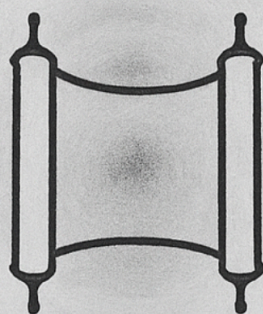


בס"ד

**Rebbe Elimelech
of Lizhensk
Parshas Pinchas**



לע"נ

אסתר בת יצחק

Dedicated By:

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The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk

Noam Elimelech

Parshas Pinchas

<p>And this is the meaning of “And he spoke... Pinchas the son of Elazar the son of... until ‘and I did not consume...’” And Rashi explains: Since the tribes were mocking him — “Have you seen this son of Puti, whose grandfather fattened calves for idolatry, and he killed a prince of Israel?” — therefore the verse comes and traces his lineage after Aharon.</p>	<p>וְדָבָר זֶה 'וַיְדַבֵּר כו' פִּינְחָס בֶּן אֵלְעָזָר בֶּן כו', עַד "וְלֹא כָלִיתִי כו'". וּפִירֵשׁ רַשִׁי לְפִי שֶׁהָיוּ הַשִּׁבְטִים מְבַזִּין אוֹתוֹ — הִרְאִיתֶם בֶּן פּוּטִי זֶה שֶׁפָּטַם כו' וְהִרְגָּ נָשִׂיא שֶׁבֶט מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל — לָכֵן בָּא הַכָּתוּב וַיִּחְסֹ אַחֲרָיו.</p>
<p>And one may ask: Did they not already know that he was paternally descended from Aharon? So why did they speak [against him]? And what did it help that the Torah now writes the lineage of Aharon?</p>	<p>וַיֵּשׁ לְהַקְשׁוֹת: וְכִי הֵם לֹא הָיוּ יוֹדְעִים מִזֶּה שֶׁמֻּצָּד אֵב הוּא מִיִּחְסוֹ, וְאֵף עַל פִּי כֵן דִּבְרוּ. וּמָה הוֹעִיל שֶׁנִּכְתְּבָה בַּתּוֹרָה הִיחֹס שֶׁל אַהֲרֹן?</p>
<p>It seems one may explain as follows: There are many people who do not feel a certain matter — when it comes into their hands — whether or not to act upon it, because they do not understand whether there is a mitzvah involved in doing this thing. For the evil inclination blinds a person's eyes so they do not see the truth, God forbid.</p>	<p>וְנִרְאֶה לְפָרֵשׁ: דִּהְיָה יֵשׁ כַּמָּה בְנֵי אָדָם שֶׁאֵינָם מְרַגְּשִׁים אֵיזָה דָּבָר, אִם בָּא לִידָם אִם לַעֲשׂוֹת הַדָּבָר הַהוּא אוֹ לֹא, לְפִי שֶׁאֵין מְבִינִים לְנִטּוֹת עֲצָמָם אִם יֵשׁ מִצְוָה בַּעֲשִׂית הַדָּבָר הַהוּא, כִּי הַיֵּצֵר הָרַע מְסַמָּא אֶת עֵינֵי הָאָדָם לְבִלְתִּי רְאוֹת הָאֱמֶת חֹס וְשָׁלוֹם.</p>
<p>But when they see a tzaddik do that very action — and he does it with such love and fear [of Heaven] — that all who see him testify that this is surely a great mitzvah, even though at first they didn't know it was a mitzvah at all.</p>	<p>אֲלֵא כְּשֶׁרואִין צַדִּיק אֶחָד שֶׁעוֹשֶׂה הַדָּבָר הַהוּא, וְהַצַּדִּיק עוֹשֶׂה הַדָּבָר בְּאַהֲבָה וּבִירְאָה כָּל כּוּ, עַד שֶׁכָּל הָרוֹאִים אוֹתוֹ מַעֲיָדִים עַל הַדָּבָר שֶׁהוּא מַעֲשֶׂה גְדוֹלָה לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּמַעֲשֵׂהוּ, אֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁמִּתְחִילָה לֹא יָדְעוּ אִם יֵשׁ מִצְוָה בָּהּ.</p>
<p>So too here — at first, the tribes did not understand that the killing of Zimri was a mitzvah, as it is written that even Moshe had the law concealed from him. But when Pinchas came and did this through his great holiness, everyone suddenly recognized that it was indeed a great mitzvah, even though Zimri was a prince.</p>	<p>כֵּן הָיָה הַדָּבָר כָּאֵן — שֶׁאֲצֵל הַשִּׁבְטִים בְּתַחֲלָה לֹא הִבִּינוּ אֶת הַמִּצְוָה שֶׁל הִרְיַגַּת זִמְרִי, וְכִמּוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב שֶׁנִּתְעַלְמָה מִמֶּנּוּ הַלָּכָה, וְכִשְׁבָּא פִּינְחָס וַעֲשֶׂה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה בְּכַח קִדְּשָׁתוֹ הַגְּדוֹלָה, אִזְ הִרְגִּישׁוּ כָּלֶם פֶּה אֶחָד שֶׁזֶּה מִצְוָה גְּדוֹלָה לְהִרְגֹּת אוֹתוֹ אֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁהוּא נָשִׂיא.</p>
<p>Therefore, it was a wonder in their eyes — how did Pinchas, the grandson of Puti on his mother's side, merit to know such a deep secret? To this, the verse responds: Don't be surprised! He is a descendant of Aharon, and the merit of Aharon stood by him.</p>	<p>לָכֵן הָיָה בְּעֵינֵיהֶם חִידוּשׁ גְּדוֹל עַל פִּינְחָס שֶׁהָיָה מֻצָּד אִם בֶּן פּוּטִי, וַיַּעֲשֶׂה דָּבָר גְּדוֹל כִּזֶּה מֶה שֶׁלֹּא עָלָה בְּלִבָּם כָּלֵל שֶׁזֶה הוּא מִצְוָה, וְאִיד בָּא זֶה לְפִינְחָס לְדַעַת מִן הַסּוּד הַהוּא? לָכֵן מִתְרַץ הַכָּתוּב לֹא־מֶר: לֹא יִהְיֶה הַדָּבָר חִידוּשׁ בְּעֵינֵיכֶם — הֲלֹא הוּא בֶּן אַהֲרֹן, וְעַמֻּדָה לוֹ זְכוּת אַהֲרֹן.</p>
<p>And those who spoke about him — God forbid — did not speak out of disdain, but rather in astonishment at themselves,</p>	<p>וְהֵם שֶׁדִּבְרוּ חֹס וְשָׁלוֹם לֹא מִטַּעַם גְּנָאִי דִּבְרוּ, אֲלֵא כְּמִתְמַהֲיָם עַל עֲצָמָם: אִיד לֹא הִרְגִּישׁוּ בַּדָּבָר לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּמַעֲשֵׂהוּ הַקָּדוֹשׁ וְהַטָּהוֹר.</p>

