



***Shlomo HaMelech saw with ruach hakodesh that Klal Yisroel will eventually be exiled time and again, destruction following destruction. They would bemoan, in this exile, their original honor. They will remember the original love of their being the chosen ones from amongst all nations, saying, "I will go and return to my first husband for it was better for me then than now." (Hoshea 2:9) They will remember His kindness, their own treachery, and the good that He said He would bestow upon them at the end of times. (Rashi, Hakdama of Shir HaShirim)***

Perhaps we can explain the order of events that Rashi describes *Klal Yisroel* going through as they begin their journey back to their Beloved.

- 1) ***They remember their original honor.*** No process of spiritual awakening can commence before one realizes his inherent self-worth. This is because, as the Chazon Ish explains, "Feelings of worthlessness serve as a block, preventing mussar from entering one's sole." Such a person can not begin to comprehend the great spiritual levels that he was created to enjoy. As Rabbeinu Yonah writes (beginning of *Sha'arei Avodah*): The first step towards Avodas Hashem is understanding one's great value.
- 2) ***It was better for me then than now.*** In the depths of spiritual emptiness, the supreme pleasure of eventual happiness, even if eternal and astronomically greater than anything one can imagine, doesn't talk to a person. His present material desires filter out calculations of eventual spiritual pleasures.
- 3) ***They will remember His kindness.*** Due to its inherent obligations our mind succeeds in blocking out the memory of Hashem's kindness towards us, till we begin to yearn for Him ourselves.
- 4) Only after we come to realize the present benefit of returning to Hashem does our subconscious let us internalize the greatest reason we have to return to Hashem: ***The good He said He would bestow upon them at the end of times.***

This teaches us how to reach the soul of one who has distanced himself from Hashem.

No process can begin prior to conveying to him his inestimable self-worth. Any debt of gratitude this person may owe you or Hashem will be subconsciously blocked out of his mind until he is no longer scared of the obligations that kindness may demand of him. Therefore, he first must be shown how returning to Hashem would truly benefit him in the here and now. Only following this will he be able to internalize the ultimate truth of the eternal and infinite benefits of returning to Hashem.

