

PAST

WHO SAYS YOU CAN'T CHANGE THE PAST?

Shabbos Shuva Drasha
with Rabbi Yaakov Fisch



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Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzatto (1707-1746)

מדת הַרַחֲמִים היא קִיּוּמוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, שֶׁלֹּא הָיָה עוֹמֵד זוּלָתוֹ כָּלֵל וְכָלֵל. וְאִם עַל פִּי כֵן אֵין מִדַּת הַדִּין

לִזְקָה, וְזֶה, כִּי לִפִּי שׁוֹרֵת הַדִּין מִמֶּשׁ,

הָיָה רָאוי שֶׁהַחוּטֵא יַעֲנִשׁ מִיָּד תִּכְּף לְחֻטְאוֹ בְּלִי הַמִּתְנָה כָּלֵל.

וְגַם שֶׁהַעֲנִשׁ עֲצָמוֹ יִהְיֶה בַּחֲרוֹן אַף, כְּרָאוי לְמִי שֶׁמִּמָּרָה פִּי הַבוֹרֵא יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמוֹ.

וְשֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה תִּקּוֹן לְחֻטֵּא כָּלֵל.

כִּי הִנֵּה בְּאֵמֶת, אִיךָ יִתְקַן הָאָדָם אֶת אֲשֶׁר עוֹת וְהַחוּטֵא כָּבֵד נַעֲשֶׂה? הֲרִי שְׂרָצַח הָאָדָם אֶת חֲבֵרוֹ, הֲרִי שִׁנְאָף, אִיךָ יוּכַל לְתַקֵּן הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה? הַיּוֹכֵל לְהַסִּיר הַמַּעֲשֶׂה הַעֲשׂוּי מִן הַמְּצִיאוֹת?

אָמְנָם, מִדַּת הַרַחֲמִים הִיא הַנוֹתֶנֶת הַפֶּה הַשְּׁלֵשָׁה דְּבָרִים שֶׁזִּכְרָנוּ:

דְּהִינוּ, שְׂיִיתָן זְמַן לְחוּטֵא וְלֹא יִכָּחַד מִן הָאָרֶץ מִיָּד כְּשֶׁחֻטֵּא.

וְשֶׁהַעֲנִשׁ עֲצָמוֹ לֹא יִהְיֶה עַד לְכֻלָּה.

וְשֶׁהַתְּשׁוּבָה תִּנָּתֵן לְחוּטֵאִים בְּחֹסֶד גָּמור, שֶׁתִּחַשֵּׁב עֲקִירַת הָרָצוֹן כְּעֲקִירַת הַמַּעֲשֶׂה.

דְּהִינוּ, שֶׁבְּהִיּוֹת הַשֵּׁב מִכִּיר אֶת חֻטְאוֹ וּמוֹדָה בּוֹ וּמִתְבּוֹנֵן עַל רָעָתוֹ וְשֵׁב וּמִתְחַרֵּט עָלָיו חֲרָטָה

גְּמוּלָה דְּמַעַקְרָא כְּחֲרָטָה הַנֶּדֶר מִמֶּשׁ שֶׁהוּא מִתְנַחֵם לְגִמְרִי וְהִיא חִפְץ וּמִשְׁתַּוְּקֵק שֶׁמַּעוֹלָם

לֹא הָיָה נַעֲשֶׂה הַדָּבָר הַהוּא וּמִצְטַעַר בְּלִבּוֹ צַעַר חֲזָק עַל שֶׁכָּבֵד נַעֲשֶׂה הַדָּבָר וְעוֹזֵב אוֹתוֹ

לְהִבָּא וּבּוֹרַח מִמֶּנּוּ, הִנֵּה עֲקִירַת הַדָּבָר מִרְצוֹנוֹ, יִחַשֵּׁב לוֹ כְּעֲקִירַת הַנֶּדֶר וּמִתְכַּפֵּר לוֹ. וְהוּא

מָה שֶׁאָמַר הַכָּתוּב (ישעיה ו): וְסָר עֲוֹנְךָ וְחֻטְאֶתְךָ תִּכָּפֹר, שֶׁהָעוֹן סָר מִמֶּשׁ מִהַמְּצִיאוֹת וְנִעְקַר

בְּמָה שֶׁעֲקָשׁוֹ מִצְטַעַר וּמִתְנַחֵם עַל מָה שֶׁהָיָה לְמַפְרָע.

