

PRAYER POINTS

TURNING THE KEY

If one merely opens his or her eyes a little wider, looks out into his world a little further, and listens to his fellow's words a little more closely, one quickly realizes that the world is filled with those who are in need of our prayers. Families suffer their private hardships – devastating illnesses, financial pressures; confused, alienated children, and more. Even those with relatively few troubles struggle with life in general in the world we live in.

Why does all this heartache present itself? While Hashem's reasons are not apparent to us, the impact is evident: When one's neighbor is afflicted, one is able to feel for him, to empathize with his plight on a personal level and build upon the connections that basically is blessedly free of worries over bare subsistence, each of us has the emotional capacity to feel for others, if only we desire to do so.

As one sage stated: "The hardships are to bring us to reach up to Hashem with higher levels of prayer and to reach out to those in need with higher levels of compassion."

Today, we search the horizon longingly for the return of the Temple, for the dazzling emanation of the Divine Presence, which will light up the world with wisdom and peace. We yearn for tranquility in place of our concerns, fulfillment in place of our struggles for health and sustenance; the love of a spouse, children, and family in place of loneliness; a world of justice and decency in place of oppression and strife.

Our prayers are the key to the fulfillment of our longings. As we train our hearts to turn to Hashem, in every hour and every situation, we fortify the *emunah*, **faith**, that is our ultimate weapon in defeating those who come against the nation of Israel. As we open our hearts to each other's needs, we can rebuild the foundation of *Ahavat Yisrael*, **love of Israel**, and unity upon which the Holy Temple was built. Within our heartfelt words of prayer, infused with love of our Creator and our fellow man, lies the key to our Ultimate Redemption in Moshiach.

POINTS TO PONDER

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Psalm 111:9 He sent redemption to His people; He ordained His covenant for all time; His name is holy and awesome. (TNK)