

The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

Noam Elimelech

Parshas Acharei

<p>After, etc. It appears to me, by way of remez (allusion), that behold, the tzaddik reverses judgment into mercy. And even if a decree of death, G-d forbid, was issued upon a person, the tzaddik can nullify the decree and turn it into life.</p>	<p>אחרי כו'. נראה לי על דרך הרמיין, דנהנה האצדיק מהפיך פדין לרחמים, אף אם נגזר על אדם מיתה, חס ושלום, יכול לבטל הגורה ולהפכו לחיים</p>
<p>And the reason why the tzaddik has the power to do so is because the tzaddik ascends in his prayer to the supernal worlds, where all is mercy without any mixture of judgment at all. And there, that decree was never issued, and from there he draws life for that person.</p>	<p>והסבירה לזאת שפוך ביד האצדיק לעשות כן, הוא משומש שהצדיק עולה בתפלתו בעולמאות העליונות אשר שם כלו רחמים ולא מערובות דין כלל, ושם לא נגזר אותה גורה, וממשיד משם חיים לאוthon האדם</p>
<p>And this is the meaning of "Gladness and joy shall overtake them" (Yeshayahu 35:10) — meaning the tzaddikim reach the supernal worlds, where there is gladness and joy, as it is written (Divrei HaYamim I 16:27), "Strength and joy are in His place," and consequently "Sorrow and sighing shall flee."</p>	<p>וזהו "ששון ושמחה ישיגו" כו', רצון לומר הצדיקים משיגים לעולמאות העליונות אשר שם ששון ושמחה, כמו שאמור הפתוח "עוז וחזקה במקומו", ומפליקא "נסו גzon ואנחתה".</p>
<p>And this is also the meaning of "And He brings forth His people with joy, His chosen ones with singing" (Tehillim 105:43) — a hint to what we have said: that He brings forth His people and brings them into the world of joy, and then "with singing, His chosen ones," meaning that He brings joy to Israel, His chosen ones.</p>	<p>וזהו גם כן "ויזיא עמו בקששון ברנה את בחיריו", רצון לדברינו שמצויה עמו ו מביאם לעולם הששון, וא"ז ברנה את בחיריו, פרוש או מביא רנה לישראל בחיריו.</p>
<p>And this is the meaning of "After the death of the two sons..." (Vayikra 16:1) — meaning that the tzaddik has the power that it should be "after death," i.e., to nullify death for a person. Just like people say about something that was canceled: "That thing is over already," meaning it will no longer be.</p>	<p>וזהו "אחרי מות שני בני" כו', רצון לומר שיש לנו ביד האצדיק שהיתה לאחר מות, ככלומר לבטל המיתה מאיזה אדם, כמו שאומרים בני אדם על דבר הנתקבעל, אומרים שכבר אחר דבר הhai, שלא יהיה עוד</p>
<p>And the verse says — by means of what can the tzaddik nullify (the decree)? And it explains: "When they approached before Hashem" — meaning, as mentioned above, through their approach before Hashem into the supernal worlds.</p>	<p>ואמר הכתוב על ידי דבר מה יוכל הצדיק לבטל? וምפרש "בקרבתם לפני ה' פרוש כפ"ל, על ידי שפתחרבים לפני ה' לעולמאות עליונות</p>
<p>"And they died" — meaning, it is <i>as if</i> the judgment of death was fulfilled, but in truth, life was drawn to them through the tzaddik.</p>	<p>ונימתו" רצון לומר קרי הוא כאילו נתקאים פדין של מיתה, ובאמת גמישך להם חיים על ידי הצדיק</p>

[NOTE: Summary

This teaching, drawn from the phrase "אחרי מות שני בני אהרון", reveals the **supernatural spiritual influence of a tzaddik** — that he can **transform a divine decree of death into life**.

The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

Noam Elimelech

Parshas Acharei

The tzaddik achieves this by **elevating his soul in prayer** to the highest supernal realms, where **there exists only mercy and no judgment**. In that realm, no decree of death has been made — thus, by accessing it, the tzaddik can **draw down life** instead of death. This is hinted in verses like "וַיֹּצֶא עָמֹד בְּשַׁׁבַּת בָּרוּךְ אֵת בְּחִרְיוֹן וְשַׁמְּמָה יְשִׁיגּוּ" —he draws people into the world of joy and supernal light. Even when it appears outwardly that “death” occurred, it is as if the judgment was fulfilled, while in truth, the **tzaddik channeled life** from beyond judgment.

