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והזדים מהרה תעקר ותשבר.

We ask Hashem in *Shemoneh Esrei* to break our enemies. We find a concept in Chazal that sometimes, “breaking is what rectifies.” When something is impure, it can be fixed by being “broken”, where it becomes restored to its original state.

Besides for “breaking” our enemies, however, there is another kind of breaking that goes on. In our own soul, it is possible for a person to feel broken inside himself.

When we ask Hashem to break our enemies, the purpose is not so that we can get rid of them. The purpose is not destruction. Rather, we want to rectify them and fix them, and therefore, the only way to fix them is by breaking them and reducing them. We are also asking here that Hashem should take those who are broken and heal them – as is written, “*He who heals those that are broken-hearted.*”

Let us reflect into this concept – what it means to be broken-hearted, and what it means that Hashem heals the broken-hearted.

Dealing With Difficulty

The word for breaking in Hebrew is *shever*, but it also can be read as *sever*, which means “hope” in Hebrew. “*The eyes of all are lifted towards You, in hope.*” Being broken inside, *shever*, is the opposite of *sever*, being hopeful. When a person goes through a rough time, either he can be *shever*, broken – or he can instead become *sever*, lifting his eyes towards Hashem in hope that he be taken out of his situation. These are two opposite emotions in our soul that we can experience in the very same situation – to feel broken, or to feel hopeful.

All of us go through hard times in our life. The problem is not the fact that we are going through a difficulty – the problem is when we become broken from the difficulty. A difficulty is a difficulty, but it doesn’t have to break you. You just have to know how to deal with it properly. When a person goes through a difficult time, he can remain confident and be able to deal with it, and he’ll adapt to the situation. But there are certain times which a person goes through, however, which totally breaks him. He can’t deal with it, or he just doesn’t know how he is supposed to deal with it; it is then that the difficulty is not just a difficulty, but it breaks him.

When a person goes through a really hard time and he feels broken from it, he first needs to reflect if it’s really a problem, or if he’s just imagining it. Many times, a person is having lots of problems, but they are being imagined. Often, the problem can be imagined or exaggerated. It can be even an

imagination within imagination. Or, it can be that the person simply ignorant of reality, and he just needs to learn more about what reality is, and then he will see his problems vanish.

But there are indeed hard situations which are not being imagined, and a person feels during these situations that he does not have the inner strength to deal with it.

Reflecting

What we need to do is to think of how to deal with a problem before the problem starts, and we can't begin to deal with a problem after the problem arrives. "A wise person looks ahead"; we need to think ahead of time, and reflect about the root of all our issues, before the issues come, so that we will be able to deal with issue or difficulty when it comes. We need to have the remedy already available before we become broken, and not wait until after we become broken.

We need to know what the proper perspective is to have on the really tough situations that we go through, **before** they happen, so that we will be able to deal with these situations when they do come.

The ability to reflect on the root of something is a unique ability to a Jew's soul. It is called the power of *yashrus*, "straight-mindedness", and it is an ability we have to penetrate straight into the root, beginning point of a matter. This is hinted to in the phrase of Chazal, "Yisrael was created in Hashem's thoughts." Since we are the "first" nation, we have an ability to reflect on the "beginning" of a situation and thus view the situation with great clarity. This is also known as our power of *raishis*, "beginning", that we have a power to see the beginning of something and thus realize what the root of an issue is.

Since we have a power to reflect on the beginning root of a problem, let us not wait until a problem arises in order to learn how to deal with it. Let us instead utilize our power of *raishis* and see what the root of all problem is - to deal with a problem **before** the problem comes.

The Root of All Problems: When We Don't Attribute Our Success To Hashem

When a person can't deal with a certain situation in his life, and he despairs, his real problem is that he thought he could be successful on his own, due to his various strengths. He thought that success is solely up to him, and that as long as he is very ambitious about achieving his goals, he will be successful.

This is the root of his problem. Why did he think he could be successful? From where he is drawing his confidence from - from himself? From his abilities? Because he's very smart and talented? Because he is stubborn to pursue his goals? Or maybe he thinks, "Life is not as hard as people make it out to be. I'm going to succeed."

This is an issue that is relevant to all areas of life, including one's *Avodas Hashem*. A person naturally attributes success to himself, and he doesn't realize that only Hashem provides us with help and success.

