

The Situation In Eretz Yisrael & The Power of Prayer

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What can we do about the current terrible situation that we are in? Throughout the last 2000 years, we have been in the exile of Edom. It's been a difficult 2000 years, but at least the lines were clearly delineated. "The hands are the hands of Eisav, but the voice is the voice of Yaakov" The weapon of the Jewish People is the voice, our prayers. The very last enemy that we will face is from Yishmael. The name Yishmael literally means "G-d will hear his voice". The Muslims are not embarrassed to pray. No matter where they are, in the middle of the airport, they pray. Jews, often times, are embarrassed to pray. When we fight Eisav, we have two completely different weapons. But when we fight Yishmael, we are fighting someone who has the exact same power as us, prayer.

Take the average day in a Jewish life. Assuming there is no special occasion, we spend most of our day praying than doing any other religious ritual. Inside the heart of every Jew, there is a part of us that wants to daven. But unfortunately, prayer is taken for granted. We must serve Hashem with all your heart and soul. To serve G-d with all your heart means prayer. It takes effort to pray, it's a struggle, you can't just run on auto-pilot! We know that prayer is the most important aspect of our lives. We must understand it. "Abra Kedabra" "I create as I speak". Hashem spoke and created the world. From this, we see the power of words. Words have the power to create, to change the whole world. "dabber" means speak, "davar" means thing. By speaking, we can create things. Either you can praise G-d, thank him or ask him. Most people are busying asking Hashem for things all the time. We have a long list of things we need and want. Why do we have to praise G-d? Does he need our praise?

How much do people worship sports stars? Rock stars? Celebrities? Imagine for a second that you are actually talking to G-d. When you admire somebody you want to say, wow I really admire you! People line up for hours to meet their favorite authors, sports stars, celebrities, etc. Why? Because through that process I feel a connection to that person. G-d is infinite, he doesn't need anything. He gives us the opportunity to talk to him. Wow, you created a whole universe from nothing. Hashem is sitting there listening to us, what do you want to say. That is the most important part of prayer. If the only time a husband and wife spoke is when they want something from each other, it would be a disaster. Surely, they would want to speak to each other without any ulterior motives.

"Yirat Hashem". We translate it as "fear of G-d" but this is not correct. It means to be in awe of

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G-d. To look at the world and say “wow”. If you can't say “wow”, then something is wrong. Certain things fill you with a sense of awe, that is called “Yirat Hashem”. So many people miss the forest for the trees, they are so focused on the details that they don't see the big picture. Just think of a tangerine, the way it looks, the way it smells, the way it tastes. We are obligated to look at everything in creation and to be in awe. We must be able to appreciate things and to genuinely thank. Often times, we overlook the good things that Hashem does and focus in on the bad things. Imagine you barely get out of an accident. As you were about to hit the car, you beg Hashem to help you. Once you barely pass the car, you think of yourself as a great driver.

We say the shemonei esreh three times a day. In the first blessing we say “gomel chassidim tovim, konei hakol”. Take the words “gomel chassadim tovim” - “he does kindness” think to yourself, what kindnesses does Hashem do for us? Take three kind things that Hashem has done for you. We are always looking for the big things. That is the wrong outlook, you have to look at every little thing the G-d does for you. The same applies to a relationship, the more you appreciate the little things, the greater the relationship. Everyone has problems but when we only focus on the problems and overlook the abundance of good, it is such a tragedy.

The yetzer hara tries to convince us that we don't count, that we are worthless. Every person should say “bishvili nivra haolam” - “the world was created for me”. There is no one more important than you. Your prayers are extremely meaningful. Make no mistake about it, every life that is saved is because of someone else's prayers. Every single prayer has the ability to change the world that we live in. No prayer goes to waste. The only weapon we have is the weapon that Yishmael has – let's use it. We are living in difficult times and no one can afford to let our prayers go to waste.