The trait of mercy is certainly the pillar of the world. For it could not endure without it at all whatsoever. But nevertheless, G-d's attribute of justice is not negated. For according to strict justice it would be proper that:

* the sinner be punished immediately for his sin without any delay whatsoever.

* that the punishment itself be wrathful as befits one who rebels against the word of the Creator, blessed be His Name.

* that there be no possible repair whatsoever for the sin.

For in truth, how can a man rectify what he has made crooked after committing the sin? ***If one murdered his fellow or committed adultery? How can he possibly rectify this? Can he undo a deed already done from existence?***

But the attribute of mercy reverses the three aforementioned matters.

* it grants that the sinner be given time and not be eradicated from the earth immediately upon sinning.

* that the punishment itself not utterly destroy him.

* that the opportunity of repentance be granted to sinners as a complete kindness, so that the uprooting of the will be counted as the uprooting of the deed.

Thus when the penitent man recognizes his sin and admits it, and reflects on his evil, repents of it and completely regrets ever having done it, as he would regret [in annulling] a certain vow, in which case there is complete regret, and he desires and longs that this deed had never been committed, and pains himself strongly that the matter was done, and renounces it for the future, and flees from it - then the uprooting of the deed from his will is counted to him as the annulment of a vow and he gains atonement for it.

As scripture says: "your iniquity is gone and your sin atoned for" (Isaiah 6:7) - that the sin is actually removed from existence, and uprooted through his paining himself and regretting in the present what he had done in the past.

Chovos Halvovos Rabbi Bachya ben Joseph ibn Paquda from 11th Century (Saragossa, Spain)

ובקשת המחילה אות על כניעתו ונשפלותו לפני האלהים והתודתו בעונו סבת המחילה לו כמו שנאמר (משלי כח) ומוֹדָה וְעוֹזֵב יִרְחֹם וְאָמַר בְּהִפּוֹךְ זֶה (ירמיה ב) הִנְנִי נִשְׁפָּט אוֹתָךְ על אֲמָרְךָ לֹא חָטָאתִי וְאָמַר (משלי כח) מִכֶּסֶה פִשְׁעָיו לֹא יִצְלִיחַ, וְכִזָּה נִרְאָה בֵּין בְּנֵי אָדָם כִּי הַחוּטָא לַחֲבֵירוֹ כְּשִׁיכָנַע לוֹ וַיּוֹדֶה שְׁחָטָא לוֹ וְהִרְעֵ אֵלָיו וּבִקֵּשׁ מִמֶּנּוּ הַמַּחֲלָה וְהִכִּיר

חֲבֵרוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ שֶׁהוּא מִתְחַרֵּט עַל מָה שֶׁקָּדַם לוֹ מִן הַחֲטָא לֹא יִתְעַכֵּב מִלְמַחֵל לוֹ וַיַּעֲבֹר עַל
פְּשָׁעוֹ וַיִּסֵּר מֶה שֵׁישׁ לוֹ בְּלִבּוֹ מִן הַנְּטִירָה.

Beseeching forgiveness demonstrates submission and humility before G-d, and confession of one's sin is a ground for forgiveness,
as written: "he who confesses and renounces them will obtain mercy"
(Mishlei 28:13). Regarding the opposite of this, it is said: "[Yet you say,
Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me.] Behold, I will
contend with you, because you say, I have not sinned" (Yirmiyahu 2:35),
and "he that conceals his transgressions will not succeed" (Mishlei 28:13).
***Similarly we can observe among human beings, that if one wrongs his
fellow, and afterwards humbles himself towards him, and admits that
he sinned against him and wronged him and beseeches forgiveness
from him,*** and the fellow recognizes that he truly regrets the wrong he
committed, the fellow will not refrain from forgiving him and will overlook the
wrong-doing, and the grudge in his heart against him will be removed.

