

Which I took from the hand of the Emori with my sword and with my bow. (48:22)

The *Targum Onkelos* interprets "my sword" as referring to prayer and "my bow" as alluding to supplication. This is consistent with the *Chazal* in *Talmud Bava Basra 123A* which discusses two levels of prayer. The first word, sword, represents the standard daily prayer that was ordained by the *Anshei Knesses Ha'gedolah*, Men of the Great Assembly. The second form of prayer refers to each and every man's own personal supplication to Hashem. Why are these two forms of beseechment equated with the sword and the bow?

The *Netziv, z.l.*, explains that when one goes to battle, his goal is to strike the king or the commanding officer who leads the army. The leader, however, is protected by security forces surrounding him. The attacking soldiers employ their sword in hand-to-hand combat, striking at the forces surrounding the king. Once the king's security has been defeated, they can shoot arrows from afar to strike at the king, who is now exposed to his attackers. Likewise, man seeks to reach Hashem through prayers. One must overcome many obstacles before he can express himself properly to Hashem. These obstacles regrettably prevent Hashem from accepting man's *tefillos*. Therefore, he prays to Hashem employing the standard textual prayer. Once the barriers of distraction and distortion have been pierced, he can express himself in his own personal, unique fashion and entreat Hashem to fulfill his request.

The *Brisker Rav z.l.*, makes another observation. A sword is a very sharp object which is in itself a formidable weapon. The arrow, however, is effective as a weapon only by virtue of the amount of pressure the archer has exerted in shooting it. The standard *tefillah* has, in its own right, remarkable spiritual powers because of its holy origin. Hence, it is compared to a sword which, by the very nature of its configuration, is a weapon. Man's personal *tefillah* is like a bow in that the efficacy of his personal supplication is determined by the degree of intensity and concentration, sincerity and devotion, which goes into his self-expression to Hashem.