching.

A Model For Us

That’s why the Torah goes out of its way to dilate on Avraham’s negotiations and acquisition of the Mearas Hamachpeilah. Eighteen *pessukim* is a lot of real estate in the Torah! The answer is that it’s intended as a model of perfect behavior.

Avraham’s humility, his generosity, his dignity of conduct, are established forever as an important lesson in proper behavior. And so if the *Chachomim* are telling us that Avraham said two things to the *Bnei Cheis* – number one, *u’figu li*, “approach Efron for me”, and number two, “If not, *u’figu li*, then pray for me” – if Avraham spoke that way then that’s the way every person is expected to follow.

What’s the lesson? When there’s something that has to be done for someone else there are always two attitudes to keep in mind. Number one, the first thing when you’re asked to do a favor for a fellow man – even if you’re not asked but you see that someone needs something – the first thing is you should attempt with your abilities, with all your agency, to succeed. Don’t be apathetic

and lazy. You might give me your *brachah*, your prayers, but don’t rely on *tefillah* alone. Be the *sarsur*, the middleman, to make it happen. “Do whatever you can,” Avraham said to the *Bnei Cheis*, “that Efron should consent.”

Now of course you might also want to give me your best wishes. You might wish me luck. But that’s not enough. First you have to try to do your best. That’s what it’s saying. Number one, **וּפָגְעוּ לִי**. “Urge him. Do something to help me out. Before you give me your good wishes and your prayers, go ahead and do *l’maaseh* for me. Show me that you mean business by actually doing the best you could.”

Praying in Truth

That’s included in the important principle of calling out to Hashem in truth. Because when Dovid Hamelech tells us that **קָרוֹב ה' לְכָל קֹרְאָיו** – *Hashem is close to all those who call out to Him*, he adds an amendment: **לְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרְאוּ בִאֱמֶת** – *To those who call out to Him in truth* (Tehillim 145:18). That’s a big principle: your prayers have to be backed up by your behavior – that’s called ‘calling out in truth’.

It’s like the man who says **רַפְּאוּנוּ ה' וְנִרְפָּא** – *Hashem heal me*. Every day, a few times a day, he’s crying out to Hashem for good health. Meanwhile, look at him. His wife prepares a good healthy supper for him but he stops off at a store on the way home and he eats garbage. He’s sitting down and eating, let’s say, cake and soda instead of nourishing food. Or he sits up late at night listening to the radio or whatever it is and munching on peanuts, instead of going to sleep on time.

So Hashem says, “You don’t mean business. You’re asking Me to heal you? But why don’t you heal yourself? You’re not doing anything for yourself and so you’re not calling out to Me in truth.”

Empty Prayers

And Avraham is telling us here the same thing is when it comes to our *tefillos* for other people. When you're praying for your fellow man, Hakadosh Baruch Hu listens to how sincere this prayer is. Is it *b'emes*? Do you really mean it? Do you really want your fellow man to be rich? Do you really want him to be healthy and live long?

Here is a woman praying for her husband. She takes out the *techinah* and she prays for him. After all, every woman needs a husband. She needs a man in the house and her children need a father. So she asks Hashem to give him long healthy years.

But she does her best to try to make him sick too. There are many women like that. You think there aren't women who kill their husbands? Not with a gun, not with weapons – with her mouth. Plenty of women have killed their husbands by bothering them, belittling them.

Many times you suddenly hear that this and this man passed away. It's a surprise. He was sick? Wasn't he healthy? People don't realize that he died from aggravation. That's not mentioned in the obituary and of course when she comes to collect the insurance nothing is said about that. She's dressed in black, and she's weeping. She killed him – what's she weeping about? He didn't take out a big enough insurance policy for me! That's why she's weeping.

Prayers of the Devil

Husbands have killed wives also. I know a man like that who used to torment his wife. She got sick. He made her physically sick with his words and finally she passed away. On her deathbed he came to her and asked her for forgiveness. She said she can't forgive him. And I don't blame her. He was a devil. He was a *frum* devil; an Orthodox devil. He *davened* for his wife but he contradicted it with his actions.