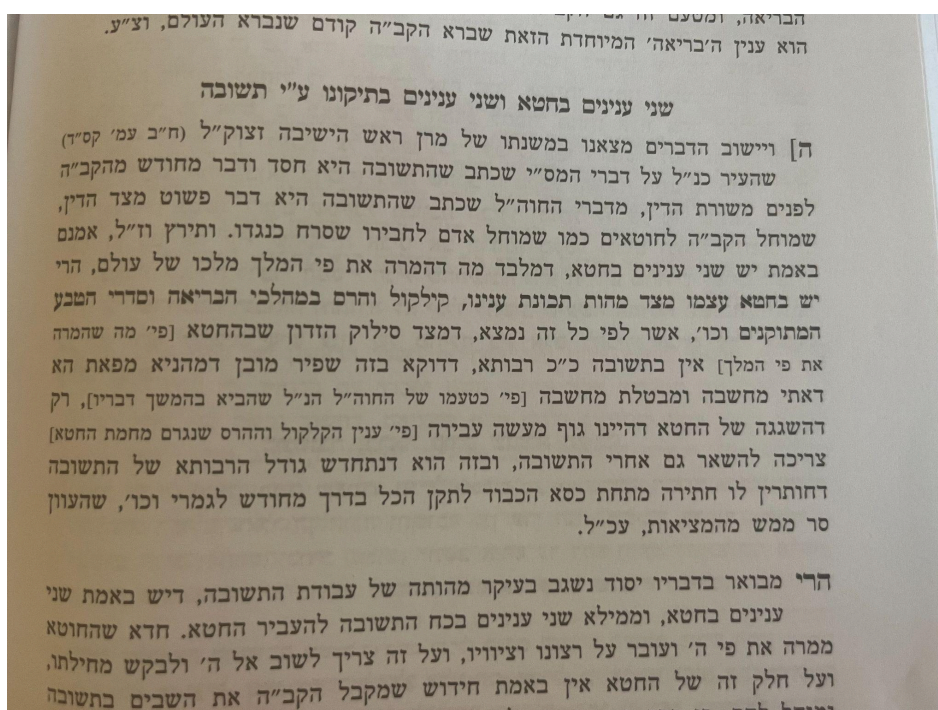
Rabbeinu Yonah- Rabbi Yonah ben Avraham Gerondi (Died-1264) Toledo,
Spain

מִן הַטּוֹבוֹת אֲשֶׁר הֵיטִיב הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ עִם בְּרוּאָיו, כִּי הָכִין לָהֶם הַדֶּרֶךְ לַעֲלוֹת מִתּוֹךְ פְּחַת
מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם וְלָנוֹס מִפַּח פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם, לַחֲשֹׁךְ נִפְשָׁם מִנִּי שַׁחַת וּלְהַשִּׁיב מַעֲלֵיהֶם אֶפֶס, וְלִמְדָם
וְהַזְהִירָם לָשׁוּב אֵלָיו כִּי יִחְטְאוּ לוֹ, לָרֵב טוֹבוֹ וַיִּשְׁרֹוּ כִּי הוּא יָדַע יִצְרָם,

***Among the good things which God, may He be blessed, has bestowed
upon His creations is the path which He prepared for them to ascend
from the baseness of their actions,*** to escape the trap of their inequities,
to hold their souls back from destruction and to remove His anger from
upon them. Because of His goodness and uprightness, He has taught them
and warned them to return to Him when they sin against Him - for He
understands their nature,



Rav Yeruchem Olshin- Rosh Yeshiva BMG Lakewood



Talmud Pesachim 54a

תנא: שבעה דברים נבראו קודם שנברא העולם, ואלו הן: תורה, ותשובה, וגן עדן, וגיהנם, וכסא הכבוד, ובית המקדש, ושמו של משיח.
 ותשובה, דכתיב: "בטרם הרים ילדו", וכתיב: "תשב אנוש עד דכא ותאמר שובו בני אדם".

