

www.JEPQUEENS.com
76-01 147 St | Flushing, NY



(718) 544-5213
JEPQueens@gmail.com

by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

LET'S USE THE POWER!

PARSHAS SHOFTIM

In the city of Ofakim, there was a couple who were not blessed with children for many years. Many years of treatment and visiting doctors in many parts of the world did not bring the desired results. One day, the rav of Ofakim, Rav Shimshon Dovid Pincus zt"l told the husband to come to his house after midnight. He did so. Rav Shimshon ushered him outside and into his car. Rav Shimshon drove for a long time. Finally, he stopped in the middle of the desert and told the husband to leave the car. "Right here, right now, you will be alone in the desert. Just you and the Ribbono Shel Olam. Now is the time for you to break down and cry real tears. Daven to Hashem like you've never davened before. Hashem wants to hear your t'fillos – and in the merit of this s'gulah, you will see a salvation. I will come back for you in a half hour." The man got out of the car. All alone, in the pitch darkness, he davened. He begged and screamed and davened like never before. Thirty minutes later, Rav Shimshon drove up and rolled down his window. "No, you did not cry enough," said the Rav to the astonished man. "This is not how to cry. Cry! Really cry! Beg and plead and cry from the depths of your heart and soul! Give it every, last ounce of energy. Use all of your remaining strength! Then, you will see salvation!" Rav Shimshon rolled his window back up and drove away a second time! The young man walked back into the desert night and let it all out. He screamed at the top of his lungs and cried to the point of total exhaustion. When Rav Shimshon pulled up 30 minutes later, he got out of the car and smiled. "Yes! This is what I meant by crying!" The man's face was bright red and he was soaked through and through from perspiration and buckets and buckets of salty tears! "Now, you will surely see Hashem's salvation," concluded the Rav. Nine months later, almost to the day, the couple was blessed with a beautiful, healthy baby boy!

How great is the power of true t'fillah from the depths of one's heart! ([Queens Jewish Link](#) by Rabbi Dovid Hoffman)

Teshuvah, Tefilla and Tzedakah annul the evil decrees against us.

We are already in the month of *Elul*, preparing for Rosh Hashana, *Yom Hadin*. Prayer is one important area to strengthen. We can reap great dividends from it!

❖ The **Talmud** (Brachos 28B) tells us that each time Rabbi Nechunya ben Hakana entered the beis midrash to learn Torah or exited the beis midrash, he recited a brief prayer. When he entered, he prayed for Divine help that he should not make a mistake in his learning or teaching Torah. Upon exiting he thanked Hashem for giving him the great privilege of learning Torah.

Rabbi Menachem Meiri, a Rishon from the 1200's, says we can learn from this that **anytime we need any type of help we should compose a prayer, in our**

"She called the Name Hashem Who had spoken to her. You are Almighty Who sees"
(Bereishis 16:13)

own words, asking Hashem for what we need. This will help us always feel connected to Hashem.

❖ Hagar, our Matriarch Sarah's maidservant who also became our Patriarch Avraham's wife, ran away from Sarah to the desert (Bereishis 16:6).

Angels appeared to her, each one giving a different message. They told her to return to Avraham and Sarah and that if she showed proper respect to Sarah then she would become pregnant and have a son, Yishmael.

Rashi says that Hagar understood that the angels were representatives who were sent by Hashem. She had been used to seeing angels coming to Avraham's house. She was surprised that she saw them in the wilderness. She responded by offering a prayer to Hashem, *"She called [She prayed in] the Name*

Hashem Who had spoken to her. [She said] You are Almighty Who sees [everything]... (Bereishis 16:13)

Sforno explains that Hagar's new insight caused her to daven to Hashem. In her tefillah she praised Hashem for noticing her pain. Until now she had assumed that revelations from Hashem were confined to Avraham's house. Now she learned that Hashem may reveal Himself in any location. She learned that Hashem notices people's pain. That inspired her to increase her level of tefillah as she praised Hashem.

Rav Henach Leibowitz zt"l said when we daven, **if we would realize the extent of how much Hashem cares about us and how much Hashem feels our pain, it would inspire us to daven with complete kavana**, concentration!

❖ Before Moshe passed away, he criticized Klal Yisroel for not davening to Hashem to remove the decree that forbade him from entering Eretz Yisroel. The **Midrash** (Devarim 7:10) states that Moshe told Klal Yisroel that he davened to Hashem to save them from annihilation due to the sin of the golden calf.

Moshe said, "One person could redeem 600,000 by the egel but 600,000 could not redeem one person?"

Rav Henach Leibowitz zt"l said that it is not logical to say that the Jewish People did not daven at all for Moshe. After all, he had done so much for them. The Jews **did** daven! However, the decree was very strong, and it required a very strong prayer to remove it. **Prayer comes from the heart and there are different levels of intensity that are possible.** Moshe was telling the Jewish People, had you davened with even more intensity and with more tears, then the decree against me would have been removed.

Maharzu says (Devarim 3:11) in order for Klal's Yisroel's tefillah to have been effective to remove the decree against Moshe, they would have had to initiate the tefillah on their own. They did not. Even had Moshe told them explicitly to daven for him, the tefillah would not have been powerful enough to have their request granted.

The power of our prayers is increased by the level of sincerity of our tears and the deep feeling in our hearts. **An added nuance of feeling can make the difference in how our tefillah is answered.**

Anytime we need any type of help we should compose a prayer, in our own words, asking Hashem for what we need. The realization of the extent of how much Hashem cares about us, will inspire us to daven with more kavana, concentration! Prayer comes from the heart and there are different levels of intensity that are possible. Every added nuance of feeling can make the difference in how our tefillah is answered. We have the power of prayer. Let's use it!

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Rabbi Yaakov Finestone is the director of JEP Queens. For almost 50 years JEP Queens has been in the forefront of kiruv. JEP has changed the lives of thousands of Jewish children enrolled in public schools and kiruv schools. Many are shomrei Torah and mitzvos today because of JEP.

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