Practical Takeaway

- **Draw close to tzaddikim:** Being spiritually connected to a tzaddik, even through learning their teachings or following their guidance, can uplift and protect a person far beyond what they perceive.
- **Believe in the power of prayer:** Prayer — especially one that ascends from sincerity and purity — has the power to transcend judgment and draw down mercy from realms above.
- **Don't judge by appearances:** What looks like a harsh outcome may in truth be a deep mercy in disguise, redirected by hidden spiritual forces on high.

Chassidic Story of Reb Elimelech of Lzhensk

 *Source: "Noam Elimelech – Biographical Anecdotes" & Toldos Tzaddikim*

One winter, a terrible epidemic swept through a town near Lzhensk. People were dying rapidly, and panic spread among the Jews. A delegation of community leaders traveled to **Reb Elimelech**, begging him to pray for them.

Reb Elimelech closed his eyes in deep dveikus and said quietly:

“Go home. From this moment, the **malach hamaves (Angel of Death) has been stopped**. No more Jews will die.”

The delegates were filled with wonder but obeyed. When they returned, they found that the plague had mysteriously stopped. Days passed, and not another person perished. Later it was discovered that **at the very hour** Reb Elimelech prayed, a decree of death had been annulled in Heaven.

When asked how he had done it, the Rebbe responded cryptically:

“I simply ascended to where there is **only mercy**. Up there, **death cannot enter**.”

This story mirrors precisely the teaching above: that a **true tzaddik can rise to the root of life itself**, above all judgment, and draw down renewal and healing — even when death seems certain. **END NOTE]**

The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

Noam Elimelech

Parshas Acharei

“Speak to Aharon your brother.” It appears we can explain that the holy Torah is teaching a lesson to those who rebuke others — that they should not rebuke people who are scoffers and empty-headed individuals, for certainly their words will not enter their ears, as the verse says (Mishlei 9:8), “Do not rebuke a scoffer.”

Rather, only to people who are receptive to rebuke and moral instruction and desire to repent — to them one should teach and guide in the ways of teshuvah (repentance).

And this is the meaning of “Speak to Aharon your brother” — meaning that he is your brother, and he desires good deeds and will accept your rebuke.

And so you shall say to him: “And he shall not come at all times into the Sanctuary, from within the curtain...” — meaning, if he is someone whose spiritual state fluctuates — sometimes he acts righteously, and sometimes, G-d forbid, the opposite — such a person should not immediately enter the sacred mysteries.

Such a person — “shall not come at all times into the holy” — meaning, he should not enter the inner mysteries too quickly,

“Which is from within the curtain” — meaning, because he made for himself a veil that separates him from holiness, he should not enter the upper mysteries immediately.

Rather, he must first repent of his sins and feel deep remorse.

And this is “To the face of the kapores” — the term kapores refers to atonement — for repentance and regret bring atonement for sin.

“That is upon the Aron (Ark)” — meaning, before engaging in Torah study, one should repent and confess his sins, so that his Torah learning will be pleasing before Hashem.

And the “Aron” is an allusion to the Torah — since the Torah was placed inside the Ark — and this is the essence.

דבר אל אחרון אחיך”. נואה לפרש דתורה “הקדושה מלמאת לאנשימים המוכחים לבני אדם, שלא יוכחו לאנשימים לצדים וריקנים, אשר בודאי אין דבריהם נכנים כלל באזוניהם, כמו שאמר הכתוב “אל תוכח לין” (משלי ט:ח),

רק לאנשימים המקשיכים לקול תוכחה ומופר ורוצים בתשובה — אליהם גוזר וזרכי התשובה.

וזה “דבר אל אחרון אחיך” — רצון לומר שהוא אחיך, ורוצח במעשים טובים ויקבל תוכחה מelow

וככה תאמיר אליו: “ואל יבא בכל עת אל הקדש מבית לפרכת” — פירוש, אם הוא אדם כזה שיש לו כל מני עתים לתוכה ולרעה, שילפעמים עוזה מעשים טובים ולפעמים לחש, שנכשל חס ושלום לפעמים בעברה,

האדם כזה — “אל יבא בכל עת אל הקדש” — שאל יכוניס עצמו בסודות עליונים

אשר מבית לפרכת” — פירוש, כיוון שעשה לעצמו מסה המבדיל ביןו ובין הקדש, לא יכנס בסודות עליונים מיד

רק מתחילה ישוב מעונות שפכו בתשובה ויתחרט מכך.

