

מה שֶׁעוֹלָם רְחוּקִים מֵהַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַר וְאֵינָם מִתְקַרְבִּים

Settling the Mind Through Joy

THE TEACHING

Why are people far from Hashem? Only because they lack a settled mind (יְשׁוּב־הַדַּעַת). The main thing is to sit and think calmly: what is the purpose (תִּכְלִית) of all the desires of this world, the body's desires and others like honour (כְּבוֹד)? One who does this "יָשׁוּב אֶל ה'", will surely return to Hashem.

But sadness (מְרֵה-שְׁחוֹרָה) keeps the mind in exile, so it cannot be steered. Joy (שִׂמְחָה) is freedom; a mind bound to joy is free, and can settle itself.

MAIN POINTS

- In sadness it is impossible to steer the mind as one wishes. Only through joy can a person direct his mind and settle it, because joy is the world of freedom: "כִּי בְשִׂמְחָה תֵּצְאוּ" (ישעיה נה:יב), "for in joy you shall go out."
- Exile unsettles the mind. The Sages said Amon and Moav had a settled mind because they never went into exile: "שֶׁאֵינָן מוֹאָב מִנְעוּרָיו", "וּבִגְלוֹתָהּ לֹא הָלָךְ" (ירמיה מח:יא), "Moav has been at ease from his youth, and has not gone into exile."
- How does one come to joy? By finding at least some good point (נִקְדָּה טוֹבָה) in oneself, as explained in Part I, Torah 282, on "אֶזְמְרָה לֵאלֹהֵי בְעוּדִי" (תהלים קמו:ב), "I will sing to my G-d while I yet exist."
- And at the very least, one can rejoice in being a Jew, as we say: "בָּרוּךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ שֶׁבְּרָאָנוּ לְכְבוֹדוֹ", "blessed is our G-d who created us for His glory", and gave us the Torah of truth (תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת).
- This is "בְּדִיחָא דַּעֲתָה" (שבת עז:), a joyful mind, a great thing: joy bound to the mind sets it free and settles it, and above it brings about a great unity (יְחִוּד גָּדוֹל).

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

When the mind will not settle, do not fight it with heaviness. First find something to be glad about, even something small. Then sit and think calmly about what truly lasts.

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