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wondering how they had failed to sense the truth and act as he did, with such holiness and purity.	
What emerges for us from all this is that after Pinchas did this act, he instilled zeal in the hearts of the holy people — that from now on they would look upon their ways with an awakened eye, to be quick and alert in fulfilling the commandments of Hashem.	היוצא לנו מזה: שאחר שעשה פינחס דבר זה — הכניס קנאה בלב עם הקדוש שמהיום והלאה יביטו על ארחותיהם בעינא פקידא להיות זריז ונשפר במצות ה'.
For a person who serves Hashem only according to his own mind and intellect can only rise as far as his mind allows — based on his root and his understanding. But when a person sees something good in his friend and becomes envious to do likewise, that envy lifts him even beyond his natural limitations.	והנה האדם העובד ה' מעצמו ולפי שכלו, אז אינו יכול להגיע לעלות כי אם עד מקום ששכלו מגיע, וכפי שרשו וכתב הבנתו. אבל כשאדם רואה מחברו דבר טוב ומקנא עצמו בו לעשות גם כן, הקנאה מביאה שיעשה אפילו שלא בדרך הטבע ויוכל לעלות למעלה על ידי זה.
Therefore, it says, “Do not envy... except in the fear of Hashem all day.”	”ולכן כתוב: ”אל תקנא כו' כי אם ביראת ה' כל היום.”
And this is the meaning of “Pinchas the son of Elazar... turned back My wrath” — because “in his zeal for My sake among them,” meaning he placed jealousy in Israel’s heart for the fear of Hashem.	וזהו ”פינחס בן אלעזר כו' השיב כו'” — על ידי ”בקנאו את קנאתי בתוכם”, פרוש: שהכניס בלב ’ישראל הקנאה ביראת ה' כו
“And I did not consume...” — meaning this thing does not lead to destruction.	ולא כליתי” — פרוש: הדבר הזה הוא דבר שאין בו פליון.
“Therefore, say: I give him My covenant of peace” — for one who is called a true servant of Hashem is complete in his service. And who caused this? Pinchas, through his great holiness. Therefore, I gave him the covenant of peace.	לכן אמור הנני נתן לו את בריתי שלום”, כי האדם הנקרא עובד ה' באמת הוא השלם בעבודתו, ומי גרם זה? פינחס בגדל קדשותו, ולכך נתתי לו ברית שלום.
And look into it more.	ויעז עזיו.

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Noam Elimelech

Parshas Pinchas

[NOTE Summary

This discourse by **Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk** centers around the story of Pinchas and the controversy surrounding his act of zealotry in killing Zimri. The tribes questioned how someone of such lineage — descended from Yisro on his mother's side — could commit such an extreme act. The Torah responds by tracing his paternal line back to Aharon the Kohen, emphasizing his holy roots.

Reb Elimelech explains that often people are unsure whether a particular action is truly a mitzvah, especially when the evil inclination clouds judgment. However, when a tzaddik acts with intense holiness and clarity, others recognize the truth of the act through him. This is what Pinchas accomplished — not only did he carry out a necessary act, but he awakened a holy jealousy in others, stirring them to greater spiritual awareness and zeal.

Pinchas's act revealed a level of kedushah (holiness) that inspired others to look more closely at their own path. His zeal transmitted a clarity of purpose that even Moshe had momentarily lost. Therefore, Hashem rewarded him with a "Covenant of Peace," for his inner shleimus (completeness) in service of God had transformed not just himself but the spiritual perception of the entire nation.

Practical Takeaway

When in doubt about what's right, look to those who act with genuine awe and love of Hashem. A tzaddik's sincere, holy actions can awaken clarity in us and inspire us to live with greater purpose. And when we witness such acts, we shouldn't judge but ask ourselves: *Why didn't I feel the truth of that action too?* That reflective jealousy — *kin'ah b'yir'as Hashem* — can become a holy motivator for growth.

Chassidic Story

Reb Elimelech once stayed at an inn with his student, the Chozeh of Lublin. During the night, a commotion broke out when a wagon driver accused a young man of theft. The innkeeper was ready to call the police. But Reb Elimelech asked the driver, "Are you certain he stole it?" The driver hesitated. Reb Elimelech said, "Let us wait until morning."

That night, Reb Elimelech recited Tehillim with great weeping and davened with fiery intensity. In the morning, the driver returned, apologizing — he had found the item in his own bag. The townspeople marveled, not only at the boy's innocence, but at the Rebbe's spiritual clarity.

Later, the Chozeh said, "Rebbe, your tears last night were more powerful than a hundred judges. You didn't just prevent a miscarriage of justice — you taught us to pause and look deeper when others rush to condemn."

END NOTE]

In another way: For the word "בְּתוֹכָם" ("among them") appears to be an unnecessary phrase. And it seems possible to explain it by

בְּדֶרֶךְ אֶחָד, כִּי מֵלֶת "בְּתוֹכָם" הוּא שְׂפָת יִתְר
לְכַאוֹרָה. וְנִרְאֶה לְפָרֵשׁ בְּהַקְדָּיִם פְּרוּשׁ "אֲנִי ה' לֹא
",שְׁנִיתִי וְאַתֶּם בְּנֵי יִעֲקֹב לֹא כְּלִיתֶם