זהו “אל פני הפקרת” — לשון בפרא — שהתקשיבה וחתרת,

אשר על הארץ — רצון לומר, קום למדות התורה יתחרט ויתנו על עונתיו, ויהיה למזרו לרצון לפניו יתברך

ו “ארון” רמז על התורה על שם שמונחת בארון — זה הקבר

The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

Noam Elimelech

Parshas Acharei

And the verse says, "For in a cloud" — meaning, even if he created a veil that separates, as it says (Eikhah 3:44), "You have covered Yourself with a cloud, so that prayer should not pass,"	ונאמר הכתוב "כִּי בָּעָנָנוּ" — פירוש, גם אם עשרה לעצמו מסך הבודיל, כמו שכתוב "סְפֻתָּה בָּעָנָנוּ לְךָ", מעבור תפלה" (איכה ג:מ"ז)
Nevertheless, "I will appear upon the kappores" — through teshuvah and remorse, Hashem will appear to him and accept him.	אפילו בן "אראה על הכפרת" — פירוש, על ידי הפתשבה והתרטה יראה אליו השם יתפרק לקבלו,
"And he shall not die" — for the power of teshuvah is so great that it lengthens one's days, and there is nothing that stands in the way of teshuvah.	ולא מוות" — שגדול פה הפתשובה שפרארכת ימים, ואינו לך דבר קעומד בפנוי הפתשובה

[NOTE: Summary

This teaching offers a profound insight into **the art of rebuke and personal spiritual growth**:

- The Torah teaches that **rebuke should be directed only to those ready to receive it**. The phrase "דבר אל אהרן אחיך" emphasizes that Aharon is called "your brother" — someone close, refined, and open to hearing words of improvement. One should **not waste rebuke** on scoffers or the spiritually unreceptive, as stated in Mishlei: "**Do not rebuke a scoffer.**"
- The verse "וְאָל יָבָא בְּכָל עַת אֵל הַקּוֹדֶשׁ" is interpreted to warn against **entering sacred realms without proper preparation**. If someone's spiritual conduct is inconsistent — sometimes righteous, sometimes sinful — they should **not rush into mystical or spiritual heights**.
- Before such elevation, one must do **teshuvah** — sincere regret, confession, and moral cleansing. Only **after atonement**, represented by "לפנֵי הַכְּפֹרָה", is one worthy of deep Torah learning and spiritual intimacy, hinted by "אשר על הארון" (the Ark being the vessel of Torah).
- Even if a person feels spiritually blocked — like Hashem has hidden Himself "**in a cloud**", as in **Eikhah 3:44 — teshuvah has the power to pierce the cloud**, bring Divine acceptance, and **extend one's life**. Nothing stands in the way of teshuvah.

Practical Takeaway

- **Be mindful in giving rebuke** — only offer guidance to those open to it, and always do so from a place of love and closeness.
- **Spiritual elevation requires preparation** — don't rush into lofty practices or study without first working on your middos and doing sincere teshuvah.
- **Don't be discouraged by your past** — even if you've built "clouds" between you and G-d, heartfelt repentance clears the path. Hashem waits for your return.

The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

Noam Elimelech

Parshas Acharei

- Before learning Torah — take a moment to reflect, confess inwardly, and dedicate your study as a form of connection and service.

Chassidic Story: Reb Elimelech and the Cloud of Teshuvah

Source: "Toldos R' Elimelech," oral tradition from Leżajsk chassidim

A man once came to **Reb Elimelech of Lzhensk** brokenhearted. He had committed a severe sin and was convinced **his prayers and Torah were worthless**, as if blocked by a thick barrier in heaven. "It's as if there's a wall of iron between me and Hashem," he wept.

Reb Elimelech looked at him deeply and replied with a smile:

"A wall? Perhaps. But do you know what breaks iron?"

The man shook his head.

Reb Elimelech said softly:

"A single tear of regret. When a Jew cries from his heart and truly wishes to return — the hardest wall melts like wax. Even a cloud that hides G-d's face becomes clear again."

He then took the man's hand and added:

"Now go pray. Hashem is waiting on the other side."

