

“יש זריז ונשכר, זריז ונפסד”

(פסחים נ:)

Quick and Gaining, Quick and Losing

THE TEACHING

There is one who is quick and gains, and one who is quick and loses. For “מִצְוָה גּוֹרֶרֶת מִצְוָה” (אבות ד:ב), “a mitzvah draws a mitzvah.” So there is something between one mitzvah (מִצְוָה) and the next that binds them and pulls one after the other, and that in-between is itself very precious (יְקָרָה מְאֹד).

One who walks the straight path from his youth (מְנַעֲוֵרִיו) loses by rushing, for he skips the holiness between the mitzvos. But one who must do teshuvah (תְּשׁוּבָה) has to be very, very quick; he is quick and gains.

MAIN POINTS

- A tzaddik from his youth goes from level to level (מִדְרָגָא לְדִרְגָא), like Avraham: “וְאַבְרָהָם זָקֵן בָּא בַּיָּמִים” (בראשית כד:א), “Avraham was old, come into his days”; he reached his level through the days, as the Zohar brings.
- At three years old “הִכִּיר אֶת בּוֹרְאוֹ”, he recognized his Creator, and went on always from level to level.
- Such a person loses through quickness (זְרִיזוּת): the next mitzvah comes to him anyway, drawn by the first, and his rushing skips the holiness in between. Pausing a little, he gains it too.
- The baal teshuvah (בַּעַל תְּשׁוּבָה) must run for his life, with no pausing at all. He does not go step by step; he must start anew, skip what needs skipping, “וְלִקְפֹּץ אֶל הַקִּדְשָׁה בְּזִרְזוּת גְּדוֹלָה”, “and leap into holiness with great quickness.”
- What lies between the mitzvos? For example: “וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵּאמֹר”, “and Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying.” The mitzvah itself comes after, from “וְעָשִׂיתָ”, but these words before it also hold service (עֲבוֹדָה).

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

If you are climbing steadily, don't rush past the holy pauses between mitzvos. And if you are coming back, don't wait for anything: run.

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