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first introducing the verse: "I am Hashem, I have not changed, and you, the children of Yaakov, have not been destroyed."	
For example: One who has a precious gem, but does not yet understand its greatness. And each time he looks at it intently, he sees and understands more and more of its value. Yet the gem itself does not change in its essence.	למשל, מי שיש לו אבן טוב, רק שאינו מבין גדולתו, ובכל פעם שמסתכל בו היטב, הוא רואה ומבין גדל מעלתו יותר ויותר, והאבן הזו אין בו השתנות בעצמותו.
So too, the analog: the Blessed Creator — may He be exalted — there is no change in Him whatsoever, Heaven forbid. He is the true, absolute simplicity.	כן הנמשל: הבורא ברוך הוא יתעלה, אין בו שום השתנות חס ושלום, והוא אחד פשוט האמיתי.
And whenever a person contemplates and sees His greatness and exaltedness, he attains more and more perception of His greatness each time. And there is no end or limit to His exaltedness that one could fully grasp.	וכל זמן שאדם מסתכל ורואה בגדלתו ורוממותו, הוא משיג בכל פעם יותר ויותר גדל רוממותו, ואין קץ וסוף לרוממותו להשיגו.
And this is the meaning of "I am Hashem, I have not changed" — therefore "you, the children of Yisrael, have not been consumed." That is, it is impossible for you to ever fully reach the end of perceiving Me. You will never be finished or limited in grasping Me.	וזהו "אני ה' לא שניתי", לכן "ואתם בני ישראל לא כליתם", ר"ל שבלתי אפשרי לכם לבוא אל כליון הסוף השגתי, ואין לכם תכלית וסוף להשיגו.
And this is the meaning of the verse: "Elokim is known in her palaces as a refuge" — meaning, when a person sees that Elokim dwells in his palaces, that is, in his body and within him — when he constantly reflects and contemplates Him — then "He is known as a stronghold."	וזהו "אלקים בארמנותיה נודע למשגב", ר"ל פשאדם רואה שיהא אלקים שוכן בארמנותיו, הינו בגופו ובתוכו, שהוא מחשב ומסתכל בו תמיד, אז "נודע למשגב", פרוש אז נודע שהוא גדול וקדוש ונשגב ואין חקר לתבונתו.
Thus it follows: When Yisrael look and reflect on His greatness, they cannot reach the end of their perception of Him. And likewise, when Yisrael possess unity among themselves, there is likewise no end or limit to the greatness they can attain.	ונמצא, בזמן שישראל מסתכלין ורואים בגדלתו, אין יכולים לבוא אל סוף השיגו. וכמו כן ישראל כשיש להם אחדות, גם כן אין סוף וקץ להשיג מעלתם.
Now, there are two levels among people: There are the lowly and wicked, who when they see a tzaddik walking in his integrity and righteousness, become jealous and provoke him, claiming that they are acting out of zeal for Hashem, when really it is not so.	והנה יש ב' מדרגות בבני אדם: יש שפלים ורשעים, בראותם הצדיק שהולך בצדקו ותומו, מתקנאים בו ומתקוטטים ועוררים עליו, באמרם פונתם לקנא קנאת ה' צבאות הבוער בלבם.
And there are tzaddikim who are truly jealous with the zeal of Hashem over the completely wicked. So how can one discern which is true?	ויש צדיקים המתקנאים באמת קנאת ה' צבאות ברשעים גמורים. ומי יוכיח מי האמת עמו — הנה או זה?

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The answer is this: Whoever's words are heard and accepted into the heart — certainly his words are truthful and sincere. He is the tzaddik whose words go forth from the heart and enter the heart. And through this, unity is formed between him and them.	אֵלָּא כֵּן הַדָּבָר: מִי שֶׁדִּבְרָיו נִשְׁמָעִים וּמִתְקַבְּלִים אֶל הַלֵּב, בְּוודָּאי דִּבְרָיו פְּנִים וְאַמִּיתִים, וְהוּא הַצַּדִּיק שֶׁדִּבְרָיו יוֹצְאִים מִן הַלֵּב וְנִכְנָסִים אֶל הַלֵּב. וְעַל יְדֵי זֶה יָבוֹא אַחָדוּת לָהֶם בֵּינוּ לְבִינֵיהֶם.
And this is the meaning of “And Pinchas saw... בְּתוֹכָם (‘among them’)” — meaning that his zeal entered their hearts and into their inner being. And the act of Pinchas became pleasing in their eyes.	וְזֶהוּ "וַיֵּרָא פִּינְחָס כּו' בְּתוֹכָם", פִּירוּשׁ: שֶׁנִּכְנְסָה קִנְיָנָתוֹ אֶל לִבָּם וּבְתוֹכָם, וְהוּטָב בְּעֵינֵיהֶם הַמַּעֲשֶׂה דִּפְיִנְחָס.
“And I did not consume...” — meaning: through this, there is no end or limit to perceiving either Me or Yisrael. Because they contemplate My greatness, and see and understand that I have no end or limit. And because they possess unity, their attainment too has no end.	וְלֹא כְלִיתִי כּו'", ר"ל: עַל יְדֵי זֶה אֵין סוֹף וְתִקְלִית לְהַשִּׁיג לֹא אוֹתִי וְלֹא יִשְׂרָאֵל, מִחֲמַת שֶׁהֵם מְסַתְּפִלִּים בְּגִדְלוֹתַי וְרוֹאִים וּמִבִּינִים שֶׁאֵין לִי סוֹף וְתִקְלִית. וּמִחֲמַת שֶׁיֵּשׁ לָהֶם אַחָדוּת, אֵין תִּקְלִית לְהַשִּׁיגֵם גַּם כֵּן.
And the word “אִתָּ” in the verse means “with” — that is, “with the children of Israel.” And the explanation is complete.	וּמַלֵּת "אִתָּ" פִּירוּשׁוֹ כְּמוֹ "עִם" בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְכֵן ל'.
<p>[NOTE Summary]</p> <p>In this profound continuation of his teaching, Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk explores a deeper interpretation of the phrase “בְּתוֹכָם” (“among them”) in the verse regarding Pinchas. On the surface, the word seems superfluous — but Reb Elimelech reveals it as essential to understanding how Pinchas’s action penetrated the heart of the people.</p> <p>He begins by explaining that just as one may repeatedly gaze at a precious gem and continually discover more of its beauty, so too, when one contemplates the greatness of Hashem, there is no end to the levels of awareness he can attain — for Hashem is unchanging and infinite. This is the meaning of the verse “I, Hashem, have not changed... and you, the children of Yaakov, are not consumed” — not consumed because one can never reach the end of understanding Him.</p> <p>Reb Elimelech then compares this to the effect a tzaddik has on others. When a righteous person acts out of pure devotion, his actions penetrate others and awaken in them awe, truth, and unity. There are two types of jealousy in the world: the false jealousy of the wicked who resent the tzaddik under the guise of piety, and the true holy jealousy of the righteous who yearn to elevate others. The way to discern the difference is this: when the words and actions of a tzaddik resonate and enter the hearts of others, transforming them — that is proof of their truth.</p> <p>Thus, when the verse says Pinchas acted “בְּתוֹכָם,” it means his zeal entered into their very being. His act wasn’t divisive — it awakened unity, awareness of Hashem, and a limitless striving for spiritual connection.</p>	

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Practical Takeaway

If you want to know if an action is truly holy, don't judge it by appearance. Judge it by impact: does it awaken unity, reverence, and transformation in others? When the deeds of the righteous stir your soul, let that holy jealousy lift you — not divide you. Gaze deeper and let that inspiration drive you upward.

