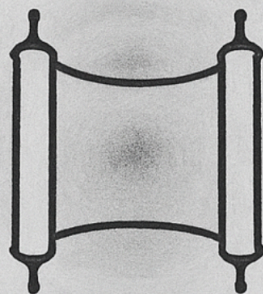


בס"ד

**Menachem Nachum
of Chernobyl
Me'or Einayim
Parshas Re'eh**



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Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl

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Introduction

This discourse by Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl, the Me'or Einayim, opens with the verse “ראה אנכי” (See, I place before you today a blessing and a curse”), exploring its profound spiritual layers. Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl (1730–1797), one of the foremost disciples of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid of Mezritch, was the founder of the Chernobyl Chassidic dynasty. His teachings emphasize the immanence of G-d in all aspects of reality, the inner divine spark within the mundane, and the transformative power of perception and intention. In this maamar, he delves deeply into how one’s inner consciousness determines whether they experience blessing or curse—even within the same physical reality.

See, I am placing before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, that you will listen, etc.; and the curse, if you will not listen, etc., and you stray from the path that I, etc., to go after other gods whom you have not known, etc.

ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום בְּרָכָה וְקָלָלָה: אֶת־הַבְּרָכָה אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמְעוּ וגו' וְהַקְלָלָה אִם לֹא תִשְׁמְעוּ וגו' וְסָרְתֶם מִן־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי וגו' לָלֶכֶת אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא יְדַעְתֶּם וגו'

To understand the matter: what is the meaning of the word "see," which implies a pointing with a finger, as though the thing is prepared before the eye of the beholder? And further, why regarding the blessing does it say the word "את" as it is written "את־הַבְּרָכָה אֲשֶׁר...", while regarding the curse the word "אֵת" is not mentioned?

לְהַבִּין הָעִנְיָן מֵהוּ לְשׁוֹן רְאָה שְׁמַרְאָה בְּאַצְבָּע פְּאִילוּ הַדָּבָר מוֹכֵן לִפְנֵי עֵין הָרֹאֶה, וְעוֹד לְהַבִּין שְׁאֲצֵל הַבְּרָכָה אָמַר לְשׁוֹן "את", כְּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב "את־הַבְּרָכָה אֲשֶׁר...", וְאֲצֵל הַקְלָלָה לֹא נֶאֱמַר תִּיבֵת "את".

And we preface with the verse written in Parshas Nitzavim (Devarim 30:15): “See, I have placed before you today life and good, and death and evil,” etc. And afterward it says there, “and you shall choose life” (verse 19).

וְנִקְדִּים פְּסוּקַת הַפְּתוּחַ בְּפִרְשַׁת נִצָּבִים (דְּבָרִים ל'), (ט"ו): "רְאָה נִתְּנִי לִפְנֵיךָ הַיּוֹם אֶת הַחַיִּים וְאֶת הַטּוֹב וְאֶת הַמָּוֶת וְאֶת הָרָע" וגו'. וְאַחֲרַיִךְ זֶה נֶאֱמַר שָׁם: ("וּבִחַרְתָּ בַחַיִּים" (שם, י"ט).

For it is known that the creation of all the worlds and their fullness was through the Torah, which are the letters from Alef to Tav. The Creator, blessed be He, contracted Himself into the letters, and the beginning of His contraction and emanation was in the letter Alef.

כִּי נִדְעָ שֶׁבְּרִיאַת כָּל הָעוֹלָמוֹת וּמְלֻאָן הֵיוּ בַּתּוֹרָה שֶׁהֵן הָאוֹתִיּוֹת שֶׁמֵּאֵל"ף עַד ת"ו, שֶׁהַבּוֹרָא בְּרוּךְ הוּא צִמְצַם אֶת עֲצָמוֹ בְּהָאוֹתִיּוֹת, וְהִחְלִת צִמְצוּמוֹ וְאַצִּילוּתוֹ הוּא בְּאוֹת א'.

And afterward He contracted Himself, so to speak, and emanated the light of His holy flow from letter to letter until Tav, which is the end of the levels, as is known—that it is the place of choice, as is said: “Tav—live; Tav—die.”

וְאַחֲרַיִךְ זֶה צִמְצַם אֶת עֲצָמוֹ כְּכִכּוֹל, וְהֶאֱצִיל אוֹר שְׁפַע קְדוּשָׁתוֹ מֵאוֹת אֶל אוֹת עַד ת"ו, שֶׁהוּא סוֹף הַמִּדְרָגָה בְּנוֹדָע, שֶׁהוּא מְקוֹם הַבְּחִירָה, כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "ת"ו" ("תַּחֲיָה, ת"ו תָּמוּת).