So you have to see to it that your spouse, your children, your mother and father, are made healthy by your *acts*. Beside your *tefillah* – absolutely you have to pray – but you should also participate in it; whatever you can do you must do.

Here's a lady who after she lights the Shabbos candles says a *techinah* and she prays for the health of her family. She's praying for their health, for their safety. But then she goes into her room to get something and she leaves her children alone with the fire. And now there's an accident *chalilah* and a child is burned. It happened. Burned to death!

Don't tell me it was an accident. Accidents *shmaccidents*. It's somebody's fault. You're praying for your children? Very good. But back it up with *l'maaseh*. You have no business doing anything except watching your child when there is a flame that's exposed.

Knives, Windows and Ladders

A father *davens* in *shul* for his children but in the house he's holding a knife in his hands as he's walking from one room to another – he walks out of the doorway with a knife with the point foremost. It contradicts his prayers for the family's health.

Or let's say your grandchildren are coming to visit you. Someday you'll have a lot of children and grandchildren and you allow your windows to remain open. So what are you telling me you're praying for your grandchildren. You're praying *against* your grandchildren. If a child falls out of the window, it's somebody's fault. If a child falls into a washing machine and gets killed *chas veshalom*, it's somebody's fault. Don't tell me the telephone rang, the doorbell rang. All empty excuses, all contradictions to your *tefillos*. Your job is the child.

If there are things on the stairs that can send a person for a ride, it's a contradiction to your tefillos. The Torah says that. Open the Gemara you big *davener*: וְלֹא תִשִּׂים דָּמִים בְּבֵיתְךָ זֶה סֵלֶם רְעוּעָה – What does it mean that it's forbidden to spill blood in your home? It means you shouldn't have a wobbly ladder in the house (Bava Kama 46a). So stairs are a ladder and things left on the steps make for a wobbly stairway. And this is being transgressed constantly. They don't care for safety! So how could they say they're praying to Hakadosh Baruch Hu for life and health? That's calling out in truth?

The Best Prayer

The answer is you don't mean business. Of course you do; your *davening* is not just idle prattling of an unthinking mind. Absolutely you mean it, but it's not enough. That's not the best way to *daven*.

What's the best way? Avraham Avinu, he's teaching us the model for us to follow: *Pigu*, do what you can. Be *mishtadel* for your fellow Jew. Besides that, *pigu* – pray for that person. But don't rely on praying before you try to do what you can. That's called true prayer; that's called יְקַרְאֵהוּ בְּאֵמֶת, calling out in truth. That's called caring for your fellow Jew – when it's preceded by action, by efforts on his behalf.

Part II. Only Prayers

Do the Minimum

But now we're going to study another aspect of what Avraham said to the Bnei Cheis; it's included in יְקַרְאֵהוּ בְּאֵמֶת, and it's going to be our subject tonight. Because let's say that the people of the town were not interested in helping Avraham Avinu by going to speak with Efron about selling the field. It could be. Maybe they don't want to get involved. Maybe they're too busy. Maybe they're not interested in dealing with Efron; could be.

So what did Avraham say to them? וּפָגַעוּ לִי – Approach him for me. Yes, that's really what I would like from you. וְאִם לֹא – But in case you're not interested in helping me like that, צַלוּ לִי עַל־וִיָּה, – so at least pray for me.

And that's a second intention our Sages saw in Avraham's words: וּפָגַעוּ לִי – At least pray for me! To pray for me, for my success in convincing Efron to sell the field to me, at least that you could do. And therefore if you really care about helping me, that's the minimum you're required to do.

That's something new now. Even though it's a blemish in the quality of your prayers – if you could do more so it's a *pegimah* in your *tefillah* if all you do is *daven* – nevertheless don't say, "Since I'm not interested enough to get up and to activate myself on his behalf then I won't do anything." No. Whatever you can do, even a prayer, you should do.

