

# Zera Shimshon

Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmani zy" a, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.



## אמרות שמשון

### Explanation of the Talmudic statement: One who hands over his judgment to Heaven is punished first

“And Sarah died in Kiryat Arba, which is Hebron, in the land of Canaan; and Abraham came to eulogize Sarah and to weep for her.” (Bereshit 23:2)

In the Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 16b), Rabbi Avin said: “Whoever hands over his judgment to Heaven (hamoser dinoh Lashamayim) is punished first, as it is said (Bereshit 16:5): ‘And Sarai said to Abram: ‘May my wrong be upon you; let Hashem judge between me and you...’”, and afterwards it is written: ‘And Abraham came to eulogize Sarah.’” Rashi comments on this: “He buried her.”

But one may ask: What did Rashi intend to add with this comment? At first glance, the teaching seems to come simply from the fact that Sarah died before Abraham.

We can explain as follows: The Talmud (Yevamot 65b) relates that a woman once appeared before Rav Nachman and demanded that her husband divorce her because they had no children. Rav Nachman replied that she was not obligated in the commandment of procreation, and that if she still insisted on a divorce, she would forfeit her ketubah (the financial settlement stipulated in the marriage contract). She responded: “Do I not have the right to a child who will care for me in my old age and attend to my burial?” Rav Nachman acknowledged that her argument was valid, and that in such a case, the husband could be compelled to grant the divorce. This is codified in the Shulchan Aruch (Eben HaEzer 154:6).

From this we understand that a woman’s desire for children cannot be claimed on the basis of fulfilling the commandment of “Be fruitful and multiply,” but rather stems from her natural yearning to have a child who will bury her when her time comes.

Accordingly, Rashi’s comment becomes wonderfully clear. When Sarah expressed her grievance to Abraham, her wish for children could not have been motivated by the commandment of procreation — since she was not obligated in it — and it would also make no sense for her to speak sharply, saying “May my wrong be upon you,” if she had no rightful claim. Therefore,

her true intention must have been her desire to have a child who would bury her upon her death. Yet, because she handed over her judgment to Heaven, she was punished measure for measure: her wish was not fulfilled, for it was not her son Yitzchak who buried her, but her husband Abraham.

This is why Rashi specifies that the Talmud’s teaching — that Sarah was punished — does not derive merely from the fact that she died before Abraham, but from the verse “Abraham came to eulogize Sarah,” implying that he buried her, not Yitzchak. Hence it is deduced that she was punished midah keneged midah (“measure for measure”) for handing her judgment to Heaven. Otherwise, how could her death before Abraham be proof of punishment? Perhaps her time had simply come. The proof lies in Rashi’s comment—that Abraham buried her, and not her son Yitzchak.

(Zera Shimshon, Parashat Lech Lecha, art. 23)

### A profound reason why Eliezer desired that a miracle occur when meeting Rivkah

“And it shall be that the young woman to whom I say, ‘Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,’ and she shall say, ‘Drink, and I will also give your camels drink,’ let her be the one You have designated for Your servant Yitzchak; and by this I shall know that You have dealt kindly with my master.” (Bereshit 24:14)

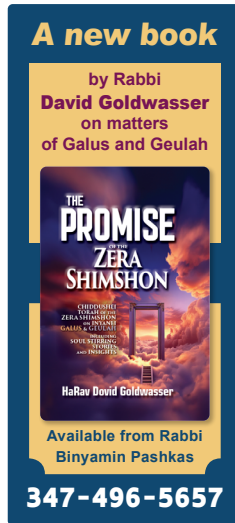
The Talmud (Ta’anit 4a) teaches: “Three people made inappropriate requests, but two of them were answered favorably, and one unfavorably...

Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, [was answered favorably,] as it is written: ‘And the daughters of the men of the city... and it shall be that the young woman to whom I say...’ It could have been a lame or blind woman, but he was answered well, and Rivkah was presented to him.”

We may ask: Why did Eliezer rely on a miracle, especially in so crucial a matter?

We can say this: The Midrash (quoted by Rashi, v. 42) explains that Eliezer said, “Today I departed and today I arrived,” which implies that the earth contracted miraculously before him (kefitzat haderech). Eliezer therefore reasoned: “If a miracle has already occurred for me, it must be that Hashem desires to perform another one,” and thus he relied upon it.

The reason he desired a miracle was that Rivkah was only three years old (Rashi on 25:20), and Eliezer feared that her father,



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Betuel, would object to the marriage, claiming that it was forbidden to marry off such a young child before she was mature enough to say, “I wish to marry this man,” as taught in the Talmud (*Kiddushin* 41a). Therefore, he wanted the encounter to occur through an obvious miracle so that this objection would carry no weight.