Therefore, in every matter—even one at the end of the level, which is distant from the light of the flow of His infinite light, may He be blessed—one must draw himself near to that end of

וְלִכּוֹ כָּכָל דָּבָר, אֲפִלוּ שֶׁהוּא בְּסוֹף הַמִּדְרָגָה, שֶׁהוּא רְחוֹק מֵאוֹר שְׁפַעַת אוֹרוֹ אֵין סוֹף בְּרוּךְ הוּא – אֵלֹא

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the level, which is the aspect of Tav, to the Alef, which is the Master (Aluf) of the world.

And to raise the thing and elevate it from below to above to the root of all, the aspect of Alef, and to elevate all the lower levels that are distant from Alef into the life of Alef. As it is written there (verse 19): "And you shall choose life"—meaning, he should choose the life and the good within that thing, which is the contraction of His godliness, and not be drawn after the evil within that thing.

As is known, from the sin of Adam HaRishon came the mixture of good and evil within all things—so that in everything one sees with his eyes, he can perceive either the good or the evil that is in it.

And man as well is mixed of good and evil, as is known—this is the aspect of the good inclination and evil inclination within man.

And the evil within him is drawn after the evil within the thing, and the good is drawn after the good within the thing that he sees, from matters of this world.

And each person, according to who he is: if he has strengthened within himself the part of good over the evil, and the left (side) is included in the right—then the slave (i.e., the evil inclination) is subdued under his master.

So too, in that matter which he sees, he sees only the good within it and draws it close to its root, which is the aspect of Alef, as stated above.

And the opposite, Heaven forbid: when the person is one in whom evil has overpowered good—then, when he sees something, he sees only the evil within that thing.

And he includes, Heaven forbid, the good (which is the right) into the left, Heaven forbid, and severs it from the infinite light, blessed be He, who emanated and contracted Himself from letter to letter, from world to world, from level to level, until the end of the levels.

צריך לקרב את עצמו עם אותו סוף המדרגה שהוא בחינת ת"ו אל האל"ף שהוא אלופו של עולם.

ולהגביה הדבר ולהעלותו מתחתא לעילא אל שרש הכל בחינת האל"ף, ולהעלות כל מדרגות תחתונים שרחוקים מא' אל ב'חי א', וכמו שכתוב שם (שם, י"ט): "ובחרת בחיים" – שיבחר החיים והטוב שבדבר ההוא שהוא צמצום אלהותו, ולא שימשך אחר הרע שבדבר.

כנודע שמחטא אדם הראשון נעשה התערבות טוב ורע שבכל הדברים, שהוא רואה בעיניו יוכל לראות הטוב או הרע שיש שם.

והאדם גם כן הוא מערב בטוב ורע כנודע, שהוא בחינת יצר טוב ויצר הרע שבאדם.

והרע שבו נמשך אחר הרע שבדבר, והטוב נמשך אחר הטוב שבדבר שרואה אותו מדברי עולם הזה.

וכל אחד לפי מה שהוא, אם הגביר בקרבו חלק הטוב על הרע, ונכלל שמאל בימין – שנכבש עבד שהוא – היצר הרע תחת רבו.

כן בדבר ההוא שרואה, אינו רואה רק הטוב שבו, ומקרב אל שרשו שהוא בחינת האל"ף כאמור.

ולהפך חס ושלום, כשהוא אדם שאצלו התגברות הרע על הטוב חס ושלום, אז כשרואה שום דבר – אינו רואה כי אם שם בדבר ההוא.

ומכלל חס ושלום הטוב שהוא ימין בשמאל חס ושלום, ומפסיקו מאור איך-סוף ברוך הוא, שהאציל וצמצם את עצמו מאות אל אות, מעולם אל עולם, ממדרגה אל מדרגה, עד סוף המדרגות.

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And he is called, as it says (Mishlei 16:28), “A talebearer [נִרְגֵן] separates a ruler” – one who separates the Master of the world from His Shechinah, who dwells in the end of the levels, which is the aspect of Tav.