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Seven phenomena were **created before the world was created**, and they are: Torah, and **repentance**, and the Garden of Eden, and Gehenna, and the Throne of Glory, and the Temple, and the name of Messiah.



Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman- (1874-1941)

רבי שמעון בן יוחי אומר: **אפילו צדיק גמור כל ימיו ומרד באחרונה – איבד את הראשונות**, שנאמר: "צדקת הצדיק לא תצילנו ביום פשעו". ואפילו רשע גמור כל ימיו ועשה תשובה באחרונה – אין מזכירים לו שוב רשעו, שנאמר: "ורשעת הרשע לא יכשל בה ביום שובו מרשעו".

Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai says: ***Even if one was completely righteous all his life and he rebelled by sinning at the end of his life, he loses his early merit***, as it is stated: "The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him on the day of his transgression" (Ezekiel 33:12). And similarly, even if one was completely wicked all his life and repented in the end, he is no longer reminded of his wickedness, as it is stated in the continuation of the verse: "And as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not stumble over it on the day that he turns from his wickedness."

וניהי כמחצה עונות ומחצה זכיות? אמר ריש לקיש: בתוקא על הראשונות.

The Gemara asks: But an individual who performed mitzvot all of his life and then sins should at least be like one whose acts have been half sins and half merits, i.e., each should be of equal weight. Why, then, is he pronounced guilty? Reish Lakish said: ***This is not referring to an individual who has merely sinned but to one who regrets all the initial mitzvot he performed in the past.*** In this case the mitzvot he performed are not taken into account.

Talmud Sukkah 52b:

אמר רבא: בתחלה קראו "הלך", ולבסוף קראו "אורח", ולבסוף קראו "איש", שנאמר:
"ויבא הלך לאיש העשיר ויחמול לקחת מצאנו ומבקר לעשות לאורח", וכתוב: "ויקח את
כבשת האיש הרש ויעשה לאיש הבא אליו".

Rava said: Initially, the verse called the evil inclination a **traveler** coming from afar. Subsequently, the verse calls it a **guest**, as one welcomes it. Ultimately, the verse calls it man, indicating significance, as it became the **homeowner**. As it is stated in the parable of the poor man's lamb that Nathan the prophet said to David: "And there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was reluctant to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to prepare for the guest" (II Samuel 12:4). And it is written in the same verse: "And he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared it for the man that was come to him." In other words, the evil inclination that began as a traveler gradually rose in prominence.

Is a sex addiction similar to other addictions?

Yes. The "addiction feeling" is what makes it similar. The craving for sex is similar to cravings felt for alcohol or drugs by those who have addictions to these substances. It's an overwhelming compulsion or temptation that's so strong you feel that you have to have it. It's an out-of-control feeling, never feeling satisfied feeling or a constant battle to take control of something that's on autopilot. You return to the behavior — over and over again — despite the negative consequences. (cleveland clinic.org)



**Rambam - Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon. Cordoba, Spain
(1138-1204)**

אין לך דבר בכל התורה כלה שהוא קשה לרב העם לפרש אלא מן העריות והביאות האסורות. אמרו חכמים בשעה שנצטוו ישראל על העריות בכו וקבלו מצוה זו בתרעומות ובכיה שנאמר (במדבר יא י) "בכה למשפחתיו" על עסקי משפחות:

There is nothing in the entire Torah that is more difficult for the majority of people to separate themselves from than sexual misconduct and forbidden relationships. Our Sages said: When the Jews were commanded regarding forbidden sexual relations, they wept and accepted this mitzvah with complaints and moaning, as implied by the phrase: "Crying among their families," [which is interpreted as meaning]: "Crying about family matters."

