

Some Teachings/Reflections/Texts on Teshuvah

Forgive your neighbors for their wrongdoings,
And then your sins will be forgiven when you pray.
Should one person cherish anger against another,
And then ask for healing from G-d?
Does that person have no mercy for a person like him/her self,
And yet pray for personal sins? (Ben Sira 28:2-4)

Every human being is tied to G-d by a rope. If the rope breaks, and is later fixed with a knot, that individual is connected ever closer to G-d than if there had never been a break in the rope. Thus, errors, mistakes, and failures have the potential of drawing us even closer to G-d. (Hasidic Teaching)

He answered: What is G-d? The totality of souls. Whatever exists in the whole can also be found in the part. So in any one soul, all souls are contained. If I turn, in *teshuvah*, I contain in me the friend whom I wish to help, and he contains me in him. My *teshuvah* makes the him-in-me better and the me-in-him better. This way it becomes so much easier for him-in-him to become better. (Pinchas of Koretz)

The one who erred should desert his/her wrongdoing, remove it from his/her thoughts, determine in his/her heart not to do it again . . .

The person should make confession with the lips and utter the matters about which the heart is determined.

He/she should cry continually before G-d with tears/supplications.

He/she should do charitable deeds according to his/her ability.

It is praiseworthy for the person to confess the error before others (this applies only to transgressions between one person and another, not to those between one person and G-d. These should be kept private).

The sins/transgressions between people are never pardoned until the person makes restitution and appeases the wronged party.

If the wronged party is not willing to forgive, the transgressor must bring a group of three neighbors to appease him/her. If the person still refuses, a second and third group of three should be brought. If they are refused, the person should be left. For then the sin of refusing to forgive rests on him/her. (From Maimonides, Repentance, The Book of Knowledge)