

PRAYER POINTS

A QUESTION OF HOPE

A couple has been childless for many years. Every spiritual approach and treatment has been tried. Nevertheless, others are encouraged to continue to pray for them, although their longed-for outcome seems beyond reason.

As previously noted, where one urgently seeks to access Hashem's storehouse of blessings, even when someone's chances of being helped appear to be sorely diminished, one must continue to pray for his fellow.

One's words of prayer must also reflect an understanding of precisely what is necessary to best help that person.

A prayer that simply asks Hashem to consider the merits of the ill person and thereby find reason to show him mercy. It should be as heartfelt as a prayer that is more specific in its request for healing.

There is one final point regarding someone benefitting from praying for a "miracle." The Gemara (Rabbinic literature) states that a person should never stand in a dangerous place and think, "A miracle will be performed for me to save me from the danger," because even if a miracle will be performed for him, it will be deducted from his merits. Thus, benefitting from a miracle diminishes a person's ultimate reward. In life-and-death situations, one does not take this into consideration; he does whatever is necessary, for the value of life is paramount.

However, the problem of "spending" one's merit on a miracle does not apply when the miracle is elicited through prayer. When one prays sincerely for god's help, he merits blessings without depleting what Hashem has already set aside for him. The rule that "we should not rely on miracles applies only if a person does not pray. When a person prays sincerely, it is considered "natural" for even a "miracle" to occur.

POINTS TO PONDER

Even when the chances of recover from illness seem remote, one should continue to pray.

When the doctors give little hope, one should pray that Hashem do what is best for the sick person and his family.

The "miracle" that results from prayer does not diminish one's merits.

1 Chronicles 16:12 Remember the wonders He has done; His portents and the judgments He has pronounced, ¹³ O offspring of Israel, His servant, O descendants of Jacob, His chosen ones. (TNK)