

חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

Mei HaShiloach

IZBICA · BERESHIT, MEI HASHILOACH

Cain's complaint stemmed from jealousy toward Hevel, but God's question teaches that each person serves according to his own yearning and level, not in comparison to another—if one purifies his desire for avodah (service) without jealousy, he will be elevated to great heights. So too, teshuvah (repentance) is possible only while one still has life and vitality, for the heart's orientation held in this world remains fixed forever once that vitality departs, as seen in the fate of Korach's congregation. AI SUMMARY

“[God to Cain] If you do well, will it not be raised?” (Bereshit, 4:7) The first sin emerged in the world from the power of jealousy. Even though it seems clear that Cain had a reasonable complaint, for he was the one who was first moved to bring a sacrifice. It seemed to Cain that his brother Hevel, who brought a sacrifice afterwards, was doing it only because it was expected of him. Therefore Cain had a powerful grudge against God.

Yet in truth Hevel waited to bring his sacrifice until he understood the reason and even the secret of the avodah (service). Therefore it is not considered as if he was just bringing the sacrifice because his brother did. Therefore God appeared to Cain and asked him why he is so angry and despondent, for if Cain had no legitimate claim, God would not have appeared to him.

In other words, if you improve your heart to yearn for an accepted avodah, without any jealousy or selfish motives, then it will be raised, or rather, elevated in your levels to the highest heights. “Raise” or *seit* in Hebrew signifies the priesthood, as in (Vayikra 9:22), “Vayisa Aharon,” “and Aharon raised,” meaning that you will serve according to your own yearning, but not according to the level of your brother, for each man has a level unto himself.

“... and if you do not do well, sin crouches at the entrance.” (Bereshit, 4:7) Man can only return to God while he is still alive, for as long as he is alive the sin is not considered permanent, and he may still

return. Yet, “at the entrance,” meaning when the vitality is drained from man, then “the sin crouches,” and he can no longer get up. This is as we find in the Gemara (Baba Batra, 74a), “Now the congregation of Korach are constantly saying, ‘Moshe is true and the Torah is true,’ but it does not save them from gehinom.” Their words are not coming from the depths of their hearts, and the attitude that one has in this world stays with him forever. If in their lifetimes they had said, “Moshe is true and the Torah is true,” God would have saved them.