

PRAYER POINTS

THE ULTIMATE HOPE

For us, the medicine we know will work, the one we can trust when there is no room for error, is prayer. A Rabbinic Commentary says: "*Va'eschanan el Hashem ba'eis hahi leimor* – I exhorted Hashem at that time, saying." It explains that the word "*leimor*" means, "say" to the generations that during troubled times they should pray.

Another Rabbinic commentary comments that "every believer in Hashem's overseeing of (our day-to-day) existence" should believe that prayer can save him from troubles. A person who fails to pray when he is in need displays a lack of faith in Hashem's constant supervision, or in His power to help.

Our primary means to hasten the arrival of the Final Redemption is by praying and crying out to Hashem. Hashem asks us to cry out and pray before Him. Did He not redeem our forefathers from Egypt because of their cries and prayers? Scripture tells us: *The Children of Israel groaned because of the work and they cried out. Their outcry...went up to God. "In the days of the Judges, I heard your cries: So it happened that when the Children of Israel cried out to Hashem concerning Midian, that Hashem sent..."*

The Rabbinic commentary, the Midrash, concludes that Hashem exhorts us to pray and cry out to Him – "*I do not want your sacrifices, only words," as the verse says: Take with your words, and come back to Hashem; say to Him: Let there be forgiveness for all wrongdoing..."*

For us *tefillah*, prayer, is our great hope. It is what our leaders have turned to during our nation's times of utmost challenge and despair because they know that it is the most powerful device we have.

It was the weapon Jacob raised against Esau, praying "*Rescue me, please, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him lest he come and strike me down, mother and children.*" Hashem answered his prayers, and *Jacob came intact (with his entire family) to the city of Shechem.*

Prayer rose to the lips of Israel when they faced what seemed like certain doom at the Reed sea: *And they were very frightened and the Children of Israel cried out to Hashem.*

Tefillah is a powerful force to bring about forgiveness for individuals as well. *Tefillah* is more powerful than bringing sacrificial offerings in the Temple. While it is well known that the sacrificial offerings atone for transgressions done by mistake, prayer atones even for intentional sins.

We see that Hashem awaits our fervent prayers. *Tefillah* is our strongest hope, our tried and true means to arouse Hashem's mercy, save us from affliction, and bring the Final Redemption.

POINTS TO PONDER

Prayer has always been the key to salvation when the we face troubles.

Our troubles serve to prod us to reach deeply into our hearts and beseech Hashem for mercy.

Psalm 130:7 O Israel, wait for the LORD; for with the LORD is steadfast love and great power to redeem. (TNK)