

“A tanna teaches like R. Yosi bar R. Chanina – Avraham established the morning prayer, as it says ‘Avraham rose early in the morning to the place where he had stood before G–d...’ (Bereshit 19:27) and there is no **standing** (amidah) other than prayer, as it says ‘Pinchas stood up and prayed.’ (Tehillim 106:30) Yitzchak established the afternoon prayer, as it says ‘Yitzchak went out to converse (lasuach) in the field at evening time...’ (Bereshit 24:63) and there is no **conversation** (siach) other than prayer, as it says ‘A prayer of the afflicted, when he faints and pours out his complaint (sicho) before G–d.’ (Tehillim 102:1) Yaakov established the nighttime prayer, as it says ‘He encountered (va’yifgah) the place, and stayed the night there...’ (Bereshit 28:11) and there is no **encounter** other than prayer, as it says ‘Therefore pray you not for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, nor make intercession (tifgah) to me...’ (Yermiyahu 7:16)”
[Berachot 26b]

[Reflecting on Berachot 26:b] These three expressions – standing, conversing and encounter, are aligned with three principle benefits that prayer brings to the service of g?d.

The first act of prayer is to root firmly in the heart all the holy concepts and lofty images, the foundations of awe and morality which one has acquired in their soul...The primary time for this rooting is the morning. That before one turns to the business of life and the inevitable feelings of bodily desire, they prepare a strong and well-founded moral posture for themselves which will stand up under the oppositional trials of the waves of the times; therefore, the prayer which is oriented toward this activity is known as *amidah*, standing.

Prayer is called *sichah* (conversation), sharing a name with the plants and trees which are called *sichim*, due to the blossoming of the soul with new powers, which branch out naturally through the excitation of the soul in the service of the heart. This is most fit to the time of *mincha*, the evening offering, when one is close to casting off their troubles...

...as the *chasid* explained in “The Duties of the Heart” on the advantage of nighttime prayer, which also facilitates visitation of sacred lofty visions and awesome intellectual fruits, that cannot be apprehended in the company of the physical senses...Prayer is called encounter (*pgiya*), as when one happens upon something, as a result not only of the nature of the path which the traveler takes but also of the immanent nearness of the one encountered.