

Elul WhatsApp / Telegram Messages

Day 5 – Thursday 5th September

I've been asked the following question. How do I look at myself in the mirror and change what I see looking back at me? How do I initiate the process of self-reflection and *cheshbon hanefesh*? How do I start to improve the three core relationships: with God, with other people, and with myself?

Well, first I think you have to begin with your relationship with God. That has to be honest and that has to be the one that begins the process. And it begins by asking God, please help me to help you. *Hashem tzeftotai tifiach ufi yagid tehilatecha*. Open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. God, help me to be the person you feel I ought to be and to do the thing you think I ought to do.

I think the process of change when you throw yourself on God becomes really, really powerful because it takes you beyond yourself and allows you to become bigger than you would've been otherwise. Now, don't expect an answer all at once. You have to be patient. Once you've made that request maybe an answer will come in the middle of the night, maybe it will come tomorrow morning, maybe you won't really hear it at all you'll just sense it somehow. But the first thing to do is to begin with God and say: Please God, help me to help you, to be your agent, your ambassador in the world.

From there you move to number two, to other people. And here the key question you have to ask yourself again with total honesty is: What would God want me to do in this situation right now? And that depends on the situation and it depends on the person. If you see somebody lonely then you have to give them company. If you see them low than you have to lift them. If they're depressed somehow or other you have to lift that depression. If they're upset you may need to make an apology. If they are struggling, they may need your encouragement. But always the question is, and depersonalise this: What would God want me to do in this situation right now? And then you begin to be objective about things and then you begin to be able to change your relationship with other people and really make a difference to their lives.

Finally, the self, how do I change my relationship with myself? Speaking personally, the best thing I find is to take a long walk and then ask myself in the course of the walk: Is there something that I am doing wrong? A long walk is probably the best way of doing that because somehow the ideas will flit through your brain and something will lodge there and then you'll probably know the big change you need to make in your life. For me it's a long walk. For others it may be a good sleep. I don't know, but whatever works for you.

So number one, begin with God. Please God, help me to help you. Number two, use that objectivity by saying, God, what would you like me to do in this situation and that will help you change your relationship with other people. And finally, changing yourself. To repeat, a long walk and ask, what am I doing wrong because there's something each of us is doing wrong and put it right and that will initiate a series of good changes in our lives. So there are my solutions. I hope they help you. Be well.