



*For crying out loud*

# We can't do it **ALONE**

The key to having our prayers accepted

**BY ROBERT SUSSMAN**



**LET'S BE HONEST, JEWS ARE FAMOUS FOR** their faribels (arguments), as the old saying goes, "Two Jews, three opinions." At times, we just have a hard time getting along. If we want to be successful in davening, however, we need to learn not only to get along with each other, but even to love and to care for each other.

## **WE DAVEN AS WE**

Open up a siddur and you'll notice something very striking: we daven in the plural. We refer to Hashem as "our G-d," and we ask Him to "forgive us," to "redeem us," to "heal us," to "bless us," and on and on.

The Ari, z"l, would teach that before a man begins davening, he needs to accept upon himself the mitzvah of loving his fellow Jew as he loves himself. In this same vein, we need to set aside a few moments before we daven to consider if there is anyone in our community in a difficult situation and join with them in

their pain (be it regarding an illness, or children, or work, etc.) and daven for them. In all of our prayers, we need to think of others and join their needs together with our own needs. By accepting upon ourselves to love our fellow Jew like we love ourselves, our prayers ascend and get included with all the prayers being davened by Jews everywhere.

## **THE CONNECTION BETWEEN DAVENING AND LOVE OF OUR FELLOW JEWS**

It's not a simple matter for our prayers to get to where they need to, to ascend before the throne of Hashem. A man is meant to daven with a group.<sup>1</sup> There's a special strength when we get together as a community for prayer. What's so special about davening as a group? Because Hashem doesn't reject the prayer of a group!<sup>2</sup>

The chiddush – the innovative idea – of the Ari is that even if one is not able to daven with a group, a person can still connect with that group through his feelings of love for the people who make up that group – and, by doing so, ensure that his prayers will be accepted. We find here an element of middah keneged middah (measure for measure): if we love, we are loved; if we hate, we are hated.

## **HATING A CHILD OF HASHEM**

What if, as sometimes happens, we're upset with another Jew? Such a thing is actually an enormous problem – it's like being upset with one of Hashem's children. In fact, it's comparable to being upset with Hashem's only child, as if Hashem, so to speak, says, "It's too much, from all of the men in the world, precisely My only son you hate?"

These two mitzvos of davening and love of our fellow Jews are really one. The connection? Emunah (faith).

The power of davening flows from believing in Hashem and relying upon him. What shows the degree to which we believe in Hashem and His being All-powerful and the Creator and Conductor of the world, however, is how much we perfect the mitzvah of loving our fellow Jew as we love ourselves. Fulfilling this mitzvah testifies to the fact that we cast our lot with Hashem – and this helps for our prayers to be accepted.

## **A TEST OF FAITH**

Why is the mitzvah of loving our fellow like we love ourselves so difficult? After all, it's not like we're being asked to give to others everything that we possess.

The difficulty in this area flows from a lack of emunah. For example, sometimes, we walk in the street and we see another Jew who appears to us like he's

“IF WE LOVE, WE ARE LOVED; IF WE HATE, WE ARE HATED.”

not so friendly and nice. He might even appear very coarse to us. And we can't help but think, "Did Hashem really create the entire world only because of this person?" referring to the sentiment expressed in the gemara<sup>3</sup> that a person must see the world as having been created entirely for his sake.

But, the truth is that this person is a Jew and, so to speak, the only son of Hashem. It's as if Hashem says, "At this moment, I'm not interested in Avraham Avinu, or Yitzchak Avinu, or Yaakov Avinu, or even any of the leaders of the prior generations. Only this sweet and beloved Jew standing before you interests me!" And Hashem takes that Jew and hugs him with an enormous expression of love.

Difficult as it may be, we need to learn to look at every Jew and to imagine that that person is the only son of Hashem. And, we need to strive to focus on the positive points that exist in him simply as a result of his having a

**“ WE NEED TO STRIVE TO FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE POINTS THAT EXIST IN EACH AND EVERY JEW SIMPLY AS A RESULT OF HIS HAVING A PURE AND HOLY SOUL THAT IS CONNECTED TO THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE. ”**

pure and holy soul that is connected to the Creator of the Universe.

### **JUST AS HASHEM LOVES ME, HE LOVES MY FELLOW**

Everything that we have flows from the chesed of Hashem and His goodness. Loving our fellow as we love ourselves is a condition of prayer because one who does not love every Jew lacks emunah in the chesed (kindness) of Hashem. When a man turns to Hashem and asks from Him for all of his needs, Hashem turns towards that person and the blessing that comes to him flows from the recognition of how much Hashem loves each and every Jew and wants only good for him. Just as Hash-

em loves me and wants to hug me – precisely in this same measure – He also loves my fellow Jew. Each and every Jew is a zisur yid (a dear Jew) to Hashem, sweet like honey.

If we fail to see this, it's a sign that we lack emunah in the special connection between Hashem and His nation Israel – and, if so, from what power are we able to stand before Him and ask for things from Him in our prayers? **III**

*Adapted from Sefer Nefesh Shimshon al Siddur HaTefillah*

<sup>1</sup>Shulchan Aruch 90:9

<sup>2</sup>Mishna Berurah 90:28

<sup>3</sup>See Sanhedrin 37a

## *Chag Sameach*



**TOYOTA**

LEAD THE WAY

**TOYOTA RAV4**  
FROM **R6160<sup>PM</sup>**  
0% DEPOSIT

**FORTUNER**  
FROM **R7150<sup>PM</sup>**  
0% DEPOSIT

THE NEW  
**YARIS**  
WITH FUTURE DRIVE OPTIONS  
FROM **R3399<sup>PM</sup>**



TO BOOK A TEST DRIVE SMS THE  
WORD **"CAR"** TO **31022**

**AUTOMARK SPECIALS ON SELECTED  
PRE-OWNED VEHICLES AVAILABLE NOW!**

Images for illustration purposes only and may vary from actual vehicles on offer. Terms and Conditions apply. E&OE

### **Killarney Toyota Houghton**

60 Riviera Road, Riviera, Sandton. Tel: 011 486 1424  
www.killarneytoyotahoughton.co.za

**We inspect all our New and Automark  
vehicles in our workshop prior to delivery!**