It's Not So Minimum

Now, that's already an important *limud* about how we shouldn't waste opportunities in our obligation of *gemillas chessed* and *ahavas Yisroel*. וּפָגַעוּ לִי – Pray for me! At least that! Everyone speaks about *ahavas Yisroel*, about helping their fellow Jews, but what about doing something? And even if the doing is only *tefillah*, it's something. It's the minimum you can do.

So therefore in case you're passing a house with a nice big *mezuzah* in the doorway. So you know that inside they're *shomrei mitzvos*. There are probably a lot of children in that house. Ooh, that's a holy home! You know it takes *mesiras nefesh* to raise big families. And so a big family of *frum* Jews, they deserve your love, your *gemillas chassodim*, absolutely. Who should you be helping if not them?

Doing and Praying

Now, you're not stopping to help them at all. You're not going to knock on the door and offer your help, to clean the dishes. You have your own business that interests you. Maybe you're on the way to the yeshiva or to the office and you can't stop. And even if you could; they probably wouldn't let you in. So you're not going to do anything for them.

By the way, there are a lot of things you *can* do for them even if you're not going to go inside. Let's say you see that the lid of their garbage can blew off into the street. So it's a *mitzvas aseh min haTorah* to pick it up for them before a car will smash it. וְהִשְׁבֵּתָ – It's a *mitzvah of hashovas aveidah*. If it's not dangerous to walk out in the street, so go out in the street and pick it up and put it back. Otherwise it will be smashed in a minute by the next car.

Don't disdain that because whatever you can do, you must. That's the first thing. But let's say you wouldn't even do that. You're not picking up the garbage can and you're not helping them with other things. So I'm not going to praise you for that but at least you can pray that the garbage can should not be smashed. At least you can *pray* for his property.

Speak In Detail

Not only for his garbage can; as you pass by, pray that there should be *parnassah* in that house. There should be *shalom* between the husband and wife forever. Ask Hashem that they should all be healthy in that home, that they should live long.

They should have a lot of nice children too. All of them should be smart and they should have no trouble in the *cheder*. And the boys and girls should get the best *shidduchim* and they should always have *parnasah b'revach*. They should all grow great in Torah and *mitzvos* and after one

hundred and twenty years they should all go to Olam Haba.

Isn't that a nice thing to do? Does it cost money to *daven* for them? So why shouldn't you? וּפָנֵעוּ לִי – *Pray for your fellow Jew!* That much you can do! That's what Avraham said: "In case you're too lazy to help me out at least וּפָנֵעוּ לִי, pray for me." You're *mechuyav* to do that.

Man Speaks, Hashem Listens

And don't think your *tefillah* doesn't mean anything. Because that's another thing we learn from Avraham Avinu. He was dealing with Canaanim after all; they were Canaanim, the *Bnei Cheis*. So here is this great man, the prince of Hashem, and he's asking the Canaanim that they should *daven* for him? "At least pray for me," he said. What's that about? What is it even worth? It's an important point to consider: Why should Hashem take in consideration a *tefillah* said by a goy?

So I'm going to put down a very big foundation. And it's very important if we're going to appreciate the subject of *davening* for our fellow Jews: חֲבִיב אָדָם שֶׁנִּבְרָא בְּצֶלֶם – *Humankind are beloved by Hashem, שֶׁנִּבְרָא בְּצֶלֶם – for they were created in the image of Hashem (Avos 3:14).* That's a tremendous statement. It hits us like a bombshell! Every *adam* is *chaviv* in the eyes of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Everyone!

And in order to emphasize man's greatness Hashem tells us that He listens to his *tefillos*. In order to demonstrate that mankind is a special kind of creature, every human being has some influence with Hashem. It's a remarkable idea! A human being says something, he asks Hashem for something, and Hashem is listening to him!

Kol Shekein a Yehudi

Of course a Yisroel is even more tremendous. חֲבִיבִין יִשְׂרָאֵל – *A Jew is so much more beloved by*

Hashem (*ibid.*) As much as He listens to gentiles it's nothing like how He listens to Am Yisroel. אֲתָהּ שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלַּת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרַחֲמִים – To the *tefillah* of Yisroel He not only listens to but He listens *b'rachamim*, with mercy.

