

## PRAYER POINTS

### THE ERRANT CHILD

What do we have to do in order to retain our special status as *children to Hashem, your God* and Hashem's *first-born son*? After straying from Hashem's path, suffering rebuke, returning and straying yet again, how can one be sure that this Father still wishes to claim these children as His own?

There is no doubt that, when Hashem's children serve Him with devotion, their position is secure. However, they are His children whether they serve Him properly or not. In fact, it is precisely at the times in the *Amidah* in which a person recognizes his flaws and sins that he addresses Hashem by the name "Father."

The fifth blessing of the *Amidah* requests of Hashem: "Bring us back *our Father* to Your Torah." The sixth blessing asks for forgiveness with the words: "Forgive us *our Father*, for we have erred." It is especially when a person has turned away from Hashem's Torah that he needs Hashem's fatherly love. He knows he is lost and that he is not deserving of rescue. A father, however, feels his child's fear and confusion, and is therefore moved to find his child and guide him home.

One rabbi provides an allegory to describe a father's reaction to an errant son: *The son disregards the father's warning to stay away from a hot pan on the stove, and consequently burns his hand. Rather than scolding the child, the father's immediate reaction is to run to the crying child, comfort him, and treat his wound.*

Our Father in Heaven warns us many times not to transgress His Torah, not to commit sins. However, should we falter and "burn ourselves," our loving Father still responds with compassion.

### POINTS TO PONDER

**Our position as Hashem's children is unconditional.**

**It is specifically when a person sins that he seeks out Hashem's Fatherly love.**

**A father feels compassion for his child's suffering, even when the child brings the suffering upon himself.**

**2 Chronicles 36:15 The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. (ESV)**