

The Vital Importance of Prayer

All the plants of the field were not yet upon the earth and all the herbal vegetation of the field had not yet sprouted, for God had not brought rain upon the soil. (Genesis.Breishis 2:5)

The verse quoted above (*All the plants of the field were not yet upon the earth...*) refers to the world after it had been fully created and clearly states that nothing had sprouted because *God had not brought rain upon the soil*. This is difficult to understand in light of the fact that on the third day of creation the verse says *Let the earth sprout forth*, which implies that vegetation was already sprouting on the earth on the third day of creation. When did the earth actually begin to sprout?

On the third day of creation vegetation grew but did not protrude, rather it remained at the surface of the ground until the sixth day. What was so significant about the sixth day that God waited until then to have it sprout beyond the surface? The first humans were created on that day and God waited until then to give rain, which caused the plants to sprout. Why did God have to wait until man as created before sending rain? Until then there was no one to work the soil and therefore appreciate the rain. When man appeared he recognized the need for rain and prayed for it. Only then did it descend, thereby causing the trees and plant life to sprout.

We learn an essential Jewish concept from this: sometimes a person can have something beneficial or even essential to his existence waiting to be sent to help him but if he doesn't pray he won't receive it. Vegetation was in the ground ready to sprout but it remained beneath the surface because no one had prayed for it. Even our exalted Matriarchs (Sara, Rebecca, Rachael and Leah) and Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) did not have children until they prayed for

them. They had done so many good things in their lives and were so connected to God, yet until they prayed they were not able to conceive.

Some people complain that they're not happy with their lot in life. "I hate my job" or "why couldn't my wife be like ..." or "why can't my husband be more sensitive" or "how come my children are wilder than normal" or "why am I an angry person by nature?" Whatever it is, people blame God for their difficulties. It's fascinating how these people suddenly have become very pious. They acknowledge God as being all powerful and the cause for their hardships yet they seemed to have surrendered to affecting any transformation for their difficulties and are helpless in changing their life's circumstance. The question we must ask them is: if you say that God is the source of your difficulties, will you admit that He has the way out too? Pray to Him and feel the comfort in doing so. Prayer doesn't have to be in a synagogue or with a minyan, it can simply be a heartfelt acknowledgment and connection to God.

There was no rain in the world until man prayed for it. Sometimes the solution to our problems is hovering over us waiting to descend; we just need to pray for it.

Good Shabbos

(Sources: Rashi, *Yalkut Lekach Tov* from *Daas Torah* by Rabbi Yeruchem Levovitz)