Chassidic Story

A simple Jew once approached **Reb Elimelech** in Lizhensk and asked for a blessing. The Rebbe looked at him and said nothing. Days later, the man returned, heartbroken. "I didn't come for money or honor — just a word from the Rebbe!" Reb Elimelech responded softly, "When you first came, your heart was closed. You wanted to *take* a blessing. But now you are *ready* to receive one."

He blessed the man — and immediately, the man's life changed. Years later, he told his children, "The Rebbe didn't just give me a blessing — he opened my heart. From that day forward, I saw Hashem everywhere."

END NOTE]

Or one could say, according to the simple understanding: Behold, we have already noted the difficulty — one verse says, "Chesed Kel all day," and another verse says, "G-d is angry every day."

And it appears that the explanation is: when there is judgment below, there is no judgment above. That is, when the tzaddik sees some lowliness in a person, and he rebukes him to his face and is angry with him for doing this — that is a form of judgment.

Through this, he causes the judgment above to be nullified. And "E-I" refers to the tzaddik, as it is written: "And He called him E-I, the G-d of Israel," and the sages interpreted this to mean that Hashem called Yaakov 'E-I.'

And the idea is: When the "E-I" — meaning the tzaddik — is angry every day below, then "Chesed E-I all day" — above. Thus, the two verses are reconciled.

And this is [the meaning of] "Elokim in her palaces..." This world is called a palace, in line with what the sages said: "Prepare yourself in the hallway..."

And "Elokim" means judgment. That is, when there is judgment in His palaces — below — then "He is known as a fortress," meaning Hashem becomes known as a refuge and shelter from all harm.

או יאמר על דרך הפשוט. דהנה כבר דקדקנו: כתוב אחד אומר "חסד א-ל כל היום", וכתוב אחד אומר "א-ל זועם בכל יום".

ונראה שלפי כשיש דין למטה, אין דין למעלה. והינו, כשהצדיק רואה איזה שפלות מהאדם, והוא מוכיחו על פניו וכועס עליו על עשותו זאת — זה הוא כמו דין.

הוא פועל שמבטל מעליו הדין מלמעלה. ו"א-ל" נקרא הצדיק, כמו שכתוב "ויקרא לו א-ל אלקי ישראל", "וידרשו שהקב"ה קרא ליצחק "א-ל".

והינו, בזמן ש"א-ל" הוא הצדיק "זועם בכל יום" למטה — אז "חסד א-ל כל היום". ונמצא צדקו יחדו שני הכתובים.

וזהו "אלקים בארמנותיה" — העולם הזה נקרא "ארמון", על דרך שאמרו: "התקן עצמך בפרוזדור".

ו"אלקים" הוא דין. והינו, כשיש דין בארמנותיו למטה — אז "נודע למשגב", פירוש: אז נודע יתברך למשגב. פירוש למחסה ולמסתור מכל נזק.

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And this is [the meaning of] “when he was zealous for My sake... and I did not consume [them]” — because he carried out judgment upon them below, I therefore did not destroy them, for this aroused great mercy upon them. Amen, may it be His will.

וזהו "בְּקִנְאוֹ אֶת קִנְאָתִי... וְלֹא כָלִיתִי" — מִתּוֹךְ שֶׁעָשָׂה בָהֶם דִּין לְמַטָּה, לָזֶה לֹא כָלִיתִי אוֹתָם, כִּי נִתְעוֹרַר עֲלֵיהֶם הַרְחָמִים הַגְּדוֹלִים. אָמֵן כּוּן יְהִי רָצוֹן.

[NOTE Summary

In this final teaching, **Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk** resolves a classic contradiction in Scripture: one verse says “*Chesed Kel all day*” — that Hashem’s kindness is constant — while another says “*G-d is angry every day.*” He answers by introducing a powerful principle: **when judgment is enacted below, mercy is aroused above.**

A tzaddik, when he sees wrongdoing in another, may rebuke the person sternly and even display anger. This righteous indignation is not personal — it serves as a form of judgment carried out in this world. Because of this, the heavenly judgment is nullified. In Kabbalistic terms, the tzaddik takes on the name “Kel” — as we find in Yaakov Avinu being called “Kel” — and when “Kel is angry below,” *then* “Chesed Kel all day” reigns above.

Thus, when Pinchas acted zealously, judging sinners within Israel, it wasn’t vengeance — it was a lower-court enactment that *prevented destruction*. The verse “*Elokim is known in her palaces*” refers to this world, which is like a royal hall. When judgment is present below — in these “palaces” — Hashem reveals Himself as a protector and refuge, showering compassion instead of wrath.

Practical Takeaway

Sometimes love looks like anger. When a tzaddik rebukes, it may sting — but it comes from a place of deep love and mercy. Rebuke given sincerely can redirect judgment into compassion. When you witness someone calling out wrongdoing with truth and love, don’t flinch — it may be that very act that is saving others from harsher consequences above.

Chassidic Story

Once, a prominent landowner in Lizhensk insulted a poor man publicly. Word of the event reached **Reb Elimelech**, who summoned the wealthy man and rebuked him sharply: “You ask for blessings from Heaven, but show none to those created in His image?” The man turned pale.

Later that night, Reb Elimelech was heard praying with tears, “Master of the Universe, I judged below — now You act with mercy above.” The next day, the man returned weeping and begged forgiveness. The Rebbe forgave him warmly.

This story is brought in “**Noam Elimelech: Hagiography and History**” (by Rabbi Mendel Piekarcz, p. 174), and also referenced in “**Toldos Elimelech**” (Warsaw edition, p. 102), where it’s emphasized that **the tzaddik’s rebuke saved the town from a harsh decree..**

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The story of Reb Elimelech rebuking the wealthy man encapsulates the final teaching of the discourse in both structure and spirit. Here's how:

1. Theme of "Judgment Below, Mercy Above"

The core idea of the discourse is that when a tzaddik enacts **judgment in this world**, it **deflects and sweetens the harsher judgment** that would otherwise descend from Heaven. This is the meaning of "אל זועם בכל יום" being reconciled with "חסד אל כל היום".

In the story, Reb Elimelech's **sharp rebuke** of the landowner mirrors this concept. He delivers judgment **on earth** — confronting sin directly and fiercely — and then immediately **davening above** that this judgment serve as a replacement for any heavenly retribution. His prayer "*I judged below — now You act with mercy above*" is a literal enactment of the discourse's central thesis.

2. The Tzaddik as "E-I"

The discourse notes that the tzaddik is referred to as "*E-I*", as derived from the verse "ויקרא לו א-ל אלקי ישראל". In the story, **Reb Elimelech steps into this exact role**: acting not just as a man of kindness but as one who channels Divine attributes — specifically *din* (judgment) — in a redemptive way.

