

PRAYER-MAIL

Every year, hundreds of letters arrive at the Jerusalem Post Office addressed to God. The majority of the letters are addressed to “God, Jerusalem, Israel,” or “ God, the Wailing Wall.” Either address directs the letter to the sorting room of the Israeli post office’s Dead Letters department. The postmen in that department ensure that every piece of mail addressed to God reaches its destination, the Jewish holy site known as the Western Wall, where Jews traditionally place their prayer requests.

The letter are collected, placed in a velvet bag, and then posted to God through cracks in the Western wall. Deliveries to the wall began several years ago when postmen decided that since there was no way to return the letters to the unknown senders, they might as well deliver them to the recipient, God. Yitzhak Rabihiya, spokesman for the Israeli postal department says, “Some people go to a shrink or a Rabbi and others write it down, put it in an envelope, slap on a stamp, and write ‘To God, Jerusalem, Israel.’”

The prayer letters request many things from God. Some seek forgiveness of sins, while other seek jobs, or seek help with personal problems. Rabihiya remembers a letter in which the author listed so many problems that postal workers took a collection and sent the man \$1,000 of the \$1,200 he requested from the Almighty.

Two months later postal workers noticed another letter from the same man written to God. They thought he was probably sending his thanks. At the end of the letter, the man wrote, “Thank you for the money, but please next time don’t send it through the postal service. Those thieves stole \$200.”