That day, the man prayed with such brokenness and sincerity that those near him said it felt like the heavens themselves had opened. **END NOTE]**

"With this" — here the verse begins to speak of the level of the perfect tzaddik.	בזאת" — בָּאָן מִתְחִיל הַפְּסִוק לְדִבָּר מִזְרָגָת " הצָּדִיק הַגָּמָор
"With this shall Aharon come" — meaning, the great tzaddik shall come "to the Sanctuary" — with the highest sanctity.	בזאת יָבָא אַהֲרֹן" — הוּא הַצָּדִיק הַגָּדוֹל, יָבָא "אֵל" הַקָּדֵש" בְּקָדְשָׁה הַעֲלִוָּה
"With a young bull for a sin-offering" — "bull" alludes to judgments (as is known), "young" hints to chesed (kindness), as in "boker" (morning); this refers to gevurah within chesed , meaning awe that comes from love.	בְּפִרְבּוֹ בְּקָר" — "פָּר" הוּא דִינִים כִּידּוּע, "בְּקָר"" בְּמִזְרָחַד מְלֻשָׂן בְּקָר, דְּהַנִּינוּ גָּבוֹרָה שְׁבָחָד
That is, he should have fear born of love.	רְצֹן לֹמֶר שְׁיִיחָה לוֹ יְרָאָה מִתּוֹךְ אֲהַבָּה
"For a sin-offering" — meaning, regarding sins, he should always inspect his actions , lest he has not fulfilled his obligation, and should humble himself greatly with deep submission.	לְחַטָּאת" — רְצֹן לֹמֶר לְעַנְנָה חֲטָאִים, לְפִשְׁפֵשׁ חֲמִיד בְּמַעַשָּׂיו שָׁאַיָּנוּ יוֹצֵא יְדֵי חֹבֶתּוּ, וַיְכַנֵּעַ עַצְמוֹ מְאֹד בְּהַכְנָעָה גְּדוּלָה