3. Transformative Rebuke

A key message in the discourse is that **when rebuke is real — coming from the heart of a tzaddik — it enters the heart of the sinner**, brings teshuvah, and fosters unity and spiritual elevation. That's exactly what happens in the story: the landowner initially resists, but Reb Elimelech's words penetrate, evoke tears, and bring about transformation — *precisely because the rebuke was true*.

4. Armonosav / This World as a Palace

The discourse refers to this world as a palace — "*Elokim b'armonoseha*" — where justice plays out to sweeten what occurs Above. In the story, **the town itself is spared** through Reb Elimelech's intervention, fulfilling the idea that proper judgment in the "palace below" reveals Hashem as "*noda l'misgav*" — a refuge for all.

Conclusion

The story **is not just a fitting illustration** — it is a **living embodiment** of this teaching. Reb Elimelech, as the tzaddik, channels judgment to draw down mercy, rebukes with holy fire to awaken teshuvah, and by judging *below*, brings salvation *above*. It is the discourse in action — exactly as the Maamar describes. **END NOTE]**

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Furthermore — words to G-d — let us return again to explain the verse: “I am Hashem, I have not changed, and you, the children of Israel, have not perished.”	עוד לאלוה מילין ונשוב שנית לבאר פרוש הפסוק: "אני ה' לא שניתי ואתם בני ישראל לא בלייתם".
Behold, when it arose in His simple will to create the world in order to bestow good to the creations, there was no empty space apart from Him — for the Infinite One, blessed be He, has no beginning and no end.	דהנה כשעלה בראונו הפשוט לברוא את העולם כדי להיטיב לברואים, ולא היה מקום פנוי וזולתו, כי האין סוף ברוך הוא אין בו לא תחלה ולא סוף.
He contracted His Shechinah, and there remained an empty space — and this is the point. And the letter Yud was formed — this is Chochmah (wisdom) . And this is [the meaning of the verse], “And wisdom — from nothing shall it be found.”	וצמצם שכנתו ונשאר מקום פנוי, וזו היא הנקודה, ונעשה יו"ד — היא חכמה, וזהו "והחכמה מאין תמצא".
And He created the world with the light of the Yosher (Direct Light), which is the name Havayah , blessed be He, in its proper order.	וברא את העולם באור הישר, הוא השם הוי' ברוך הוא בסדרו.
And He formed man in His image, and He sealed him with the seal of the King — which is the name Havayah , blessed be He — both inside and outside: a seal within a seal, on both the body and the soul.	וניצר את האדם בצלמו, וחתם אותו בחותם המלך — הוא השם הוי' ברוך הוא — מבית ומחוץ, חותם בתוך חותם, על הגוף ועל הנשמה.
For such is the halachah regarding wine, where there is concern of contact by a gentile — there must be a seal within a seal . So too, man in this lowly world requires the seal of the holy King to protect him, lest he intermingle with the nations.	פי כן הדין בגין במקום חשש מגע נכרי — צריך חותם בתוך חותם. ככה גם כן האדם בעולם הזה השפל צריך חותם המלך הקדוש, כדי להשימר שלא יתערב בגוים.
And He sealed him with the name Havayah , blessed be He — in the order of Yosher (straightness).	והתמו בשם הוי' ברוך הוא — הישר.
And even though in the order of the Alef-Beis, the Hei precedes the Yud , nevertheless since the letters are supernal, according to the order of Tashrak (reverse Alef-Beis), the Yud comes first — and that is the name in its direct order.	ואף שבאותיות האלף-בית — ה"א קודמת ליו"ד — אבל מפני שהאותיות עליונים הם, על פי תשר"ק, ונהיו"ד קודמת, והוא השם הישר.
Now indeed, the Holy One, blessed be He, has no change in Him, Heaven forbid — not sometimes for good and sometimes the opposite, Heaven forbid — “for from the mouth of the Most High...”	ואמנם כי כן, שהשי"ת ברוך הוא אין בו שום השתנות חס ושלום — להיות פעמים לטובה ופעמים להפך חס ושלום — "כי מפי עליון כו

