

## Mishlei 15-29

# Estrangement

### Key Concepts

Hashem very much wants to be close to us for we are His handiwork. It is in our interest to be close to Him, for then he hears our tefillos and responds to them. But whether we are in fact close to Hashem depends very much on our attitude towards Him. His behavior responds to human activity. If a person estranges himself from Hashem, then He is in fact distant from him. However, if one moves closer to Him, then He is there, heeding every prayer. This is what David Hamelech meant when he said, **קָרוֹב ה' לְכָל קוֹרְאָיו**, "Hashem is close to all who call upon Him" (Tehillim 145:18).

What is Hashem looking for from us? He wants us to turn to Him and emulate His ways of truth and kindness. And so we may end up being close to him or far from him. It is not that Hashem changes His mind in response to human prayer, but that He simply allows a man to place Him at whatever distance he desires.

### Exploring Mishlei

(כט) רְחוֹק ה' מִרְשָׁעִים וְתִפְלֵת צְדִיקִים יִשְׁמָע:

*Hashem remains distant from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.*

This proverb contrasts the way Hashem responds to people and their tefillos. At one extreme there are the resha'im who have chosen to make Hashem irrelevant to their lives. They keep Him at a distance and so He remains distant from them. At the other extreme there are the tzadikim who have placed the relationship with the Creator as central to their being. He in turn pays close attention to their every wish and tefillah.

### Learning Mishlei

(כט) רְחוֹק ה' מִרְשָׁעִים

וְתִפְלֵת צְדִיקִים יִשְׁמָע:

**Hashem remains distant from the wicked** – **רְחוֹק ה' מִרְשָׁעִים** for they have chosen to be distant from him. **But He hears the prayer of the righteous** –

וְתַפְּלַת צְדִיקִים יִשְׁמַע for he is always close to them.

## Additional Insights

A series of additional insights illuminating this proverb are presented below. The numbers identifying the insights refer to the listing of sources at the end of the segment.

- (1) Whether Hashem pays attention to our tefillos depends upon how close we are to Him. In effect, it is we who control the relationship.
- (2) Hashem loves the tefillos of tzadikim so much that even when a tzadik pleads for the welfare of a rasha, Hashem listens to him.
- (3) Hashem is close to the righteous; with their tefillos they can gain from Him clarity of thought, purity of intention, and strength for fulfillment of good purposes.

## Sources

The primary sources used for the additional insights illuminating this segment are listed below.

(3) רשר"ה

(1) - מצודות, מלבי"ם

(2) - שבט מיהודה