



Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein Parashat Chayei Sara / פרשת חיי שרה / 5779

## The Prayers of Yerushalayim

When Eliezer arrives at Charan and commences his search for an appropriate spouse for Yitzhak, he begins with a prayer. The Torah relates that God responded to this prayer immediately: “Now he had not yet finished speaking, and behold, Rivka came out.”<sup>1</sup> According to the midrash, this immediate response to a prayer occurred two other times in Tanach:<sup>2</sup>

Rebbi Shimon b. Yokhai taught: there are three people who were answered with the request still in their mouths: Eliezer the servant of Avraham, Moshe and Shlomo.

The passage continues that when Moshe prayed for Korach and his followers to die in an usual fashion, God immediately opened a hole in the ground and God similarly responded immediately to Shlomo’s prayers at the inauguration of the first Beit HaMikdash by sending a fire from heaven to consume the sacrifices on the altar.

Characteristic of midrashim, this passage simply notes the affinity in events and language of these three stories. Beyond this connection, though, what is the conceptual connection and lesson to be learnt from the association of the prayers of these stories?

Perhaps these three prayers represent three stages in the development of the Jewish people and their connection to Hashem. Eliezer’s prayer occurs in the context of the first Jewish marriage.

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<sup>1</sup> Bereishit 24:15. Translation from Chabad.org.

<sup>2</sup> Bereishit Rabbah 60:4.



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Avraham and Sarah had begun the Jewish faith through their preaching of monotheism and morality, but their efforts would only have continuity if their child Yitzhak would marry and have children. God responded to their efforts to create the Jewish people by responding immediately.

Moshe is known as Moshe Rabbeinu – the giver of the Torah. Once the Jewish people are established and are comprised of over two million people, God saw fit to transmit to us the Torah – the ultimate guide for life. However, this effort was endangered by Korach who challenged the authority of Moshe and the authenticity of his teachings. Therefore, Moshe's prayer was, in effect, a prayer that the Jewish people have the Torah, and he was also answered immediately.

Shlomo's life represents the full maturation of the Jewish people's relationship with Hashem. The Jewish people were living in the Land of Israel and following the Torah. What was missing was the Beit HaMikdash in Yerushalayim – the eternal resting place for God on earth, amongst the people. Shlomo's prayer at the Beit HaMikdash's inauguration is focused on Hashem's choice of Yerushalayim and how through resting His presence in the city and the Beit HaMikdash, God would be intimately involved in the affairs of the Jewish people. Once again, God is pleased with the efforts of Shlomo and the people to further develop their relationship with Him and God's presence fills the Beit HaMikdash.

May we merit that our Yerushalayim once again become the overt resting place for God, amongst the Jewish people.