

PRAYER – A PERSONAL CONNECTION

A person can attend a wedding and spend most of the evening feeling bored and ambivalent. Why? Because there is no one he connects with. On the other hand, one can spend time waiting in line at the bank and actually enjoy it. Why? Because he runs into an old friend and spends the time engaged in a meaningful conversation. Human beings yearn to feel connected. Every person cherishes the feeling of being valued, cared for, heard, and accepted.

Yet this feeling, fulfilling as it is, is just a glint of the relationship one can experience from the greatest connection of all – that of an individual to Hashem, his Creator. In those moments of true connection during prayer, one is filled to the overflowing with a deep sense of purpose and of bonding with God. That is because in those meaningful moments, one is fulfilling the purpose for which he was created, which is to build a relationship with God.

It is vital for everyone to have *Emunah*/faith – to know that Hashem runs every aspect of the universe. Once that fact is established in one's heart, one needs to learn how to connect, on a deep, personal level, to Hashem, and that is one of the primary goals of prayer.

For many people, the desire to feel Hashem's closeness during prayer burns most passionately when troubles come. It is then that their illusions of self-sufficiency are stripped away, and they are able to call out to Hashem in humility.

Even when one is not facing a problem, the inner need to feel a close connection to Hashem, remains undiminished. One does not pray only because of what he needs from Hashem. Rather, he prays because his most essential need is to constantly grow and to reaffirm his close relationship with Hashem.

The children of a loving father do not approach him only when they need his help; they seek to be near him whenever they can. They thrive and flourish on his consistent, loving presence in their lives.

In the same way, an individual's spiritual growth depends on his constant desire for closeness to Hashem. This is a desire that transcends all times and circumstances. To reach out to Hashem in prayer and forge the closest possible personal connection to Him is to open the channel of unlimited spiritual purpose and achievement, no matter what one's day-to-day activities bring his way.

POINTS TO PONDER

Hashem is close to those who call upon Him sincerely.

Connecting to Hashem provides the ultimate fulfillment, since this is a person's true purpose.

Prayer is the ultimate vehicle for connecting to Hashem.

Even when a person does not feel any pressing personal needs, he must pray.

As the words of *Tehillim*/Psalms promise: Psalm 145:18: Hashem is close to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him sincerely.