

## PRAYER POINTS

### WHAT'S SO DIFFICULT?

The stages of our lives are many and varied. Each infant begins life as a completely selfish human being, caring solely to be fed, comforted, and cherished. Some individuals never grow beyond that point emotionally. Others grow to such heights that they seem almost superhuman in their ability to give to others while barely drawing sustenance from this world. They merge themselves with Hashem's ways and become a vessel of His Torah, wisdom, and kindness.

Sometimes we pour our whole heart into prayers for others in need. Arriving at this level of compassion for others is not a simple matter, for even well-meaning people are caught up in their own lives and challenges. There is no question that when one, Heaven forbid, undergoes suffering, we are able to feel what another person is going through.

Developing compassion for situations that lie outside one's own personal experience is a long-term process. As a child grows out of infancy, he or she begins to discover that to interact positively with others they must take their needs into account. As we mature we come to understand that others have needs. Nonetheless, shedding one's initial self-absorption is a lifelong endeavor, and one of the key challenges in spiritual growth.

All of Torah works in concert to help a person break free of the self-serving attitude with which he is born, and to step into the thoughts and feelings of those around us. By loosening the grip on the self, the Torah enables one to become capable of responding to the needs of others, and thereby emulating the ways of God.

### POINTS TO PONDER

***We come into the world as a totally self-centered being.***

***Developing compassion for others is a life-long endeavor.***

***Torah trains a person to be caring and aware.***

***By prying us away from our self-preoccupation, the Torah enables us to emulate the ways of Hashem.***

**Daniel 9:20 While I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and laying my supplication before the LORD my God on behalf of the holy mountain of my God -- <sup>21</sup> while I was uttering my prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had previously seen in the vision, was sent forth in flight and reached me about the time of the evening offering. <sup>22</sup> He made me understand by speaking to me and saying, "Daniel, I have just come forth to give you understanding. (TNK)**

