

Chayei Sarah: Immediately Answered Prayers

 Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson
From the Sichos in English Collection

In the Torah portion of *Chayei Sarah* we read¹ how Avraham sent his servant, Eliezer, to find a wife for Yitzchak. Arriving in Aram Naharayim, Eliezer prayed that his mission be crowned with success. The Torah goes on to say:² “He had not yet finished speaking when Rivkah appeared....”

Regarding the alacrity with which Eliezer’s prayer was answered, the *Midrash* states:³ “There were three individuals whose prayers were answered immediately: Eliezer the servant of Avraham, Moshe, and Shlomoh.

“Eliezer — [as written:] ‘He had not yet finished speaking when Rivkah appeared’; Moshe — [as written]:⁴ ‘No sooner had he finished speaking these words [that the earth would split and swallow up Korach’s rebels if he, Moshe, was indeed G-d’s messenger], than the earth split; Shlomoh — [as written]:⁵ ‘And as Shlomoh concluded praying [that the Divine Presence grace the *Beis HaMikdash*], a fire descended from Heaven....’ ”

In light of the fact that Eliezer’s prayer was likened to the prayers of such giants as Moshe and Shlomoh, and that other individuals of great stature did not have their prayers answered with such dispatch, we must perforce say that the immediate response was not so much dependent on the person doing the praying as on the uniqueness of the prayers.

In what way were these prayers so exceptional that they, and they alone, were answered with such speed?

The amount of time it takes for something to be transferred from one person to another depends entirely on the distance between the giver and the recipient; when they are utterly united, the transfer takes no time at all. It thus follows that the petition of one entirely united with G-d will result in an immediate response.

Just as the degree of closeness to G-d will affect the swiftness of response to one’s prayer, so too will the content of the prayer have a direct effect on the speed of the answer — the more the prayer emphasizes the concept of unity and closeness to G-d, the more immediate the response.

In light of the above we can understand the uniqueness of the three abovementioned prayers: they encompass the three general manners whereby G-dliness is united with creation — within the *world*, within *man*, and within *Torah*.

The proof that G-dliness abides within the world was the manifestation of the Divine Presence in the *Beis HaMikdash*.⁶ There it was possible for the naked eye to perceive that the material world was nullified before G-dliness, so much so that physical space transcended finite boundaries, as our Sages state:⁷ “The space of the Ark was not [capable of being] measured.”

It was for this measure of unification and revelation of G-dliness within the world that Shlomoh prayed at completion of the *Beis HaMikdash*, and that is why his prayer was answered immediately.

The revelation of G-dliness through unification with *man* finds expression in prophecy. This state is achieved when a prophet cleaves to G-d,⁸ meriting to have G-d's words revealed to him clothed in his own intellect, in his thought and speech.⁹

Moshe's prayer in response to the rebels' clamor:¹⁰ "Why are you setting yourselves above G-d's congregation?" addressed itself to this issue, as the verse states:¹¹ "This shall demonstrate to you that *G-d sent me* to do all these deeds, and I did not make up anything myself."

Because Moshe's prayer dealt with the critical issue of uniting with G-d through prophecy, G-d's response was instantaneous.

The third manner of revelation of G-dliness — in a manner of complete unification — is the Divine revelation within *Torah*, for *Torah* and G-d are entirely one.¹²

When G-d gave the *Torah* to the Jewish people, He brought about the unification of the highest with the lowest — transcendent G-dliness uniting with the physical world — thereby making it possible for parchment, for example, to become a sacred object.

The incident that paved the way for the unification of the most lofty with the most base was the marriage of Yitzchak to Rivkah, for the actions of the Patriarchs serve as an antecedent to the actions of their progeny.¹³ Yitzchak's marriage to Rivkah mirrored the joining of the most high with the most low.

Marriage is the highest form of union. In order for Rivkah (a child of the nefarious idolater Besu'el and sister of the infamous swindler Lavan) to marry Yitzchak (a living "sacred offering,"¹⁴ the ultimate in holiness), a true union of the loftiest and lowliest had to be achieved. This marriage served as the forerunner of the union represented by the *Torah*.

It was for this union that Eliezer prayed. Little wonder, then, that "He had not yet finished speaking when Rivkah appeared."

Based on *Likkutei Sichos* Vol. XX, pp. 91-96.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Bereishis* 24:1-14.
2. *Ibid.* verse 15.
3. *Bereishis Rabbah* 9:4; *Yalkut Shimoni, Remez* 108.
4. *Bamidbar* 16:31.
5. *Il Divrei HaYomim*, 7:1.
6. See *Or HaTorah, Vayeitzei* 178a and onward; *Ma'amar Reb Brachya* 5643, chs. 2-3, 14 and onward; *Ma'amar Padah B'Shalom* 5680 and 5687.
7. *Yoma* 21a.
8. See *Rambam, Hilchos Yesodai HaTorah* 7:1.
9. *Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah* conclusion of ch. 2, quoting the *Ari Z"l*.

10. *Bamidbar* ibid. verse 4.

11. *Ibid.* verse 28.

12. *Tanya* chs. 4 and 23 quoting the *Zohar*.

13. See source cited in *Likkutei Sichos V* , p. 79, fn. 20.

14. *Bereishis Rabbah* 64:3.

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