

## "Purim and the Power of Prayer"

One of the main lessons from the miraculous victory of the holiday of Purim is the incredible power of sincere prayers. It was only the genuine prayers of Mordechai and the Jewish people which allowed the salvation to materialize. Purim teaches us that whenever Jews are in trouble or have a pressing need whether individually or collectively, the only address is the One Above, The Master of the Universe. Everyone recites in the daily prayers, "v'oneh l'amo b'eis shav'um eiluv" - "Hashem who responds to His people upon their outcry to Him". It is not nearly enough to just desire Hashem's salvation, one needs to open his mouth wide to beg and pray to be saved.

The most powerful weapon that the Jewish nation has is each and every one's individual mouth. The Chofetz Chaim (Rabbi Yisrael Mayer Kagan 1839-1933) explains based on the teachings of *chazal*, that the way one uses the mouth parallels one's "אומנות" - occupation. The Chofetz Chaim explains that each occupation has specific tools that are necessary to help support and guide them to successfully complete that specific job. A doctor has the stethoscope, the teacher has a ruler, and the restaurant owner has a deep fryer. The result of the job will be dependent on the condition of the tools being used. If the tools are new and in immaculate condition, the result will be perfect. However, if the tools are lacking or somewhat defective, it will clearly be noticeable in the results. He continues that this equally applies in regards to our mouth. The mouth is the tool used for learning Torah, praying, and doing acts of kindness. However, the mouth can also be used as a weapon to hurt and even destroy other people's lives. For one's prayers to be successful, the mouth has to be kept clean and pure from speaking harmful or negative words. A pure mouth that is used to beseech Hashem, reaches heaven in pristine state and with its full potential power. This will allow the prayers to achieve maximum results. On the other hand, if one's mouth is tainted and impure, the prayers to Hashem will be deemed defective, like a skilled worker whose tools are defective.

People are constantly running around looking for an instant "segulah", spiritual remedy in every tough situation. However, the only truly effective method to protect from hardship and misfortune is to pray to Hashem. Prayer that comes from a pure and clean mouth will have the power to soar straight to heaven and achieve maximum success. May we all merit to see our individual and collective prayers answered and the coming of Moshiach.