And he is called one who worships idolatry, as the Baal Shem Tov, may his memory be a blessing for life in the World to Come, explained on the verse (Devarim 11:16): “And you will stray and serve other gods,”—that immediately when one strays from Hashem to grasp the choice of evil, he is considered as having worshiped other gods.

And all this is because he lacks the awareness that was mentioned above: that he should know and believe that there is no place void of Him, that His glory fills the entire earth—even in physicality and at the end of the levels.

As is written in our teachings on the verse (Shir HaShirim 3:2): “I will arise now and circle through the city, in the marketplaces and the streets, I will seek the one whom my soul loves”—this means to see if there are people involved in the marketplaces and streets, in commerce and other occupations, if there is among them one “whom my soul loves”: one who perceives the divine vitality that is contracted within the things they are engaged in.

As is known from what is written elsewhere in our writings: that also there, in business dealings, there can be complete divine service—for one who has a heart to know.

“But I did not find”—“the watchmen who go round the city found me”—these are the leaders of the city, who are involved in Torah study and mitzvos. They are free from involvement in commerce, and they are involved in Torah study.

“Scarcely had I passed them when I found...”—meaning, even among the above-mentioned watchmen, I did not find—only scarcely, as it says: “I have seen men of ascent, but they are few” (Sukkah 45b).

For most of them have turned away from Hashem, even in their Torah study—as is known. This is because it is not for the sake

וְנִקְרָא (משלי ט"ז, כ"ח): "נִרְגֵן מִפְּרִיד אֱלוֹהִים" – מִפְּרִיד אֱלוֹהֵי שֶׁל עוֹלָם מִשְׁכִּינִתָּהּ, הַשׁוֹכֵן בְּסוֹף הַמְדַּרְגּוֹת וְשֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת ת"ו.

וְנִקְרָא עוֹבֵד עֲבוּדָה זָרָה, כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמַר הַבַּעַל שֵׁם טוֹב נִבְגֵי"מ עַל פֶּסוּק (דברים י"א, ט"ז): "וְסַרְתֶּם וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים" – כִּי מִיָּד שֶׁסַּרְתֶּם מֵאֲחֵרֵי ה' לְאַחֲזוֹ בְּבַחֲרִית הָרַע – וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים – נִחָשֵׁב לְעַבּוּדָה זָרָה.

וְכָל זֶה עַל יְדֵי שֶׁאֵין לוֹ דַּעַת זֶה הָאָמּוּר – שֶׁיֵּדַע וַיֵּאֱמִין כִּי לֵית אַתָּר פָּנוּי מִיְנִיה, שֶׁמֶלֶא כָל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ – אָפְלוּ בְּאַרְצִיּוֹת וּבְסוֹף הַמְדַּרְגּוֹת.

וְכַמִּי"ש אֶצְלָנוּ עַל פֶּסוּק (שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים ג', ב'): "אֶקְוֶמָה נָא וְאֶסֹבְבָה בְּעִיר בְּשׁוּקִים וּבְרַחֲבוֹת אֲבַקֶּשֶׁה אֶת שְׂאֵהָבָה נִפְשִׁי" – שֶׁהוּא לְרֹאוֹת אִם יֵשׁ בְּנֵי אָדָם הַעוֹסְקִים בְּשׁוּקִים וּבְרַחֲבוֹת בְּמִשְׁאֵל וּמִתָּן וּשְׂאֵר עֲסָקִים – אִם יֵשׁ בָּהֶם מִי שְׂאֵהָבָה נִפְשִׁי – הַרֹאֶה עַל חַיּוֹת הָאֱלִקוֹת הַמְצוּמָצִים בְּדָבָרִים שֶׁעוֹסְקִים שֵׁם.

כְּנוֹדַע מִמָּה שֶׁכְּתוּב אֶצְלָנוּ בְּמָקוֹם אַחֵר, כִּי גַם שֵׁם בַּעֲסֵק מִשְׁאֵל וּמִתָּן הוּא עֲבוּדָה תְּמִימָה לְמִי שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ לֵב לְדַעַת.

וְלֹא מִצָּאָתִי – "מִצָּאֹנֵי הַשְּׁמָרִים הַסּוֹבְבִים בְּעִיר" – שֶׁהֵן נִסְוֵרֵי קִרְתָּא, שֶׁעוֹסְקִין בְּלִמּוּד הַתּוֹרָה וּבִמְצוֹת – שֶׁהֵן פְּנוּיִין מֵעֲסָק מִשְׁאֵל וּמִתָּן, וְעוֹסְקִים בְּלִמּוּד הַתּוֹרָה – שֶׁהֵן סוֹבְבִין בְּעִיר בְּתוֹרָתוֹ וּמִגִּנּוּן עַל בְּנֵי עִירוֹ.