The reason for the prohibition of marrying off a very young girl is the concern that when she grows up, she may not want that husband, and “we do not rely on miracles” to determine such a matter. But in this case, since Hashem performed multiple miracles to unite Rivkah and Yitzchak, it was clear that their union was decreed from Heaven. Hence, there was no longer any fear that Rivkah would later refuse him, for everything had occurred miraculously in fulfillment of the Divine will. Thus, Betuel could not reject Eliezer’s proposal.

*(Zera Shimshon, Parashat Chayei Sarah, art. 9)*

### **Lavan realized that when Eliezer was sent for the betrothal, he had ceased to be accursed**

**“And [Lavan] said: ‘Come, blessed of Hashem! Why do you stand outside, when I have cleared the house and the place for the camels?’”** (*Bereshit* 24:31)

The Midrash (*Bereshit Rabbah* 60:7) teaches that this verse hints that Eliezer was transformed from being “accursed” to being “blessed.” But what led Lavan to conclude this?

The answer is that as soon as Lavan saw the rings and bracelets on Rivkah’s hands, he thought that Eliezer had given them to her as betrothal gifts. If so, it necessarily followed that Eliezer was no longer a slave, for a servant cannot act as an agent (*shaliach*) to betroth a woman, as the Talmud (*Kiddushin* 41b) rules: “Just as you [Israel] are members of the covenant [of Abraham], so must your agent be a member of the covenant.” If Eliezer were still a slave, he could not serve as an emissary in an act of kiddushin.

From this it follows that Abraham must have freed him, as ruled in the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Yoreh De’ah* 267:70): if a master commands his slave to perform a mitzvah or any act in which the slave himself is not obligated, the slave is automatically emancipated, for such a command implies that the master considers him bound by mitzvot as a free man, which as a slave he is not.

Therefore, when Lavan saw that Eliezer was acting as an emissary for a betrothal, he understood that Abraham had emancipated him, and he exclaimed: “Come, blessed of Hashem!”—meaning: you no longer belong to the category of the accursed, but to that of the blessed.

*(Zera Shimshon, Parashat Chayei Sarah, art. 9)*

*An endless search lasting hours · tension and anguish · the baby was found safe and sound*



**A dear Jew who lives in Cleveland (yes! even there people study Zera Shimshon) relates the following:**

*It happened not long ago, one afternoon, when my two-year-old daughter simply vanished. At first, during the first few minutes, we began to search calmly throughout the house — both floors, the basement, the yard surrounding the house,*

*the kitchen, the bathroom, the closets, and every corner or crevice where she could have crawled into. But as the minutes went by and she still didn’t appear, I turned to my Jewish neighbors and to my relatives who live nearby, as well as to all the members of the synagogue where I pray, asking them to come and help in the search, which by then we had to expand to a larger area.*

*Dozens of Jews came to the area and began to search; everyone was tense and filled with anxiety. I felt that with every passing minute I was beginning to lose my mind — each moment meant fewer chances of finding her. At the same time, we called the local police, who also gave instructions and joined in the search efforts. But the baby still wasn’t found.*

*After more than two hours from the beginning of the incident, I was completely bewildered; I felt I could no longer do anything. Thoughts of the worst, Heaven forbid, began to invade my mind. I told myself: I no longer have the mental strength to keep searching, but I can still say **Tehillim** (Psalms). I took the book of **Tehillim** with the commentary of Zera Shimshon — a book very dear to me, which I always use in moments of favor or distress to arouse Divine mercy. I try to pray only with that book so that, while reciting **Tehillim**, I may also awaken salvation through the merit of the **Zera Shimshon**, by studying passages of his sweet and wondrous insights into the verses.*

*So I did in that moment of anguish, the likes of which I had never experienced; each passing instant felt like an eternity. I began to recite chapters of **Tehillim** and to study the explanations and teachings of **Zera Shimshon**, calmly and with focus — as much as possible in that state — for several long minutes.*

*And behold, one minute (just one!) after closing the book, my nephew came running toward me with the baby in his arms — healthy and strong. It turned out she had fallen asleep under the sofa, a place we had certainly checked before, but since she was covered with a blanket, we thought there was nothing there and didn’t notice her.*

**“Yeshuat Hashem keheref ayin”** — “The salvation of Hashem comes in the blink of an eye.” A phrase of faith that we always repeat now took on a tangible and living meaning.

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Translated and written by Rabbi Moshe Spira - yomospira@gmail.com

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