



Our Tefilot Are Never in Vain

Captain Daniel Perez z"l Hy'd fell in battle on Simchat Torah. The soldiers under his command saved dozens of people as he continued to fight in his tank for hours. Daniel was considered missing and then presumed captured. Just two weeks ago, he was declared fallen and his family began to sit Shiva. His father Rabbi Doron Perez, Executive Chairman of World Mizrahi, sent the following message to communities worldwide:

"After 163 heart-wrenching days of angst, anxiety, prayers and mitzvot in Daniel's merit, last week he was declared fallen on Simchat Torah. So many people prayed for him over the past 5 months – were those prayers in vain? Especially since before we began davening for him, he had already been killed.

"Nothing could be further from the truth for two reasons. Although this wasn't the outcome that we wanted, it gives solace to know that he didn't suffer. It is a painful loss, but we don't need to worry about him. That is a relief, and it is because of your tefillot that we were brought this closure.

"Additionally, we always davened for Daniel amongst all the hostages. There are so many other hostages – including Matan Shachar ben Anat from Daniel's tank – and

therefore they were never only for Daniel. Not only were the prayers not in vain, but they actually brought our anxiety as to Daniel's fate to an end, enabling us to move on to the next painful stage of mourning.

"Moreover, prayer is, first and foremost, something that changes us. The Hebrew word "to pray," *lehitpalel*, is reflexive. It is not only about impacting the world, but first, about impacting ourselves. Once we change ourselves, we can change the world. And we see how that has happened: barriers between people have come down and Am Yisrael has become more united. All the acts of kindness, *challah* bakes, *mitzvot*, *tefillot*, etc. have changed us, bringing us closer to God and to one another — and that lasts forever.

"May we continue to pray and to feel as one, and in that merit may only good things happen for the Jewish people." ■



Sivan Rahav-Meir is a media personality and lecturer. Married to Yedidya, the mother of five. Lives in Jerusalem, and formerly served as the World Mizrahi Shlichah to North America. Sivan lectures in Israel and overseas about the media, Judaism, Zionism and new media. She was voted by *Globes* newspaper as most popular female media personality in Israel and by the *Jerusalem Post* as one of the 50 most influential Jews in the world.