

PRAYING with *Fire*

PRAYER POINTS



*Dear
Siddur...*

By Sam Stern

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Dear Siddur,

After 17 years together, it pains me to write this letter.

I remember the day we met. You came to me through the assistance of a Jewish outreach organization when I was in Israel at the age of 19 – my first [siddur](#).

At first, your words were foreign, but over the years they became familiar, almost second nature.

We've been through a lot together, you and I. You were there with me in those early years, when I was in yeshiva in Israel when everything was so new, when I was trying to figure Judaism out, trying to figure life out. You were there for me in college and then when I graduated. You were there with me when I was looking for my *bashert*, during a frustrating period of years that seemed like it would go on without end.

But you were also there with me when I found my *bashert*. Do you remember, siddur, the day of my [wedding](#) when I held you, [praying](#), overwhelmed as I thought about the life that lay ahead of me? The tear marks on your pages still commemorate that day.

You were there for me during those days of triumph, and you were there for me during days of struggle as well. You were there with me as I sat at the bedside for each of my grandparents before they departed to their Eternal Home. You were with me when I was fired from my job, and unemployed for almost a year. And for the years when my wife and I wanted so badly to have children but were not yet blessed, you were there, siddur.

I won't lie – it wasn't easy opening you up during those times. But in those days, you taught me discipline. You reinforced the lesson that prayer is not a magic incantation. It is a process by which we strengthen our relationship with the Master of the Universe, because only during difficult times is growth really possible.

And you were there for me, siddur, when my wife and I found out that we were going to be blessed with not one child but two – twins. There are tears on your pages which commemorate that as well. You were there when our beautiful children were born, you were there at the [bris](#) when family and friends joined us in this new chapter in our lives and as we formed another link in the eternal chain of the Jewish people.

You were there when I finally got the job that was meant for me and me for it.

With so many years together, you always seemed to know which page I wanted to turn to, almost instinctively. You even had all of the notes that I made in the margins during those first few years when I delved into the meaning behind your prayers.

But all of the wear and tear has taken its toll on you. I've tried to patch you up over the years, God knows, I've tried. Pages have fallen out, and I have taped them back in place over and over again, stubbornly fighting the inevitable.

I finally bought a new siddur. It doesn't open to the right page or stay open obediently like you did. It doesn't have the notes from my youth, or the tears. It feels so clean, so sharp, so foreign.

If you could talk, I have a feeling you'd say it's time for me to move on. I hear that – another chapter in life. But it isn't easy. So, if it's alright with you, I am not going to get rid of you entirely. I am going to tuck you away on a corner of the bookcase, and just open you up from time to time and visit you, my old friend.

Seventeen years. Thanks for the memories, siddur.

The moral of the story is we need a prayer life – a connection to our heavenly Father through His Son Yeshua. Without this what do we really have?