

PRAYER POINTS

THE SOUL'S SUSTENANCE

What if someone simply cannot arouse in himself the emotion of joy prescribed for coming before Hashem in prayer? What if, despite his best intentions, he cannot bring his heart to feel joy like a child in the presence of his father? One rabbi explains that the act of prayer itself awakens recognition of one's father in Heaven; this, in turn, strengthens a person's ability to pray.

The rabbis explain: Every person is created with a *neshamah* (soul), and like the body, the soul must have its nourishment. It must be satiated three times a day with prayer and a daily diet of Torah and mitzvot. If a person does not provide this nourishment to his *neshamah*, it will become weak and infirm to the point where the person will no longer even recognize his Father in Heaven.

This offers hope for anyone who finds that, even as he stands in the synagogue praying daily, his emotions are disconnected from his words. The cure is to keep feeding the *neshamah* with all the spiritual sustenance Hashem places before him in this world, so that slowly but surely, his *neshamah* will become healthy and whole. In the deepest recesses of his soul, he will recognize his Father, Who has been hopefully and patiently waiting by his side all along.

POINTS TO PONDER

A person's neshamah becomes "starved" when it is denied its sustenance of tefilla, Torah, and mitzvot.

A "starved neshamah is weakened to the point at which it does not even recognize its Father.

Nourishing the neshamah through tefilla enables it to awaken to its Father's presence.

Deuteronomy 4:29 However, from there you will seek ADONAI your God; and you will find him if you search after him with all your heart and being. (CJB)