

Bnei Yisrael cried out to Hashem. (14:10)

The *Midrash Tanchuma* (9) teaches that when *Klal Yisrael* saw that their situation was dire, they grasped the *umnos*, “profession,” of their ancestors/Patriarchs and reached out to Hashem through the vehicle of prayer. The efficacy of prayer cannot be overstated. It should not be our last – but rather, our first – resort. A Jew speaks to Hashem, his Father in Heaven, through the medium of prayer. *Chazal* are teaching us, however, that the Jewish People turned to Hashem in prayer just because the situation was bleak. How is this to be compared to the prayers of our Patriarchs, who prayed to Hashem on a regular basis? It was their means of communication with Hashem. The prayers emanating from the Jewish People and those expressed by our *Avos*, Patriarchs, appear dissimilar on the surface.

Horav Baruch Dov Povarsky, Shlita, cites *Horav Yeruchem Levovitz, zl*, who posits that our prayers must reflect the attitude that, without Hashem, salvation is hopeless. Our only avenue to redemption, to recovery, to be extricated from the adversity that is gripping our lives, is through prayer to Hashem. Nothing else is effective. Our *Avos* manifested this attitude when they prayed to Hashem. They knew that it was always crunch time, because only Hashem could pull them through. Thus, every prayer that emanated from them addressed an *eis tzarah*, dire circumstance. Without Hashem, everything is foreboding.

Regrettably, we do not pray preemptively, waiting instead until we have exhausted all other avenues of relief, so that our backs are against the proverbial wall; then we turn to Hashem as our last resort. We must drum it into our heads that Hashem is not only the first resort – He is the only resort. Everybody/everything else is only His messenger. When we pray, it should be with this attitude – “Hashem, You are my only source of salvation. Without You, I am uncertain of any recovery.” This is how we *daven* on *Yom Kippur*. Indeed, if we would *daven* on a regular basis the way we *daven* when we know it is “crunch time,” our *davening* would obviously have greater efficacy, because every moment is actually “crunch time.”