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Rather, He is One in true oneness without any change. The change, rather, comes from the actions of human beings: when they do one of the commandments that are forbidden — Heaven forbid — they reverse the Yosher (direct) light, and the letters of the Name become inverted — that is, they become והיה .	אֵלֹא הוּא אֶחָד בְּאַחַדוֹת הָאֲמִתִּי בְּלִי שׁוּם הִשְׁתַּנּוּת. רַק הַהִשְׁתַּנּוּת בָּא עַל יְדֵי מַעֲשֵׂה בְּנֵי אָדָם — בַּעֲשׂוֹתָם אֶחָד מִכָּל מִצְוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא תַעֲשֶׂינָה חֹס וְשָׁלוֹם — הֵם מִהִפְכִּים הָאוֹר הַיָּשָׁר, וְנַעֲשִׂים הָאוֹתִיּוֹת שֶׁל הַשֵּׁם מִהִפְכִּים — דְּהִינּוּ: וְהָיָה .
And this too is the explanation of the verse: “If you will surely listen... and do what is yashar (upright) in His eyes” — meaning, you will effect through your actions that the letters of the Holy Name will remain upright.	וְזֶהוּ גַם כֵּן פִּירוּשׁ הַפֶּסוּק: “וְאָמַר אִם שְׁמוּעַ כו' וְהַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינָיו תַּעֲשֶׂה” — פִּירוּשׁ: תִּפְעַל עַל יְדֵי מַעֲשִׂיךָ שֶׁתַּעֲשֶׂה הַיָּשָׁר בְּאוֹתִיּוֹת הַשֵּׁם הַקָּדוֹשׁ.
For the letters are called “eyes,” since they shine. And this is [the meaning of] “for I am Hashem your Healer.” That is, when you reflect in teshuvah to repair that which you have inverted — the letters of the Name — and restore them to how they were, this is your healing.	כִּי הָאוֹתִיּוֹת נִקְרָאִים “עֵינִים”, לְפִי שְׁמַאֲרִים. וְזֶהוּ “כִּי אֲנִי ה' רֹפֵא” — וְהִנּוּ: כְּשֶׁתִּתְהַרְהַר בְּתִשּׁוּבָה לְתַקֵּן אֶת אֲשֶׁר הִפְכָּת אוֹתִיּוֹת הַשֵּׁם, וּתְחַזְרִים לְכַמוֹת שֶׁהָיוּ — זֶה הֵיא רְפוּאָתְךָ.
What emerges for us from this is: Because man is clothed in physical substance, through him the “substance” of the King's seal — which is the name Havayah , blessed be He — sealed upon the body, may become inverted.	הַיּוֹצֵא לָנוּ מִזֶּה, עֲבוּר שֶׁהָאָדָם מְלוּבָשׁ בַּחֲמֶר, וְעַל יָדוֹ תִּתְהַפֵּךְ בַּחֲמֶר חוֹתֶם הַמֶּלֶךְ — הוּא שֵׁם הוּי' בְּרוּךְ הוּא — הַנִּתְחַתֵּם עַל הַגּוּף.
However, the soul , which is a portion of G-d above, always longs to ascend to its source in the Supernal Light, and constantly arouses a person to do teshuvah.	אָבֵל הַנִּשְׁשָׁמָה, שֶׁהִיא חֵלֶק אֵלּוּקָה מִמַּעַל, מִשְׁתַּקְקֶת תָּמִיד עֲלוֹת לִשְׁרָשָׁה מְאֹר הָעֲלִיּוֹן, וּמַעֲזִירָת אֶת הָאָדָם לְתִשּׁוּבָה.
Therefore, her seal remains — and the name Havayah within her stands firm and is not changed.	וְלָכֵן חוֹתֶמָה קִיָּם, וְהַשֵּׁם הוּי' שֶׁבְּתוֹכָהּ עוֹמֵד בְּקִיּוּמוֹ וְאֵינּוּ מִשְׁתַּנָּה.
And this is [the meaning of the verse] “I am Hashem, I have not changed.” The word “שִׁנִּיתִי” here implies both ‘second’ and ‘change’ — meaning, the second Name , sealed on the soul, is never altered.	וְזֶהוּ “אֲנִי ה' לֹא שִׁנִּיתִי” — פִּירוּשׁ: לְשׁוֹן שְׁנִי וְלְשׁוֹן שְׁנוּי — ר"ל: הַשֵּׁם הַשְּׁנִי, הַחֲתוּם עַל הַנִּשְׁשָׁמָה, אֵינּוּ מִשְׁתַּנָּה לְעוֹלָם.
“And you, the children of Israel, have not perished” — for the soul brings you back to the good.	וְאַתֶּם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא כָלִיתֶם” — לְפִי שֶׁהַנִּשְׁשָׁמָה מַחְזִירָת אֶתְכֶם לְמוֹטָב.
And similar to this concept was also the intent of Pinchas in this case — to bring Yisrael back and awaken their spirit within them toward Hashem.	וְכִיצָא בְּדָבָר זֶה הֵיחָד פְּנוּת פִּינְחָס גַּם כָּאן — לְהַשִּׁיב 'אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלַעֲזֹר רִוּחַם בְּקִרְבָּם אֶל ה'.
And through this he effected that the name Havayah , blessed be He, was made yashar (upright) in its letters.	וְעַל יְדֵי זֶה פִּעַל שֶׁנַּעֲשֶׂה הַשֵּׁם הוּי' בְּרוּךְ הוּא יָשָׁר בְּאוֹתִיּוֹתָיו.

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And thus, from חַמָּה (wrath) was made מָחָה (erased). And this is [the meaning of the verse], “He turned back My wrath” — and it became “[I] erased from upon the children of Israel all their sins.”	וְלָזֶה נַעֲשֶׂה מִן "חַמָּה" — "מָחָה". וְזֶהוּ "הָשִׁיב אֶת חַמָּתִי" — וְנַעֲשֶׂה "מָחִיתִי מֵעַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת כָּל חַטָּאתָם",
For they repented through him. “And I did not consume [them], etc.” Understand this well.	כִּי חָזְרוּ בַתְּשׁוּבָה עַל יָדוֹ. "וְלֹא כָלִיתִי כו" — וְהִבֵּן.
<p>[NOTE Summary]</p> <p>This final section of the discourse by Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk emphasizes the difference between the physical and spiritual components of the human being. While the body, being made of coarse material, can distort the divine seal (the Name Havayah) that is impressed upon it, the soul — a spark of G-d Himself — always yearns to return to its Source and urges the person toward teshuvah.</p> <p>This unchanging seal upon the soul is the deeper meaning of the verse “<i>I am Hashem, I have not changed</i>” — implying that the “second” Name, the one sealed within the soul, never changes or becomes corrupted. Thus, “<i>You, the children of Israel, have not been consumed</i>” — because the soul constantly brings you back to the good.</p> <p>Pinchas, through his zealous action, reignited that inner soul-force within the people. By doing so, he restored the letters of the Divine Name to their proper, upright order. As a result, Divine wrath (<i>cheimah</i>) was transformed into mercy (<i>machah</i>), erasing Israel’s sins and averting destruction.</p> <p>Practical Takeaway</p> <p>Even when a person’s external actions falter, the soul within them remains pure and unchanging — and that inner Divine spark is always pulling them back toward teshuvah. Trust that your essence is sealed with holiness. And like Pinchas, you can help others reconnect with their inner truth and restore Divine harmony through bold, sincere acts of awakening. END NOTE]</p>	
“And He said... Harass the Midianites... over the matter of Pe’or and over the matter of Kozbi, etc.” One must carefully examine why it says “for they harass you” in present tense, even though the events had already occurred.	וַיֹּאמֶר כּו' צַרּוּר אֶת הַמִּדְיָנִים כּו' עַל דְּבַר פְּעוֹר" וְעַל דְּבַר קֹזְבִי כּוּלִי. "וַיֵּשׁ לְדַקְדֵּק: אָמְרוּ "כִּי צַרְרִים כּו." בְּהוֹנָה עַל דְּבַר הָעֶבֶר וְנִתְּהוּהָ כָּבֵר
And it also says, “in their deceit (בְּנִכְלִיָּהֶם),” which means thought or intention. But did they harm Israel only through thought ? Surely they also acted — in the matter of Pe’or and Kozbi, as the verse recounts.	וְגַם אָמְרוּ "בְּנִכְלִיָּהֶם", שְׁפִירוּשׁוֹ — הַמַּחְשְׁבָה, וְכִי בַּמַּחְשְׁבָה לְבַד הִרְעוּ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל? הֲלֹא גַם פָּעְלוּ הַמַּעֲשֶׂה. גַּם כֵּן בְּדִבְרֵי פְעוֹר וְקֹזְבִי כִּנְאָמַר
It appears one may explain: The primary intent of the Blessed Creator in exacting vengeance upon Midian was due to the profound corrupt thoughts and sinful imaginings that were caused among Israel through the Midianites — when they spoke about the incident of Pe’or and the affair of Kozbi.	וְנִרְאֶה לְפָרֵשׁ: כִּי עָקַר כּוֹנֶנֶת הַבּוֹרָא בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּנִקְמָתוֹ בְּמִדְיָן — הִיָּה מַחְמַת גָּדֹל הַמַּחְשְׁבוֹת וְהַהוֹרִים רָעִים שֶׁנִּתְּהוּוּ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַל יְדֵיהֶם — בְּדִבְרֵם בְּסִפּוֹר הַמַּעֲשֶׂה. דְּפִעוֹר אוֹ מַעֲשֶׂה דְּקֹזְבִי