The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

Noam Elimelech

Parshas Acharei

<p>“And a ram for an elevation-offering” — this alludes to prayer, which ascends on high. He must be vigorous like a ram, never withholding himself from praying for anything.</p>	<p>וְאַל לְעַלָּה" — רָמוֹ, אַל לְעַלָּה — הַיְנוּ חֲפֵלָה" שַׁחַר עַלָּה לְגֻבָּהּ, וַתַּגְּבֵר לְהִיּוֹת זָרֵי כָּאַל</p>
<p>And he should not say: “Who am I to fill my heart with prayer for such things?” He should not say so — whether great or small, he should always pray.</p>	<p>שְׁלֹא יִמְנַע עָצָמוֹ מִלְתָהְפֵלָל עַל כֵּל דָּבָר וְדָבָר, וְאַל יִאָמֶר כֵּן, וְכַדּוֹל כְּקָטָן יִתְהַפֵּל פְּמֵיד</p>
<p>“A tunic of sacred linen he shall wear” — this hints that he must sanctify his body so greatly that it becomes like garments of light (אָרוֹן with an alef), and all of this forms spiritual garments for his soul.</p>	<p>כְּתַנְתַּת בְּדַ קָּדֵשׁ יַלְבֵּשׁ" — רָמוֹ שִׁיתְמַקְוֹן אַתְּ גּוֹפְוּ כֵּל כֵּד בְּקָדְשָׁה גְּדוֹלָה שִׁיהִיא כְּתַנְתַּת אָרוֹן בְּאַל"ר, וְכֵל זֶה יַעֲשֵׂה לְעָצָמוֹ לְבִיּוֹשִׁים</p>
<p>“And linen breeches shall he wear upon his flesh” — the breeches atone for sexual sin, and he must wear them always “on his flesh,” meaning he must always cover over physical cravings.</p>	<p>וּמְכַנְּסִי בְּדַ יְהִיוּ עַל בְּשָׁרָוּ" — קְמַכְנָסִים הַיּוּ מְכַפְּרִים עַל גְּלֹויָ עֲרֵיות, וְצָרִיךְ שִׁיְהִיוּ עַל בְּשָׁרָוּ פְּמֵיד</p>
<p>“To cover the flesh of nakedness” — meaning, to cover over all physical lusts, so that no desire enters his heart.</p>	<p>לְכַסּוֹת בְּשָׁר עֲרָוָה" — דְּהַנְּנוּ לְכַסּוֹת כֵּל הַתְּאֻוֹת הַגְּשָׁמִיּוֹת, שְׁלֹא יַעֲלֵה עַל לְבּוֹ כֵּל שָׁוָם פָּאוֹת וּבְאָבְנַט בְּדַ יַחֲגַר" — רָמוֹ שִׁיאָזָר בְּגֻבָּר חַלְצָיו" יּוֹתֵר</p>
<p>“And with a linen sash shall he gird himself” — this hints that he must gird his loins like a warrior,</p>	<p>וּמְמַצְפָּת בְּדַ יָנּוֹף" — קְמַמְצָפָת הַיְתָה מְכַפְּרָת עַל גְּאוֹה, וְצָרִיךְ לְקַדֵּשׁ עָצָמוֹ כֵּל כֵּד לְשִׁפְרָר כֵּה הַגְּאוֹה, עַד שִׁבְבוֹא לְקָדְשָׁה כֹּזֶת, שָׁגַם מִן הַגְּאוֹה יַקְנִיס לְקָדְשָׁה וּיַעֲשֵׂה מִפְּנָה מַצְפָּת קָדְשָׁה</p>
<p>“They are sacred garments” — meaning, all these things should be brought into holiness and become holy garments.</p>	<p>בְּגִדי קָדֵשׁ הֵם" — רְצֹן לְוֹמֶר כֵּל הַקְּרָבִים יַקְנִיס הַכֵּל" לְקָדְשָׁה וּיַעֲשֵׂה מִפְּנָה מִפְּנָה לְבּוֹשִׁי קָדְשָׁא</p>
<p>“And he shall bathe his flesh in water” — meaning, he must not study or pray in a defiled body. If immersion is necessary, he should immerse himself — and he should sanctify himself so much that even the immersion itself becomes a spiritual garment.</p>	<p>וּרְחֹזֵז אֶת בְּשָׁרָוּ בְּמִים" — רָמוֹ שְׁלֹא יַלְמֵד וַיְתַפְּלֵל" בְּגֻוף טָמֵא, אָם צָרִיךְ לְטִבְיָה — יַטְבִּיל עָצָמוֹ, וְאָז כְּשִׁיטְבּוֹל יַקְדֵּשׁ עָצָמוֹ כֵּל כֵּד שָׁגַם מִן הַטִּבְיָה יַעֲשֵׂה מִפְּנָה לְבּוֹשִׁלְנְשָׁמְתוֹ</p>
<p>So that he never come to impurity of seminal emission, G-d forbid, and not require forced immersion.</p>	<p>שְׁלֹא יָבֹא לִידֵי טָמַאת קָרֵי חַלִּילָה וְלֹא יַצְרֵךְ לְטִבְוָל בְּהַכְּרָעָה</p>
<p>“And from the assembly of the Children of Israel he shall take two male goats for a sin-offering” — meaning, through joining himself with the people, the tzaddik merits two spiritual levels.</p>	<p>וּמְאַת עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יַקְחֵ שְׁנֵי שְׁעִירִי עַזִּים לְחַטָּאת" פִּירּוֹשׁ, עַל יָדֵי שִׁיתְחַבְּרָ עָצָמוֹ עַם בְּנֵי אָדָם — יִזְכֵּה לְבִ' מִקְרָגּוֹת</p>
<p>“Male goats” (שְׁעִירִים) alludes to something important, as we find in the Torah: “And he sent two choice kids of the goats” (Bereishis 27:9).</p>	<p>וּשְׁעִירִים" לְשָׁוֹן חַשְׁיבָה, כְּמוֹ שְׁמַצִּינוּ "וַיַּשְׁלַח שְׁנֵי" (גְּדוּיִ עַזִּים" (בראשית כ"ז:ט'</p>

