

PRAYING with *Fire*

PRAYER POINTS



Heartfelt Prayer Is Never in Vain

Rachel Frankel said, “If tomorrow, God forbid, I’ll hear the worst news, I don’t want my children to feel that where did all my prayers go?”

by [Rabbi Dovid Rosman](#)

I am feeling intense pain. Pain for those beautiful teenage boys whose lives, full of potential, were cut short in a horrific way. Pain for their families. Pain for their friends and communities where they lived. And pain for the entire Jewish nation which unified during this time to do what they could to bring them home.

In addition to the incredible efforts of the IDF to find the boys, people around the world were doing anything they could to try to help the cause.

Sitting in my office that faces the Western Wall, I witnessed thousands of people from all walks of life coming daily to pray for them. There were 24-hour Torah learning programs set up in the boys’ communities to serve as a merit for their well-being. People accepted upon themselves to be more meticulous in their speech and in the way, they treat others. Shabbat was accepted early. The nation united; we felt like one family.

Now we are left reeling, devastated by the vicious murders. And many are wondering: what happened to all our prayers over the last 18 days? Were they for nothing?

The Hebrew word for prayer “*tefillah*” comes from the root “*palel*” which means to connect. A successful prayer doesn’t necessarily mean that we get what we ask for. God is not a vending machine and there are times when the answer we receive is “no.” But the prayer may still be deemed “successful” since the primary goal of prayer is to connect with God. That has been accomplished. Our responsibility to this terrible situation was to do whatever was in our power. We prayed, we performed extra mitzvot, and we united in a unprecedented manner. We gained a greater appreciation of preciousness of life, of the Jewish people, and we genuinely connected with God. All that will go to the merit of Naftali, Gilad and Eyal.

The parents of the three boys displayed enormous strength and faith in God. In an interview with the Times of Israel last week, Rachel Frankel said this: “We repeatedly requested people to pray, and people from different faiths, and people that are secular. They each have their own way of sending positive energy, whatever it takes, and prayer means a lot to me. I just want it clear and I kind of repeated myself a few times: Prayer is very powerful but it’s not a guarantee for anything.

“I didn’t know they were taking pictures then [at the Western Wall] but I think the words they caught me saying were, “God doesn’t work for us.” Just because I’m praying with all my heart. It might help. I believe it could help, especially when thousands and millions are praying. They are. But nobody owes me anything. And if tomorrow, God forbid, I’ll hear the worst news, I don’t want my children to feel that where did all my prayers go? It was a group of children I don’t know and I feel a responsibility. God forbid, it shouldn’t be a crisis for them.”

No prayer goes wasted. Our sages teach us that all prayers, even ones which seem to go unanswered, are stored away by God and come into fruition at a later date. King David says to the Almighty, “You have counted my wanderings, place my tears in your flask, are they not in Your record?” (Psalms, 56:9) Rabbi Shimshon Pinkus explains that every tear shed in prayer is saved and kept by God until it is used at its designated time of need. Only God can know when that time is.

The holy Steipler Gaon of Bnei Brak once said, “Do not be dismayed. There is no such thing as a sincere prayer that goes unanswered. Any heartfelt request addressed to God *must* be answered. It can’t be otherwise. If it is not answered today it will be answered tomorrow. If not tomorrow it will be answered in a week. If not a week, in a month. If not answered in a month it may be answered in a year, or in ten years, or in one hundred years or more. If your prayers are not answered in your lifetime they will be answered for your children or for your children’s children. We cannot say for sure *when* a prayer will be answered, we can rest assured only that every prayer *will* be answered somehow, someday.” (A Letter for the Ages, Artscroll)

Our pain is great, and we cannot understand how this fits in with God’s greater plan. In just over two weeks these boys were able to create great change within the Jewish People, more than some can do in a lifetime.

May we be comforted together with the family and may all our prayers, extra study of Torah, and performance of mitzvot serve as a merit for these holy souls and the Jewish People.