

PRAYING with Fire

PRAYER POINTS

MAKING IT DIFFERENT

“There is only one hope. Mashiach must come soon. It must happen sooner or later, but it is up to us to hasten his arrival.

“This is no time for silence! Why don’t we cry out to the Almighty to help us? It is our duty to arouse the people to cry out and pray for the Final Redemption.” ...The Chofetz Chaim

To the Chofetz Chaim, the power of our prayer was as real as the power of an army. He knew that if only the “troops” would rally their strength and take up their arms – the power of prayer – there was hope. The tide of battle could be reversed.

Today, many of us hold our most powerful weapon – prayer – idly at our sides, perhaps not quite convinced that it can save us. The incessant march of world events seems far beyond our sphere of influence.

However, the suffering during the “birth pangs of Mashiach” will persist only until we fully grasp and internalize its message. As soon as we allow our belief in praying to the Almighty to flow from our minds into the deepest recesses of our hearts, we will find our capacity for the kind of prayer the Cofetz Chaim had hoped to stir – the kind that can bring Mashiach in an instant.

This this ray of hope exists is confirmed by so many of the Jewish sages. They explain that we can bring Mashiach in the designated final time, and our travail will be shortened. Thus, it is in our hands to hasten the emergence of the Final Redemption.

The *Geulah* will come when the *tefillah* – prayers emanating from the people of the Almighty rises to the level that clearly affirms our *emunah* – our unshakable reliance on the Almighty. The difference is that we reach this level through our own efforts, responding with growing *emunah* and heartfelt prayer to the difficulties we now encounter.

Yishmael is here to drive *emunah* into the depths of our consciousness and thereby squeeze the pure essence of *tefillah* from our hearts. He is the foe from whom we can find no refuge; he deflates any notions we might have of finding peace through alliances, appeasement, or military strength. But the goal is not our suffering; it is our stark recognition, deep into the core of our beings, that crying out to the Almighty – *tefillah* fueled by a strong, underlying *emunah* – is our first and last hope.

POINTS TO PONDER

For many people trust in the Almighty is not reflected in their initial response to troubles.

A true ingrained belief in the Almighty impels us to cry out to Him and rely on Him alone.

Our sincere prayers have the power to bring Mashiach earlier than the designated final time, shortening the period of our travail.

Psalm 111:9 He sent redemption to His people; He ordained His covenant for all time; His name is holy and awesome. (TNK)