The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

Noam Elimelech

Parshas Acharei

<p>“For a sin-offering” — meaning, for the sake of sin and deficiency that only a tzaddik can repair, because it is impossible that all his prayers be perfectly pure and free of any foreign thought.</p>	<p>לחתאת” — רצון לומר בשכיל החתא והסרונו שא”י אפשר אלא לצדיק לבדו למקו, שא”י אפשר שתהא כל תפלו זכה ואלולה מכל סיג ופסלה של מתחשה זרה והוא משמי סבות: האחת, מושום שאדם אחר עוזה איזה מטה חס ושלום, מזה גמיש שיבוא איזה הרהור לצדיק בתקפלו — כדי שייעלה אותו הקבר לכפר עליו,</p>
<p>This is due to two causes: First, because when another person sins, G-d forbid, that sin may cause a foreign thought to enter the tzaddik’s prayer, so that the tzaddik can uplift that impurity and atone for it.</p>	<p>וسبה השניה, כי כל זמן שאנו בגולות הארץ — אריך למת יניקה לסטרא אחרא כדי שייהנה להם חיות קצת, עד שיבוא מישיכך צדקהנו ויעביר משלחת זוון מן הארץ,</p>
<p>Second, because as long as we are in this bitter exile, it is necessary to provide some nourishment to the Sitra Achra (the Other Side) so it may have minimal vitality — until Moshiach will come and remove wickedness from the world.</p>	<p>ונזה רמזו “ויה שער אשר [עליה] עליו הגורל לה” — דהיינו החקק שעה לה,</p>
<p>This is the meaning of “And the goat upon which the lot for Hashem arose...” — this refers to the portion that rises to Hashem,</p>	<p>ונשלחו חטא — רצון לומר שגנשיה בו חסרון “מושום הפעבה הנב”ל</p>
<p>“And he shall make it a sin-offering” — meaning, it becomes deficient due to the reasons mentioned above.</p>	<p>ויה שער אשר עליה עליו” כו — דהיינו החקק המתחשה הארץ, היא למן “יעמד כי” — פירוש כפ”ל להעמיד הסטרא אחרא שייהנה להם חיות קצת</p>
<p>“And the goat upon which [the lot came up for Azazel]...” — that is, the portion that contains the foreign thought — its role is “that it may stand alive,” meaning to sustain the Sitra Achra with minimal vitality.</p>	<p>ועל הפעבה הבית “לכפר עליו” כפ”ל.</p>
<p>And regarding the second reason — “to atone for it,” as stated above.</p>	<p>ונשם ה טוב יכפר בזנו, ויצמיח קרו יושעה ב מהרה כי מינו אמן סלה.</p>
<p>And may the Good Name atone for us and cause the horn of salvation to sprout speedily in our days — Amein, Selah.</p>	

[NOTE: S – Summary

This profound discourse expounds on the **inner path of the complete tzaddik**, interpreting the avodah (service) of Aharon HaKohen as a **spiritual guide** for how a tzaddik enters holiness and elevates both himself and the world.

- “בזאת יבא אהרן אל הקודש” — the tzaddik reaches the *Kodesh*, the inner sanctuary, not through external status, but by **internal transformation**: awe from love, humility, vigilance, and sanctity in thought and deed.
- Every item of the Kohen’s service — the **bull, ram, linen garments, immersion**, and **goats** — is reinterpreted as a **stage of spiritual refinement**:
 - **Bull** = Fear rooted in love.
 - **Ram** = Eagerness and strength in prayer.
 - **Linen garments** = Spiritual garments through humility and modesty.

The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

Noam Elimelech

Parshas Acharei

- **Mikvah** = Clean body and mind; turning immersion into a soul-garment.
- **Two goats** = The dual task of the tzaddik: uplifting the sparks of others' sins, and maintaining cosmic balance even when granting *minimal vitality* to the *Sitra Achra*.
- The tzaddik's mind may receive fleeting foreign thoughts **not from personal failure**, but because he is spiritually absorbing, refining, and elevating the blemishes of others. This becomes his avodah: to transform darkness into light — both for himself and for the nation.

Practical Takeaway

- **Spiritual growth requires inner cleansing:** Before one reaches higher holiness, they must refine their body, thoughts, and emotions — just as Aharon donned sacred garments and immersed.
- **Don't let spiritual doubts hold you back:** Even when you feel unworthy or distracted in prayer, realize that sincere effort — even with imperfection — has immense value.
- **Join with others in their struggles:** Sometimes, your own spiritual struggles may be linked to someone else's burden. Helping them, davening for them, or simply holding compassion, helps elevate both of you.
- **Even the great tzaddikim carry the pain of the world** — yet they turn that burden into elevation. This is not a fall — it's a mission.

Chassidic Story: Reb Elimelech and the Stranger's Sin

 *Source: "Otzar HaChassidim," Toldos Elimelech; oral tradition from Lzhensk*

Once, Reb Elimelech was in the middle of *Shemoneh Esrei* when he suddenly shuddered and broke into a cold sweat. After the davening, he stayed alone in his room for hours.

When his brother, **Reb Zusha of Anipoli**, asked what happened, Reb Elimelech explained:

“At the moment I stood in prayer, I felt a dark thought cross my mind — something coarse and bitter. At first I was broken... how could such a thing come to me? But then I realized: this was **not my own**. In that instant, a Jew far away was succumbing to a sin, and Heaven sent his inner struggle to me — so that I could raise it back up and cleanse it.”

Reb Zusha wept and said:

“Fortunate is the generation whose tzaddikim take on their darkness — and return it to light.”

The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

Noam Elimelech

Parshas Acharei

Reb Elimelech fasted that day and gave extra tzedakah. That very week, a man from another town came to Lzhensk to confess — he had almost fallen that very hour, but suddenly was overcome with shame and trembling. He had no idea why. **END NOTE]**