A person begins to engage in self-improvement in his *Avodas Hashem*. Does he think he can succeed? Why does he think he can succeed? A person begins to learn a certain sefer, in the hope that he will come to serve Hashem better. Why does he think he will succeed? If he thinks that he can succeed because he has special abilities in his soul, then even if he "succeeds", it's not called real success. It's really setting him up for failure.

Chazal say that the evil inclination gets stronger every day and tries to kill a person, and if not for

Hashem's help, it is impossible to overcome the evil inclination.^[1] Without Hashem helping us, it is impossible to ever succeed! We must be aware of this.

If a person reflects about the truth, he will be able to understand, that he really isn't able to succeed on his own, without the help of Hashem. But if we bring Hashem into the picture, we will be able to succeed over anything.

We cannot accomplish anything without Hashem's help. Often, when a person feels that he is succeeding, he might be thinking, "I must be having *siyata d'shmaya* (assistance from Heaven)." But that still doesn't mean that he actually attributes his success to Hashem; he can still very well be thinking that the success is mainly coming from himself, and that it is just that he also has a little *siyata d'shmaya* helping him out too...

Many problems in a person's life are due to inner turmoil going on in the soul. When a person doesn't know how to use his soul's abilities, his soul's abilities clash within him. He becomes frustrated, and the source of all the frustration is because there are internal contradictions taking place within him, because he doesn't know how to direct each of his soul's abilities in its proper direction.

A person might blame his problems on his society, but often it's really because of himself, due to the inner turmoil going on in his own soul. Sometimes it really does have to do more with environment and society. But in either case, the evil inclination gets stronger every day, and without enlisting Hashem's help, we are powerless.

Who created the *yetzer hora*? Hashem created it. The *yetzer hora* is not some force of evil that stands by itself. If someone thinks that evil is a force unto itself, this borderlines on denying Hashem. Evil, too, is a creation of Hashem. Therefore, just as Hashem created evil - the *yetzer hora* that tempts us to do bad things - so can Hashem take away the evil, if we ask Him for help.

In our Torah learning as well, we must realize this. Success in our learning doesn't depend on having a really good *Rebbi* or having the best *chavrusa*. These are just messengers that Hashem sends us to help us succeed.

Hashem created everything. He created evil as well, and He created evil so that we can realize that we cannot overcome evil on our own, and thus come to recognize how much we need Hashem for everything. Hashem did not create the *yetzer hora* because He wants us to fail, *chas v'shalom*. He created evil because He wants us to realize how much we need to turn to Him for success, and that we can **only** be successful in we list Hashem's help.

The Mishnah in *Pirkei Avos* states, "If I am only for myself, what am I?" The deeper meaning of this is that if I think that all my success will come due to "my" strengths and talents, then I will get nowhere.

Hashem created the power of free will for this reason as well, so that we will choose to realize, that only through Hashem's help can we succeed.

These are not just words. This is a way of how to view life. We must realize that life might be difficult, but it is not entirely composed of difficulties. The point of all our difficulties is so that we can recognize the Source of all the difficulties, Hashem, Who created them. The more we choose to recognize how we can only succeed with Hashem's help, the more Hashem will grant us assistance, and then we will discover that our setbacks weaken.

When a person goes through a failure, he feels, "I didn't succeed. I failed." But what he has to think is as follows. The only reason why we don't succeed is when we don't think that Hashem is helping us, and we think that success comes from ourselves. So if we ever fail, it's all because we didn't

recognize Hashem enough in the picture. Without Hashem in the picture, we will become weak and broken.

When we feel that we have come unsuccessful and we feel broken from this, the problem is not that we have become broken of the problem. The real problem is the *source* of why we have become broken - we didn't realize that the secret of success depends on attributing our success to Hashem.

In Summary

To summarize, most of the problems going on in people's lives is really stemming from imagination. People imagine that they have a problem, or they exaggerate a problem and blow it up. In these cases, a person has to learn how to get in touch with reality, and when he sees reality, he will realize that he doesn't have a real problem, and that it was just being fueled by his imagination.

But there is also a large percentage of problems that are stemming from the fact that people don't realize that only Hashem can make us succeed.

"In Your hands, I place my spirit." Just as we give ourselves over to Hashem every night before we go to sleep, entrusting our soul with Him that He will return it to us the next day, so must we realize that our entire success can only come from His hands, when we enlist His help.

[1] Sukkah 52a

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