And not only a Yisroel who's a big *tzaddik* with a white beard and a silk robe. It's true for all of us. I'll tell you a little secret. You're not a *tzaddik*, let's say. It could be you are, but let's say you're not a *tzaddik*, and you're crying out to Hashem. You know what crying does? It makes you a *tzaddik*! That's what crying out does for you.

The more you talk to Hashem and become aware of Him, the more of a *tzaddik* you become. If you call out from the bottom of your heart and you do a lot of it, that's how you become a *tzaddik*. So now your *tefillos* are the *tefillos* of a *tzaddik*. It means that all of us can change things with our *davening*.

Saved By a Prayer

I can tell you in my own poor little life, I look back and I see how many times I said a *tefillah* and it came true right away. Right away! It's remarkable! I can tell you stories upon stories – I won't waste your time now – of my own experiences.

I was walking once in Manhattan Beach. I never was there before. It was a strange neighborhood to me. How will I get home? I didn't know the way.

I was asking Hashem, I said to Him, "Help me get home."

All of a sudden a man driving his car came by. "Are you Rabbi Miller?" he says, "Can I help you? You need a ride anywhere? Can I take you home?"

Another time I lost my wallet. I never carry any money but this time I was carrying forty dollars in my wallet. I couldn't find it. What happened to it?

So I went back to the store where I had been before. The storekeeper and I looked between all the boxes. No, not there.

I gave him my telephone number, "If you find it, call me up."

I started walking home. I walked a block and a half and then I said, "No, I have to walk back. I'll look on the street." So I *davened*. I asked Hashem to open my eyes, I should find my wallet. I walked back and as soon as I got to the block of the store, sure enough there was my wallet right near my shoe. Right near my shoe. So He listens. Absolutely He listens.

Utilize the Opportunity

Now these are small things. I can tell you dozens of stories like that. There's no question that Hashem is listening. בִּי אֲתָהּ שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלַּת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרַחֲמִים – You're listening with *rachamim*. He listens, absolutely. Of course if there's a big *tzaddik* his *tefillos* are better but anybody can *daven*. When it comes to *tefillah* everyone is important. בִּי אֲתָהּ שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלַּת כָּל פֶּה – Hashem hears the prayers of everyone. That's in Nussach Sefard. He listens to everybody's *tefillos*. So no matter who you are, it pays to cry out to Hashem.

And so we have to utilize that. Hashem is listening like a kindly Father: *Vus zugstu mein kind?* Think that way when you're *davening*. He's listening to you. To a *goy* He hears; not with *rachamim* but He hears. But your words? He's listening intently. He's *extremely interested* in your *davening*.

Unselfish Prayers

Only that people make a mistake – I'm talking about myself too – and we think almost exclusively about ourselves. Now, there's nothing wrong with *davening* for what you need but that's only half of the story. Because the best *tefillah* is the unselfish one, when you're praying for someone else. And

it's so important because the scales of heaven can be tipped sometimes even by the smallest thing! One more *tefillah* sometimes can make a difference. Sometimes that one more *tefillah* can be the thing – your *tefillah* for a fellow Jew can make a difference.

We'd be surprised if we could know how much *tefillos* aided other people. It's not something small to *daven* for your fellow Jew. The doctors are trying to do this and that and very many times doctors are surprised that the man survives. They said it's useless but he survived. A girl was waiting for a *shidduch* for years and out of nowhere the *yeshuah* came. *Tefillah* works!

Absolutely, a person is capable of helping his fellow Jews by means of *tefillah*; he's capable of extending people's lives, of helping them make a living, of making good *shidduchim*. We don't realize that it was somebody's *tefillah* that helped. Like we say in the Akdamus of Shavuot, וְהִנֵּיא בְּעוֹתָא – *Tefillah* helps. When a person *davens*, he's *mechuyev* not only to think that Hashem is actually listening, but that it *helps*. We have a lot of pull with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. כִּי אֶתָּה שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלַּת עַמְּךָ – *Hashem listens to our prayers with mercy*. And therefore, never despise the power of a *tefillah*.