ואמרו חכמים גזל ועריות נפשו של אדם מתאוה להן ומחמדתן. ואין אתה מוצא קהל בכל זמן וזמן שאין בהן פרוצין בעריות וביאות אסורות. [ועוד] אמרו חכמים רב בגזל מעוט בעריות והכל באבק לשון הרע:

Our Sages said: A person's soul desires and craves theft and forbidden sexual relations. ***You will never find a community that does not have some people who are promiscuous regarding forbidden relationships and prohibited sexual conduct.*** Moreover, our Sages said: Most people trespass with regard to theft; a minority with regard to forbidden sexual conduct, and all with regard to the shade of undesirable gossip.

לפיכך ראוי לו לאדם לכף יצרו בדבר זה ולהרגיל עצמו בקדשה יתרה ובמחשבה טהורה ובדעה נכונה כדי להנצל מהן. ויזהר מן היחוד שהוא הגורם הגדול. גדולי

הַחֲכָמִים הָיוּ אוֹמְרִים לְתַלְמִידֵיהֶם הִזְהָרוּ בִּי מִפְּנֵי בִּתִּי הִזְהָרוּ בִּי מִפְּנֵי כָּלִיתִי. כְּדֵי לִלְמַד לְתַלְמִידֵיהֶם שֶׁלֹּא יִתְבַּיְּשׁוּ מִדְּבַר זֶה וְיִתְרַחֲקוּ מִן הַיְּחִיד:

Therefore it is proper for a person to subjugate his natural inclination with regard to this matter and train himself in extra holiness, pure thought, and proper character traits so that he will be guarded against them.

He should be very careful with regard to entering into privacy with a woman, for this is a great cause [of transgression]. Our great Sages would tell their students: "Watch me because of my daughter," "Watch me because of my daughter-in-law," so that they would teach their students not to be embarrassed about such matters and distance themselves from entering into privacy with women.

וְכֵן יִהְיֶה לְהִתְרַחֵק מִן הַשְּׁחוּק וּמִן הַשְּׁכָרוֹת וּמִדְּבָרֵי עֲגָבִים שֶׁאֵלּוּ גּוֹרְמִין גְּדוּלִּים וְהֵם מַעֲלוֹת שֶׁל עֲרִיּוֹת. וְלֹא יֵשֶׁב בְּלֹא אִשָּׁה שֶׁמִּנְהֶג זֶה גּוֹרֵם לְטִהָרָה יִתְרָה. ***גְּדוּלָּה מְכַל זֹאת אָמְרוּ יִפְנֶה עַצְמוֹ וּמַחְשַׁבְתּוֹ לְדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה וְיִרְחִיב דַּעְתּוֹ בַּחֲכָמָה שֶׁאֵין מַחְשַׁבַת עֲרִיּוֹת מִתְגַּבֶּרֶת אֲלָא בְּלֵב פָּנוּי מִן הַחֲכָמָה.*** וּבַחֲכָמָה הוּא אוֹמֵר (משלי ה יט) "אֵילַת אֲהָבִים יַעֲלֶת חֵן וְדִידָהּ יִרְוֶה בְּכָל עֵת בְּאַהֲבָתָה תִּשְׁגֶּה תַּמִּיד":

Similarly, a person should distance himself from levity, intoxication, and flirtation, for they are great precipitators and steps [leading] to forbidden relations.

A man should not live without a wife, for this practice leads to great purity. And [our Sages gave] even greater [advice], saying: ***"A person should always turn himself and his thoughts to the words of the Torah and expand his knowledge in wisdom, for the thoughts of forbidden relations grow strong solely in a heart which is empty of wisdom."*** And in [Solomon's words of] wisdom [Proverbs 5:19], it is written: "It is a beloved hind, arousing favor. Her breasts will satisfy you at all times. You shall be obsessed with her love."