The 13 principles of Judaism: #5. Praying to God, the right way (2 of 2)

Previously, we've explained that we should pray exclusively and directly to God (see **here**) and communicate with Him only by means of prayer. Sometimes, in their desperation to have their prayers answered, people would use tricks, amulets or formulas which, they think, will help to fulfill their needs and desires. The Tora, however, is not a book of magic written to teach us how to make God do what we want. The ultimate objective of prayer is not forcing God to accept our will, but training us to accept His.

What is the proper way to pray to haShem?

I'm quoting the invaluable words of rabbi Hayim Pereira-Mendes on prayer:

"Prayer means speaking to God. It may be Praise, Supplication or Thanksgiving. We should speak to God about what is most in our hearts, as a child speaks to its father. That is true prayer. We should place before God all our private wants, our sorrows and our perplexities. Nothing that troubles us in our daily lives is so unimportant that we need hesitate to speak to God about it in prayer."

"Prayer is of little use unless we are conscious of what we say and feel that we are actually speaking to God. After true prayer we feel that we have been near to God. The object of prayer is to bring us near to God."

"Prayer without proper conduct is worse than useless. It is an insult to God. Our prophets condemn prayer, sacrifices, the observance of Sabbath and other Holy Days, and all religious ceremonies, unless our conduct is acceptable to God. Right conduct is everything. Religious forms without right conduct are useless. Unless prayer, Sabbath, Holy Days and all religious ceremonies or forms build up right character, they fail in their purpose. We cannot expect that God will answer our prayers, unless we "do justly, love kindness and walk

modestly before Him.”

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