Part III. The Obligation to Pray

The Sin You Didn't Know About

Now you might think that this entire subject is *middas chassidus*; that everything we're saying here is for certain people, great people. But the truth is that it's much more than that. It's an obligation; we're all *mechuyav* to pray for our fellow Jews. Not only it's a good deed or a *mitzvah*; it's a *chiyuv* – it means that if you don't do it it's a sin.

We learn that from Shmuel Hanavi. Shmuel Hanavi was speaking to the Bnei Yisroel and he

said, גַּם אֲנֹכִי חָלִילָה לִי מִחֲטֹא לֵה' מִחֲדוֹל לְהִתְפַּלֵּל בְּעֲדֶיכֶם – *Far be it from me to sin against Hashem and refrain from praying on your behalf* (Shmuel I 12:23). He called it a *cheit* to not pray for a person who needs help. “*Chalilah* that I should do a sin and not *daven* for you.” And on this *possuk* the Gemara (Brachos 12b) says: כָּל שֶׁאֵפֶשֶׁר לוֹ לְבַקֵּשׁ רַחֲמִים עַל חֲבֵירוֹ וְאֵינוֹ מְבַקֵּשׁ – נִקְרָא 'חוֹטֵא' – *Anyone who is capable of davening to Hashem on behalf of his friend but he doesn't, so he's called a sinner*.

Now that's a big *chiddush*. Because we understood that it's a good thing to *daven* for a friend. If someone is in need of a *refuah*, it's a wonderful thing if you *daven* for that person. If someone needs a *shidduch* and you *daven* for that person, that's excellent. But what Shmuel is saying here is a novel idea: that you *must* *daven*, that you're a sinner if you don't do it.

Doing the Minimum

So now you know what to do if you hear that someone needs a *yeshuah*. Let's say you find out that someone you know has a child who is sick. You can't help him? You're not capable of doing anything? So at least pray for him! At least that you can do!

Ask Hakadosh Baruch Hu to help him. Ask for the child's name and make sure to be *mispallel* for him. Your friend doesn't have to hear it. Stand in a corner somewhere and speak to Hashem. Find a telephone booth. You can even take the receiver in your hand if you want and make a long distance call to Hashem: “Please Ribono Shel Olam, send a *refuah shleima* to so and so, *b'soch shaar cholei Yisroel*.”

And not once and then you forget about it. Many times! You should carry papers with you that have the names of *cholim* and other *nitzrachim* and from time to time look into the papers and be *mispallel*. It's very important to live with that attitude of praying for our fellow Jews.

The Secret of the Siren

When you hear the siren of an ambulance speeding down the street, don't just take it as one of the phenomena of daily life. The wail of the siren, it should be to you as if the sick man himself is crying out to you, "Please help me!" That's how you should consider the siren.

Of course the man who is driving the ambulance is making more noise so he should advertise his company. He doesn't need all that noise but he's doing it anyhow; he wants you to see what a good company it is. But you should listen to it as the wail, the outcry, of that afflicted person who is battling for his life. The oxygen is being administered to him and his heart is barely beating! "Help me!" he cries to you.

But you don't know anything about medicine. What can you help? The answer is you can *daven*! Say something! Say a *tefillah*: "Oib er is a Yid – if it's a Yisroel there, then Hakadosh Baruch Hu should send him a *refuah shleimah b'soch kol Yisroel*."

A National Obligation

So somebody asked, "What about if he's an Italian? Then you shouldn't pray for him?" The answer is, do Italians pray for Italians? They don't do that. An ambulance passes by, which Italian prays? Ah *nechtiga tug*. We pray for Am Yisroel. That's our obligation, a special obligation for our nation, to pray for each other.

