

GREAT FOR SHARING  
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

# בשבת



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS  
VAYISHLACH

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT  
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS  
RABBI AVICHAÏ BENSOUSSAN

## TEFILLAH BOOSTERS

**P**arshas Vayishlach records the long-awaited meeting between Yaakov and Eisav. Yaakov, knowing that Eisav had raised an army and is marching his way, did what he could to prepare for war. Besides sending gifts to appease Eisav, and *Davening* to Hashem, Yaakov also split his camp in half, with the idea that if Eisav were to conquer one camp, the other camp would be able to escape.<sup>1</sup>

If one follows the story chronologically, there is one part that doesn't seem to make sense. Yaakov Avinu split his camp a full day before they were slated to meet Eisav. Why did Yaakov take this drastic step before he truly needed to?

The Tiferes Tzion<sup>2</sup> (Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Yadler, 1843 -1917) explains that besides being a sound strategy for war, Yaakov also split his camp in order to augment their prayer! By splitting the camp, Yaakov was showing his family that there is a plausible chance that half of them may not survive. Though Yaakov's family already knew that the coming war could be deadly, by seeing a concrete example of this possibility, it would inspire them to deepen their *Tefillos*, and pray to Hashem with all of their heart. This is why Yaakov split his family 'early' - in order to get them to *Daven* with greater connection to Hashem.

This is truly a fascinating insight into both *Tefillah*, and the human being. As meaningful as the *Tefillah* of the *Shevatim* certainly was, they were still capable of reaching even deeper into their souls, and raising the level of their *Tefillah*. How great is the human soul!

Additionally, one would think that the prayers uttered by the children of Yaakov would not need any augmentation. Nevertheless, the *Shevatim* benefited from a reminder of how dire their situation is, using that reminder to boost their *Tefillah*.

When we see how our great ancestors treated *Tefillah*, it can inspire us to reach higher as well. After all, if Yaakov himself felt that *Tefillah* needed a boost, we can likely use a boost as well. And if the *Shevatim* were able to find untapped potential in themselves and use it for their prayers, we too can dig deep into our soul, and pour it into our prayers.

1 Bereishis 32:4-22

2 Tiferes Tzion on Bereishis Rabbah 75:13

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### Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

Sometimes we may short-change ourselves because we are unaware of how much potential we truly have. We see from the *Shevatim* how much more there is to a person's abilities, and how much more there is to *Tefillah*. What can we do in our own lives to enhance our *Davening*?

One exercise, which can be done before *Tefillah*, or at any other time, is to focus on what we have, and what life would be like if it were missing. For example, every morning we thank Hashem for giving us sight. Imagine if we did not have the ability to see! Imagine if no one around us were able to see, either. How would we manage? By truly putting ourselves into this imaginary situation, we can augment the power of our *Tefillos*.

Another exercise is to spend time focusing on the idea that everything happens because of Hashem. The ability to pass an upcoming test, make friends, or have a medicine work is all from Hashem. The more we understand this simple idea, the more power we give to our *Tefillos*.



**Let's strive to develop truthful  
thinking rather than determining that  
'our thinking' is the 'truth.'**

- Degel HaMussar p. 43

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# A HEARTWARMING REMINDER

Reuvein Braun\* was going through a hard time. More than one of his close relatives were very ill, and he himself had recently run into terrible financial troubles. Rosh Hashanah was approaching, and Reuvein certainly had a lot for which to *Daven*. Nevertheless, he was having a hard time concentrating, and felt a creeping sense of despair as the Yom Tov came closer.

One day his four year old son came home from preschool with a bookmark. On one side was a laminated picture of his smiling son, and on the other side was a short poem. "I am small as you can tell / And still cannot *Daven* well / So dearest parents, please be so kind / and in your *Tefillah* have me in mind!"

With a tear in his eye, Reuvein placed the bookmark in his Rosh Hashanah *Machzor*, knowing that it would help him focus during *Tefillah*. And indeed it did - whenever Reuvein's mind began to wander during the long *Shemonah Esrei*, he would look down at his smiling son, remind himself of who is counting on him, and reinvigorate his *Tefillos*.

*Mussaf* finished, and Reuvein started putting away his *Tallis* and getting ready to return home. As he moved his items around, his son's bookmark fell out of his hand, and onto the floor. Before he could reach down and pick it up, another hand had already retrieved it. Reuvein looked up to see his son's bookmark in the hands of the Rav, Rabbi Biderman.

"What a lovely son you have," said Rabbi Biderman, as he returned the bookmark.

Reuvein nodded. "Thank you. I'm happy I brought this with me. Every time I looked at his picture, it helped me focus."

"Why's that?"

"Well, I love my son! And the poem really hit home. I have to say, he's very precious to me, he's so innocent and pure, and, well, I feel like if I don't do everything I can for him, who will?"

Rabbi Biderman slowly nodded his head. "It would not surprise me at all," he said, after a moment, "if Hashem, too, has a 'reminder' bookmark like this for each one of us."

*\*Names have been changed, based on a true story.*

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Before *Davening*, one should take a few moments to mentally prepare themselves to *Daven* to Hashem.<sup>1</sup>
- During *Shemoneh Esrei* one should imagine that they are in the *Beis HaMikdash* and direct their heart toward the heavens.<sup>2</sup>
- We would certainly be aware of what we are saying before speaking to a human ruler. Similarly, one should familiar with the meaning of our *Davening* when *Davening* to Hashem.<sup>3</sup>

1 *Shulchan Aruch, Orech Chaim* 93:1

2 *ibid.* 95:2

3 *ibid.* 98:1