

Mishlei 16-07

Harmony

Key Concepts

Life is full of occasions when another person says or does something that triggers in you a feeling of resentment. Their motivation may be simple thoughtlessness or ignorance, or it may be an expression of anger for whatever reason.

In any case, your feeling of resentment will tend to motivate in you a negative reaction. It is a *mitzvah* to suppress that reaction, no matter how right it seems at the time. This kind of behavior can be very difficult, but you will find it easier if you consider what Hashem would want you to do.

Mishlei wants to assure you of something that you know already. If you want to please Him, you will show forbearance. You will suppress your negative reaction and repay harm with favor. Ultimately, your behavior will be rewarded in the form of an improved harmony in your life. The person who seemed at that moment as your enemy will wish you only good.

Exploring Mishlei

(ז) בְּרָצוֹת ה' דְּרָכֵי אִישׁ גַּם אוֹיְבָיו יִשְׁלַם אֹתוֹ:

When a man's ways are pleasing to Hashem, even his enemies will be at peace with him.

This proverb is presented in form of a riddle in which a key element is left for the listener or reader to fill in. The proverb begins with the motivating factor, which is the goodwill of Hashem. This is what a person must always have in mind because there will be many occasions when he may overlook it in the heat of the moment.

The proverb skips any mention of the actual circumstances of hurt and resentment that explain why the person had to invoke that motivating factor. However, these circumstances become evident when the ultimate result is presented, which is the desired state of harmony, even with one's enemies.

Learning Mishlei

(7) When Hashem is pleased — בְּרָצוֹת ה' —
with a man's ways — דְּרָכֵי אִישׁ

of reacting to an offense
the result will be that there will be
harmony in the man's relationships
and **even his enemies** — **גַּם אוֹיְבָיו**.
will be at peace with him — **יִשְׁלַם אִתּוֹ**.

Additional Insights

(1) Only one kind of “revenge” is permissible: to do a kindness to your enemy! If you are good to your enemy, without stressing his animosity against you (“See, I am not like you”), if you quietly do him a favor, he will look back with burning shame upon his behavior to you, and Hashem will reward you. (רשר"ה)

(2) A person may find himself under attack by an internal enemy or an external enemy. The internal enemy is the *yetzer hara* (evil inclination). If he deals with the *yetzer hara* effectively, Hashem is pleased and rewards him by restraining any external enemies that attack him. (מלב"ם)