And not only for the *cholim*. If you know that someone is in some difficulty, difficulty with *parnassah* or with the law or trouble with his neighbor, whatever it is, all kinds of difficulties people have, you should feel it's your duty to intervene and pray for them.

Look how many girls need *shidduchim*. How many people can't find *shidduchim* for their daughters? You ever think of *davening* for all the fathers who need to marry off their daughters?

Did you ever spend five minutes davening for the girls? Young men too are looking for *shidduchim*. They're in a quandary. They're always calling me on the phone asking me, "What should I do? It's not going."

Sometimes all we can do is *daven* for them. If you can do more, absolutely you must. That's what Avraham said. Number one is help me *l'maaseh*; speak to Efron for me. But if you can't do something right now at least you can take a few minutes and *daven* for all the girls and boys who need *shidduchim*. That's our contribution, the minimum contribution. Constantly it should be on our minds to fulfill that obligation of praying for our fellow Jews.

The Constant Opportunity

And that brings us to one of the great opportunities of life that we don't appreciate enough and that's Shemoneh Esrei. Shemoneh Esrei means very many things to us; very many achievements are available in the *davening*. But one of the important ones is that we're always praying *for each other*.

It's a remarkable thing that all of our prayers are so arranged that we're praying for Jews constantly. When we *daven*, we *daven* in plural; the whole *davening* we say *b'loshon rabim*. You don't say *רְפְּאֵנוּ ה'* – unless you say *nusach Galicianer*. It's *רְפְּאֵנוּ ה'* – Heal us! Plural! Us! When you say *בְּרַכְנוּ אֲבִינוּ* – Bless us, our Father, so some people think us means 'me', the majestic me. *רְפְּאֵנוּ* and *בְּרַכְנוּ* means, 'Bless me,' 'Heal me.' "We means me," he thinks.

Public Prayer

No. *We means we*; all of the loyal Jews. *עַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲמָדָה* – The whole Jewish people. You're praying for your neighbors. You're praying for *chassidishe* Jews in Williamsburg. You're praying for the Young Israel Jews in Scarsdale. For the Lakewooder Jews and Monsey Jews. And for the Teimani Jews and

the Flatbush Jews and Eretz Yisroeldige Jews. We want all of the Am Yisroel to have *yeshuahs*. That's why when we stand Shemoneh Esrei we're saying everything in plural.

Now, it's not a bad idea, in order to get into the *hergel*, the practice, to think at least about your fellow Jews right around you, in the shul. Maybe it's too big to think of everybody but at least in this *minyan* where you are.

So you say, "Well, of course. I intended everybody." You intended nobody. You weren't even thinking. Maybe yourself you were thinking about. Maybe.

Expanding the Prayer

So make it a habit as you're saying **רְפָאנוּ ה' וְנִרְפָּא**, you're thinking also about the man next to you. You're asking that his heart should be healthy. His kidneys should be healthy. His eyes should be healthy. It didn't even occur to you! Heal us means all of us; all the people in my shul, and their wives and their children, they should have healthy hearts. No one should get that dreaded disease.

Mention names of those you know. It should be a practice of yours at the end of your Shemoneh Esrei to take out that paper from your pocket and read off the names. If you know the *nusach* you can say it in the middle of *refaeinu*, the *tefillah* for sick people. You can shed a tear too! They need it and it will help.

Sometimes, you can expand your *tefillos* outside of the shul, outside of the neighborhood. Think of all the hospitals where there are so many Jews right now waiting for help. So why shouldn't you daven for them? **רְפָאנוּ ה' וְנִרְפָּא**! All *frum* Jews should be well!"

Praying for Boys

Not only health; pray for the wisdom of our nation. **יְעֵזֶר בִּינָה, הָיְנוּ מֵאַתָּה** – Favor us from You, **וְהַשְׂכִּיל** – with knowledge, understanding and wise

conduct. The first *brachah*, the request for understanding and wisdom is plural because it's not only for you. You're asking for all the boys in the yeshivah; you're praying to Hakadosh Baruch Hu they should have good heads.

