

Prayer Proximity

Excerpted and adapted from a shiur by Dayan Yehoshua Grunwald

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https://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/BER81_007_Vayeitzei_Prior_to_Prayer_Semichas_Geulah_LTefillah.mp3

And he encountered (vayifga) the place and stayed there overnight because the sun had set . . .

Bereishis 29:1

According to the Gemara (Brachos 26b), the word *vayifga* (from the root *pegi'ah*) refers to *tefilah*, from which the Gemara derives that Yaakov established the practice of davening Ma'ariv. The Gemara also says (Brachos 27b) that Ma'ariv is optional, though *Klal Yisrael* accepted it as obligatory.

Tosafos (Brachos 4b) asks that given the inherent *reshus* status of Ma'ariv, why does the Gemara also say (Brachos 9a) that the *bracha* of *Ga'al Yisrael* about the Redemption from Egypt must be adjacent to *Shmoneh Esrei*? How can this be required if the entire Ma'ariv is optional? Tosafos answers that although Ma'ariv is not an absolute obligation, if one does recite it, *smichas ge'ulah lisfilah* is required.

This idea may also explain the approach of the Magein Avraham, who holds (106) that women are not obligated to recite *Shmoneh Esrei*, yet he also holds (70) that women are obligated in *smichas ge'ulah lisfilah*. The Machatzis Hashekel explains that although women may make a short request to fulfill their daily obligation of *tefilah*, if they choose to recite *Shmoneh Esrei*, they must also be *someich ge'ulah lisfilah*.

May one announce immediately before the Ma'ariv *Shmoneh Esrei* to insert an addendum (e.g., *Ya'aleh v'yavo*), or is that considered a *hefsek* (interruption) between *ge'ulah* and *tefilah*? The Rashba, quoted by the Shulchan Aruch, rules that it is not considered a *hefsek* because it is for the purpose of the *Shmoneh Esrei*; additionally, Ma'ariv is a *reshus*, so the requirement for *semichas ge'ulah lisfilah* is more lenient than for Shacharis. However, the Kaf Hachaim and Shulchan Aruch HaRav (in his Siddur) note that the custom is not to announce this.