TEFILA and HUMBLENESS

16th of Av, 5770

I've got a few new books in Israel. One of them is BET ELOKIM written by Rabbi Moshe ben Yosef Miterany (Salonica 1505-Jerusalem 1585)

In section # 1 he talks about Tefila and the first thing he teaches us is about the attitude of humbleness that we have to show when praying to God Almighty. We cannot 'demand' from God to fulfill our needs or requests. We must realize that God Almighty does not owe us anything. Humbly, we approach Him, asking Him and begging Him to hear our prayers knowing that we don't necessarily deserve His attention or response… We should see ourselves like a poor person asking for charity, requesting a 'favor' not a 'payback'.

All the Mitzvot we do are not 'favors' for God for which we should expect God's attention. On the contrary: a Jew 'owes' God the privilege of having being chosen by Him and every Mitzva we do, it's ultimately for our own benefit: to refine our character and to feed our soul with the nutrients necessary for the world to come. God Almighty is like a father that loves his son and if he demands from his son, for instance, to study, is having his son's interest in mind, not his own!

Similarly, every Mitzva we do by the command of God it was given by Him for our benefit.

This attitude of humbleness and acknowledgment to HaShem is a prerequisite for a sincere prayer.

Read more about rabbi Moshe Miterani, the MABIT: http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=294&letter=T#1241