You know how important a good head is? A boy with a poor head gets so discouraged in the yeshivah, especially with the *rebbeis* who are saying big *pipulim*; they're not saying plain *pshat*. A *rebbei* thinks it's beneath his dignity to say plain *pshat* – he wants to show he's Rabbi Akiva Eiger and so he's saying deep *pilpulim*; I don't know how good they are but he's trying anyhow. And the poor, bewildered *talmidim* understand nothing; instead of getting the plain *pshat*, they understand nothing.

So a few very good boys succeed, a few *baalei kishronos*. But that's not good enough for us. We want every single one to succeed! We have to pray for all those boys that are being frustrated and being disappointed and very many of them are turned off because they don't understand what's going on. We pray **אֲתָהּ חוֹנֵן לְאָדָם רַעַת ... הָיְנוּ מֵאַתָּה** – Hakadosh Baruch Hu please give a blessing to Jewish boys in the yeshivah. You can *daven* for the *illuyim* too, yes, but don't forget to *daven* for the weaker boys.

Praying For Girls

And Jewish girls too. We want them to be *matzliach* in the Bais Yaakovs. There was a girl here who couldn't keep up with her studies and they wanted to send her from Bais Yaakov. The father came running to me. "What can I do?" he said. "I can't put her in public school! *Gevald!* What are they doing to my child?!"

They said "we can't keep her. She's too far behind." So they made a deal finally. They let her go just to English alone. But it was a terrible thing, a calamity. The girl couldn't keep up.

And so we have to pray. So many of our children need our *tefillas*. They have *nisyonos*, troubles, and they need our help. If you can do something, absolutely you must. That's number one. But in very many cases there's only so much we can do. But to *daven*, to pray, to cry out, to shed a tear even, that's something we all can do and therefore there's no end to the opportunities in this career of praying for our fellow Jews.

And so whoever you are – every man and woman, every boy and girl – and wherever you are – whether it's in the *beis hakenesses* or whether it's in the street – every opportunity should be used. People need help. You can't help them? But this much you have to do. *Daven!* Besides for achieving for yourself a greatness of character and a perfection of the *neshama*, it helps them too! And so with your prayers you can be a savior; with *tefillah* you can be an *oheiv Yisroel* and accomplish *yeshuas Yisroel*.

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

Let's Get Practical

Praying for Others

We learned about the great responsibility of praying for others. This week I will *bli neder* begin to practice what Rav Miller recommended; to begin writing down the names of people I know who could use prayers. During Shemoneh Esrei I will remember to think of others as I use the *lashon rabim*, moreover, after Shemoneh Esrei, I will review the list and try to pray earnestly for each one.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

135 – Calling in Truth | **554** – Giving and Getting Blessings
715 – Desire the Unattainable | **864** – Seven Objectives of Tefillah
E-259 – Improving the World

Q&A

WITH
RAV AVIGDOR
MILLER ZT"L



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שאלות ותשובות עם ראב"ד אביגדור מילר ז"ל

QUESTION

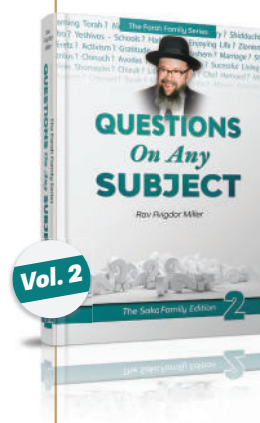
What do you think about people who label America a white Christian country?

ANSWER

Absolutely! That's what we want. Jews should not resent the fact that many claim this to be a white Christian country. We should say "Gezunterheit!" More power to you! We are satisfied with that. Let it remain a white Christian country!

It's a tragic error when these ultraliberal Jews battle religion in the schools. Let them have religion! It's their country. We can't take over their country. Certainly it's a Christian country and it must remain so. The salvation of America is that it should remain a Christian country because to be a Christian country is ten thousand times better than being a G-dless country – because atheism is ten thousand times worse than idolatry.

TAPE # 47



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