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And through the speech they spoke about those things, evil lustful thoughts entered Israel.	ועל ידי הדיבור שדברו בהם — נפלו לישראל הרהורי תאוות רעות.
And the rule is: With every sin, a kelipah (spiritual impurity or husk) is created. And as long as that kelipah remains in the world, bad thoughts continue to fall upon people from that very sin.	והקלל בזה: שבכל עברה — נבראת קלפה ר"ל, וכל זמן שהקלפה בעולם — אז נופלים מחשבות רעות לאדם מאותה העברה.
Therefore, a person who does teshuvah must eliminate that kelipah from the earth.	ונצריך האדם השב לבער הקלפה ההיא מן הארץ.
And in our case too — so long as those wicked Midianites remained in the world, the sinful thoughts of Pe'or still held sway over Israel and confused their minds.	וגם בגדון דידן: כל זמן שהיו אותם הרשעים המדגנים בעולם — אז היו עדן הרהורי עברה דפער שולטים בישראל לבלבל להם המחשבה.
Therefore, Moshe Rabbeinu, peace be upon him, was commanded to take vengeance upon them for the sake of Hashem.	ולכן נצטוה משה רבינו עליו השלום לנקם בהם נקמת ה'.
And this is the meaning of “for they harass you” in present tense — meaning, they are still harassing you.	ונהו "פי צררים..." להם" בהווה — פירוש: עדן הם צוררים להם.
And the verse explains how: “In their deceit (בגנליהם) with which they deceived you regarding Pe'or” — meaning, through those evil thoughts that arise in you when you speak about the affair of Pe'or.	ומפרש הכתוב בזה: "בגנליהם אשר נפלו להם על דבר פער" — פירוש: באותן המחשבות הרעות, המתהוות להם בדברכם במעשה דפער.
“And regarding the matter of Kozbi...” Therefore, destroy them from the earth, so that you may be pure and holy — “And you shall eradicate the evil from your midst.” Amen, may it be His will. And this is clear.	ועל דבר כזבי כו", ולכן תבערו אותם מן הארץ, ותהיו טהורים וקדושים, ובערת הרע מקרבך. אמן כן יהי רצון. וק"ל.

[NOTE Summary

In this closing teaching, **Reb Elimelech of Lizensk** addresses a subtle textual detail: the Torah commands Moshe to “harass the Midianites” in **present tense** (“צררים”), even though their sin had already occurred. Why speak as if it’s ongoing?

The answer lies in understanding the lingering spiritual effects of sin. According to Reb Elimelech, when a person sins, it creates a **kelipah** — a spiritual residue or husk — that continues to emit impure energy even after the act is done. As long as that kelipah exists, it generates corrupt thoughts and desires in others.

The Midianites didn’t only corrupt Israel through physical action; their **words and presence** continued to stir impure thoughts in the people. So long as Midian remained in the world, Israel was plagued by the mental residue of the sins of Pe’or and Kozbi. Therefore, Hashem commanded their removal — not merely for revenge, but to **purify the collective consciousness** of Israel and eradicate the lingering source of spiritual confusion.

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Practical Takeaway

Sin doesn't end with the act — it leaves a spiritual imprint. When seeking teshuvah, don't just abandon the behavior; work to uproot the internal effects it left behind. And when you sense ongoing negative thoughts, it may not be *your* sin but the remnants of collective or societal impurity that needs to be removed. Uprooting the source of impurity — even indirectly — brings true inner clarity and sanctity. **END NOTE]**

Or one may explain it another way, but in a single style, based on what our Sages said: “Carve for yourself — the shavings shall be yours. From here we learn that Moshe became wealthy.”

או יש לפרש באופן אחר ובסיגנון אחר, על פי מה שאמרו חז"ל: "פסל לך — הפסלת תהיה שלך. מכאן נלמד משה".

Now this seems strange — that a tzaddik would desire wealth? On the contrary, we find the opposite: he didn't want wealth, as seen with the **coffin of Yosef**. And about him it is said, “*A wise-hearted person takes commandments.*”

והנה כמו זר נחשב שיחפץ הצדיק בעשירות. ואדרבה, הלא מצינו ההפך — שלא חפץ בעשירות בארוננו של "יוסף". ועליו נאמר: "חכם לב יקח מצוות".

But it seems: every word that leaves a person's mouth never goes to waste or is lost. Rather, from the words of a holy tzaddik is created a **holy angel**, and conversely, from a wicked person a **destructive angel**, Heaven forbid.

אבל נראה: דכל דיבור היוצא מן האדם — אינו הולך לריק ולבטלה, כי אם מדברי הצדיק הקדוש — נברא מלאך הקדוש, ולהפך — מאדם רע נברא מלאך רע חס ושלום.

And this utterance roams the earth with no rest until it reaches the tzaddik. Then that speech **enters the tzaddik's thought**, and he elevates it into holiness.

והנה זה הדיבור — הוא משוטט בארץ באין מנוחה, עד בואו אל הצדיק, ואז נופל לצדיק הנה במחשבתו. והוא מעלהו אל הקדושה.

This explains why sometimes a tzaddik will experience a thought that **never once entered his mind before**. It's not his own thought — it came from the utterance of a wicked person, wandering until it found rest.

ונהו שלפעמים בא אל הצדיק מחשבה — אשר מעולם לא עברה על דעתו המחשבה ההיא. ואין זה כי אם היוצא מפי איזה רשע, ומשוטט עד מצאה מנוח.

And this is the explanation of the verse: “*Draw me after You, we will run.*” Meaning: the thought that is not good says to the tzaddik, “*Draw me toward holiness,*” because “after You we run.”

ונהו פירוש הפסוק: "משכני אחריך נרוצה" — דהינו: שהמחשבה אשר לא טובה — אומרת לצדיק: "משכני לקדושה, כי אחריך נרוצה".

And afterward, when she arrives at the realm of holiness, she praises and says: “*The King has brought me into His chambers.*” That is, the tzaddik — who is called “king” — has brought me into the inner sanctums of the Holy One.

ואחר כך, בבואה אל הקדוש — משבחת ואומרת: "הביאני המלך חדריו" — הוא הצדיק שנקרא "מלך", הביאני בחדרי קדש של השכי"ת ברוך הוא.

