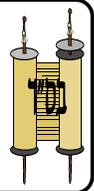




# Kindert Torah

Parashas Vayera



## Knock Down the Walls

“Avi, did Avraham Avinu have *Siyata Di'Shmaya* (Heavenly Assistance)?”

“Oh did he, Chaim! It is hard to think of someone who had more *Siyata Di'Shmaya*. Avraham Avinu stood up against the whole world when he proclaimed that Hashem was the Creator of the Universe. He was then tested with ten tests, including being thrown into a fiery furnace, and going to war against four kings. He survived all of this with tremendous *Siyata Di'Shmaya*.”

“That is 100% correct, Avi. Would you like to have *Siyata Di'Shmaya* like Avraham had?”

“Of course!”

“The Gemora (Berachos 6b) gives us the key to acquiring this *Siyata Di'Shmaya*.”

“What is it?”

“Praying in a *makom kavuah* (fixed place).”

“Can you please explain that, Chaim?”

“Sure, Avi. Rebbe Chelbo says in the name of Rav Huna, ‘Whoever fixes a place for his tefillah (prayer); the G-d of Avraham will help him.’ Rashi adds, ‘Just as He helped Avraham.’ The source of this is a verse in this week’s parasha, ‘And Avraham arose early in the morning to the place where he had stood before Hashem’ (Bereshis 19:27). He went back to pray in the exact same place that he had prayed before. From here we see that a person should always pray in the same place”

“That sounds so simple, Chaim. Just by praying in the same place, you can receive great *Siyata Di'Shmaya*.”

“Yes, Avi. It is worthwhile to look in the Shulchan Auruch Orach Chaim (90:18,19) to learn the halachos of *makom kavuah*. Then you will know the details of this law. When you do fulfill it, you will merit many other good things.”

“Please tell me about them Chaim.”

“The Gemora continues to relate that a person who prays in his *makom kavuah* will be called an *anav* (humble one,) a *chassid* (one who goes beyond the letter of the law,) and a student of Avraham Avinu.”

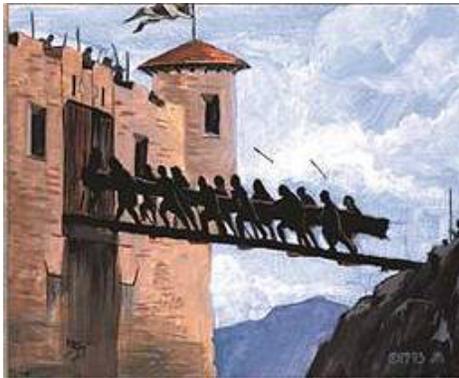
“Wow! How is that possible?”

“The Rashba explains that your *makom kavuah* helps you settle your mind with the proper *kavannah* (intentions) before you pray. You realize before Whom you are standing, and you stand in awe and fear of Him. When you prepare yourself in this way, your tefillah is naturally better. The Meiri relates that *makom kavuah* helps with your *kavannah* during tefillah.”

“That makes good sense, Chaim.”

“The Rif takes a different look at the subject. One who views tefillah as a burden will look for an opportunity to throw off

the burden at the earliest possible convenience. He will pray wherever and whenever he can. On the other hand, one who is careful to pray in a *makom kavuah* shows that tefillah is a special opportunity to subjugate himself to Hashem, and to ask for His Mercy. In this way, he is similar to Avraham Avinu, who went to a special place to request mercy from Hashem, in order to save Lot from the destruction of Sdom. So we see that prayer in a *makom kavuah* is a reflection of ones *middos* (character traits), specifically the desire to subjugate oneself to his Creator. The Rabbeinu Yona elaborates even further. Why does a person receive such wonderful praises just for praying in a *makom kavuah*? He answers that although we do not know for sure that the person is an *anav* and *chassid*, still we have permission to believe that it is true. Why? Since he is so careful about his tefillah to pray in a *makom kavuah*, and he loves to pray so much, he is surely an



*anav*. Because without humility, he cannot even consider that Hashem will accept his tefillah. The verse (Tehillim 51:19) states this, ‘The sacrifices Hashem desires are a broken heart.’ Once he merits humility, he subsequently will achieve *chassidus*, as the gemora (Avodah Zara 20b) says, ‘*Anava* brings you to *chassidus*.’”

“That is so inspiring.”

“I have a parable that will really fire you up. The sefer Taamei HaMinhagim cites the writings of the Arizal for this story. Imagine a king who wants to conquer a walled city. He tries to break down the wall with a battering ram. The secret is to keep pounding away at the same place on the wall. That will weaken the structure until eventually the wall will fall down. However, if the king smashes one place, then another, then another, the wall will not weaken, rather it will stand strong. So too it is with our tefillos. From the day that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, a wall of iron stands between us and Our Father in Heaven. Our tefillah

is like the battering ram, which can knock down the wall. When? When we pray in a *makom kavuah*. Moving around from place to place is like battering away at different points on the wall. It will never fall down.”

“I hear you loud and clear, Chaim. I am ready to pray. Nothing will stop me. I am going to knock down walls.”

“Avi, Hashem should give you *Siyata Di'Shmaya* just like your ancestor whose name you bear - Avraham Avinu.”

*Kinderlach* . . .

Now is the time to develop the good habit of praying in a *makom kavuah*. Go to the same *Beis HaKinesses* every tefillah. Within the *Beis HaKinesses*, pray in the same place. You will see that your mind is more settled because you are in a fixed place. You will pray with better *kavannah*. By obligating yourself to the same place, you will show your humility and your willingness to go beyond the letter of the law. Your tefillah will become a powerful battering ram, able to knock down the walls of iron between you and Hashem. In addition, you will have tremendous *Siyata Di'Shmaya* to help you succeed in everything that you pray for. *Kinderlach*, may Hashem answer all of your prayers!

Parasha Questions:

- Why did the Torah list all of the descendants of Milkah? (Rashi 22:23)
- When did Hashem prepare the ram of Akeidas Yitzchak? (Rashi 22:13)
- Why did the angel call Avraham's name twice? (Rashi 22:11)
- What will Hashem answer the Satan and the nations who ask Him why He loves Avraham so much? (Rashi 22:12)
- Was Akeidas Yitzchak a command or a request? (22:2 and Rashi)

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