

לפי גדלות השם יתברך ועצם רוממותו יתברך

The Past Is Gone: Mercy, Teshuvah and the Yetzer's Fire

THE TEACHING

Hashem's greatness, His mercy, and starting again. By the measure of Hashem's greatness and exaltedness (רוממותו), even one small movement or glance not fitting before His honour would deserve what it deserves, Heaven forbid.

But Hashem is full of mercy (מלא רחמים), "וְכָל הָעוֹלָם מְלֵא רַחֲמָנוּת", the whole world is full of compassion, and He wants the world very much. So strengthen yourself in His service with whatever you can, even as you are, and rely on His mercy, which has no measure.

MAIN POINTS

- He will surely not abandon you, whatever happened. "הָעֵבֶר אֵין", the past is nothing. The main thing is from now on: don't do it again, at least "שֵׁב וְאַל תַּעֲשֶׂה", hold back, in action and in thought. What happens to you by itself, don't worry about it and don't look at it at all.
- Complete teshuvah (תשובה שלמה) is when you pass through the very same places and situations you were in before, and now you turn your back on them and overcome your inclination. Only that is called teshuvah.
- It is a great level (מַעֲלָה גְדוֹלָה) to still have a yetzer hara (יֵצֶר הָרָע). Then you can serve Hashem with it: take all its fire and warmth (הַתְּלַהֲבוּת וְחַמִּימוּת) and bring it into prayer, pleading with a burning heart. Without a yetzer hara, the service is not complete.
- The main thing is to hold back the heat at the time of desire (תַּאֲוֹת), and release it at the time of prayer and service.
- Even someone not upright sometimes prays with fire, from that same heat, but he gets no reward. For one who wants to live properly, still having a yetzer hara is a great level.

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

Don't drown in the past; Hashem's mercy is bigger. Start now, as you are. And the fire you struggle with can become the fire of your prayer.

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