And this is the meaning of what they said: “*Carve for yourself — the shavings shall be yours.*” The explanation: the **rejected pieces** and the **impure thoughts** shall be yours — **so that you may bring them to holiness**, and through this they become elevated.

ונהו שאמרו: "פסל לך — הפסלת תהיה שלך", פירוש הדברים: הדברים הפסולים והמחשבות הפסולות — יהיו שלך, שאתה תביאם אל הקדושה, ובהן יתעלו.

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“And from here Moshe became wealthy” — meaning, a great wealth beyond all value — namely, the elevated thoughts.	ומכאן נתעשר משה — עשירות גדול לא יערה כל. זהב סגור — הם המחשבות
And this is the intent of the verse here: “ <i>For they harass you with their deceit</i> ” — meaning, through their evil thoughts and speech , they cause that you too must contend with those thoughts in order to elevate them. And truly, this is a great avodah for you. And this is understood.	וזהו פונת הפתוב בקאן: “כי צררים הם לכם בנגליתם” — פירוש: על ידי מחשבותם הרע ודבורם הרע — פועלים נשגם אתם יש לכם המחשבות והם פדי להעלותם, ובאמת — היא עבודה גדולה לכם. וכן”ל

[NOTE Summary

In this final and elevated passage, **Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk** offers a mystical interpretation of Hashem’s command to “harass the Midianites” through the lens of the verse “*carve for yourself*” and Chazal’s teaching that “*the shavings shall be yours*” — from which Moshe became wealthy. At first glance, this seems contradictory to the tzaddik’s usual disregard for wealth. But Reb Elimelech reveals that the **true wealth of a tzaddik** lies in his capacity to transform impurity into holiness.

Every spoken word, he teaches, creates a spiritual entity — a holy angel from a tzaddik’s speech, or a harmful force from the words of the wicked. These “orphaned” words and corrupted thoughts roam the world until they find rest — and often, they land in the mind of a tzaddik. When a foreign or impure thought enters the tzaddik’s consciousness — though it never once crossed his own mind — it is often a **fallen spark** from someone else’s sin. The tzaddik’s avodah is to **elevate it**, to draw it after him “toward holiness,” fulfilling the verse “*Draw me after You — we will run.*”

This is the deeper meaning of “*the shavings shall be yours*” — the tzaddik receives not gold or silver, but the **spiritual debris of the world**, which he redeems and uplifts. Thus, “*Moshe became wealthy*” — not in material riches, but in elevated thought. And this, Reb Elimelech says, is also the meaning of “*they harass you with their deceit*” — their evil thoughts and speech infiltrate your consciousness, so that **you** — the people of Hashem — will refine and return them to holiness. It is a great avodah, and one that is still very much alive.

Practical Takeaway

Sometimes the thoughts that trouble you most — the ones that feel alien, impure, or completely unlike your true self — are not your own. They may be fallen sparks seeking redemption through you. Instead of despairing, do as the tzaddikim do: **draw them after you**. Lift them. Reframe them. Daven through them. Turn spiritual debris into gold. This, too, is holy work.

Chassidic Story

Once, a young chassid came to **Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk**, weeping bitterly. “Rebbe,” he said, “I

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have impure thoughts — vile things that never entered my mind until I came to Lizhensk. Why now, of all places?”

Reb Elimelech closed his eyes, then smiled gently. “You think they are yours?” he said. “They’re not. You’ve grown pure enough that wandering thoughts — ones rejected by others — are coming to you for tikkun. They trust you to carry them home.”

The chassid gasped. “So what should I do?”

Reb Elimelech said, “Welcome them without fear. Pull them behind you. Daven harder. Learn deeper. Transform them. That is your avodah.”

Source: This story appears in “*Toldos Elimelech*”, Warsaw edition, p. 133, and is also quoted in “*Ohr Elimelech*” (Parshas Matos), where it’s taught that sometimes the holiest soul is the one chosen to uplift the darkest spark.

TPX (Therapeutic-Psychological Integration)

This deeply mystical teaching from **Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk** offers a powerful psychological lens for understanding **intrusive thoughts**, **emotional burdens**, and the inner work of **transformation**.

Reb Elimelech presents a radical view: not every thought that enters your mind is your own. Thoughts are spiritual forces — they originate not only from within, but from **outside of you**, shaped by others' speech, actions, or unresolved energy. In modern psychological terms, we might call this the **internalization of ambient psychic material** — the unconscious absorption of what others project into the world.

When a person speaks — especially with emotional intensity — it creates a kind of **energetic imprint**. If the speech is destructive, it leaves a residue. This “wandering energy” seeks a place to land, and often, it finds its way into **sensitive, spiritually attuned people** — people like the tzaddik in the teaching, or even deeply empathic individuals today. The tzaddik receives these wandering forces and **elevates** them. In trauma therapy, this is called **integration** — not repression, not rejection, but facing what emerges and transforming it.

Reb Elimelech reframes what most people see as spiritual failure — intrusive, disturbing, even foreign thoughts — as **a holy opportunity**. The tzaddik doesn’t ask, “*Why am I thinking this?*” or “*What’s wrong with me?*” Instead, he asks: “*What am I being asked to elevate?*” The thought is not a sign of your unworthiness — it’s **a trust placed in your soul**, that you’re strong enough to redeem what others could not.

This mirrors trauma healing. Often, people carry shame over thoughts or feelings that seem alien or dark. But these may be **introjects** — absorbed messages or energies from parents, abusers,

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culture, or society. The path to healing is not denying them, but **welcoming them into awareness, reframing them, and transforming them** through inner work — through “drawing them after you.”

When Reb Elimelech says that *Moshe's wealth* came from *the shavings* — from the “psoles,” the rejected material — he teaches us that **our greatness comes not despite our darkness, but through our transformation of it.**

Story

In 2015, a woman named Claire began experiencing persistent, graphic intrusive thoughts after starting a volunteer position at a trauma recovery center. She was horrified — these weren't thoughts she had ever had before. She thought she was breaking down.

But a therapist trained in somatic trauma work offered her a new frame: *“Your nervous system is carrying other people's pain. These are not yours — they're visiting you because you're finally strong enough to feel them and return them.”*

With time, Claire began using grounding techniques, prayer, and journaling to transform those thoughts — not by pushing them away, but by honoring them, blessing them, and gently releasing them. She didn't collapse from the weight — she rose with it.

She later became a trauma counselor herself, telling clients: “Some thoughts don't need to be healed — they just need to be **walked back to the light.**”

Source: Adapted with permission from a story featured in the *Center for Mind-Body Medicine* (CMBM) trauma training seminar, 2017. **END NOTE]**