

Creating Opportunities

As the יום הדין approaches, instead of being stirred towards תשובה, we often find ourselves paralyzed by fear. This dilemma was addressed by דוד המלך in the words, “כי עמך הסליחה,” למען תורא. This Pasuk tells us that it is critical to temper the fear of Hashem with a deep awareness of how forgiving Hashem is. Internalizing His immense forgivingness can enable us to utilize fear as a motivator. However when it comes to fear of אדם לחבירו fear can still overwhelm us, due to the harsh truth of “אין יום כפורים מכפר עד שירצה את חבירו.” This fear only intensifies as we begin to focus on the countless infractions we made towards others. For instance, לשון הרע, גזל, and the list goes on and on, which makes it close to impossible to recall everyone we slighted and how we did it. Thus the task of asking and receiving מחילה seems daunting. As Hashem’s forgiveness is contingent on our friends’ forgiveness, developing a fear that will propel us to תשובה in אדם לחבירו seems impossible. However, there must be a method to reduce this fear so that it can serve as a call to action.

"Developing a sincere, heartfelt desire to come close to Hashem will provide us with a roadmap"

The שער התשובה in אורחת צדיקים, after discussing the difficulty in doing תשובה in areas of אדם לחבירו, offers us words of encouragement. He says, “Our sages say that repentance is held back from the sinner because of his bad heart, however one who wants to come close to Hashem, the gates of repentance are not closed to him. Hashem opens up for him the gates of repentance and guides him on the straight path. As it says, “ובקשתם משם את ה אלקך ומצאת כי תדרשנו בכל לבבך,” and other pesukim that relate this as well.

It is evident from the אורחת צדיקים that there is an antidote to reduce feeling overwhelmed in the process of תשובה, even in the arena of אדם לחבירו. One who sincerely desires to come close to Hashem, as the Pesukim emphasize, “When you seek Hashem with all your heart and soul,” will be taught and guided towards תשובה even when it comes to אדם לחבירו. Although the path of תשובה appears to be closed, Hashem will orchestrate opportunities to facilitate תשובה. Perhaps we will by chance meet someone that we had forgotten to pay back a loan, or suddenly find a book we never returned. Hashem will make the impossible possible. Bearing this in mind we can rest assured that we may be able to repair any damage done אדם לחבירו, and attain forgiveness from Hashem.

We can extrapolate from here a foundational insight into how we approach the תשובה experience. We are often overwhelmed by the תשובה processes of regret, confession, and abandoning the sin, especially in אדם לחבירו, as they are not easy tasks. However, it is now clear that if we want to mitigate many of the hardships in our pursuit of תשובה, developing a sincere heartfelt desire to come close to Hashem will provide us with a roadmap to arrive at our destination. As Hashem will open doors that were previously closed.

BASED ON THE WEEKLY SHMUSS GIVEN BY HARAV SHAYA COHEN, ROSH HAYESHIVA ZICHRON ARYEH

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנוח
לעילוי נשמת הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר
לרפואה שלמה רפאל חיים דוב בן ריסא שושנה