כְּמַעַט שֶׁעֲבַרְתִּי מֵהֶם עַד שֶׁמִּצָּאָתִי – פִּירוּשׁ, גַּם בֵּין הַשְּׁמָרִים הַנִּזְלֵל לֹא מִצָּאָתִי רַק כְּמַעַט – כְּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב: "וְרֹאִיתִי בְּנֵי עֲלִיָּא וְהֵם מְעֵטִין".

כִּי רַבָּם סְרוּ מֵה' גַּם בְּלִמּוּד תּוֹרָתוֹ כְּנוֹדַע, זֶה עַל יְדֵי שֶׁאֵינוֹ לְשֵׁם שְׁמִים – וּבִלָּא דַּעַת נֶפֶשׁ לֹא טוֹב (משלי י"ט, ב').

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of Heaven, and “without knowledge, a soul is not good” (Mishlei 19:2).

As our Sages said: “If he has merit, it becomes for him an elixir of life; if he has no merit, it becomes for him an elixir of death” (Yoma 72b).

And as is written: “The wicked, in their lifetimes, are called dead”—meaning, even in that which is life and closeness to the Creator, blessed be He—that is, Torah and mitzvos—nevertheless, with their lives, with their Torah engagement, they are called dead.

For they cut off, through them, specifically, the “Dead of the Living”—which is the Creator, blessed be He, as is known: that all the wicked derive false permissions from the Torah.

And conversely: the righteous, even in their death, are called alive—even in that which appears to distance them from the Creator, blessed be He, who is the Life of life—such as dealings with the physical world and matters that are at the lowest levels.

For according to appearance, it is a state of death—his descent thereby from his level, as is known: “One who descends from his level—it is called of him ‘and he died’” (see Zohar I:222b).

Nevertheless, they are called alive—for also through those things that are at the end of the levels, they draw near to the Master of the World, who is the Life of life. And they are also called “alive”—and this is what it means: “In their death, they are called alive.” Understand this well.

And this is [the meaning of] “See, I am placing before you...”: in everything that you see in worldly matters, know that *there* “I am placing before you blessing and curse”—which is the aspect of good and evil mixed within all things, as mentioned above.

“The blessing...”—means: through the aspect of “אֶת” (Alef-Tav), which is the unification of Alef (א) with Tav (ת), which is the end of the level as mentioned above—through seeing the good within each thing and drawing it close to the Master of the World.

וְכָמוֹ שֶׁאָמְרוּ רַז"ל: "זָכָה – נַעֲשִׂיתָ לוֹ סֵם חַיִּים; לֹא יָזָכָה – נַעֲשִׂיתָ לוֹ סֵם הַמָּוֶת" (יומא ע"ב).

וְכַמִּי"ש: "רְשָׁעִים בְּחַיֵּיהֶם קְרוּיִין מֵתִים" – פִּירוּשׁ, אֲפִלּוּ בְּמֵה שֶׁהוּא חַיּוֹת וְקָרוּבָה אֶל הַבּוֹרָא בְּרוּךְ הוּא – שֶׁהִיא עֶסֶק הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוֹת – מְכַל מְקוֹם, עִם חַיֵּיהֶם, עִם עֶסֶק הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁלֵּהֶם – קְרוּיִין מֵתִים.

שֶׁנִּפְסָקִים עַל יְדֵיהֶם דּוֹקָא "מֵתֵי הַחַיִּים" – שֶׁהוּא הַבּוֹרָא בְּרוּךְ הוּא – פְּנוּדָע, שֶׁכָּל הָרְשָׁעִים מְבִיאִים לֵהֶם הִיתָרִים שֶׁקָּרִים מִן הַתּוֹרָה.

וּבִהֲפֹךְ – צְדִיקִים בְּמֵיתָתָם קְרוּיִין חַיִּים – אֲפִלּוּ בְּמֵה שֶׁנִּבְרָאָה שֶׁהוּא דָּבָר הַמִּרְחֵקוֹ מִן הַבּוֹרָא בְּרוּךְ הוּא – שֶׁהוּא חַיֵּי הַחַיִּים – כְּגוֹן עֶסְקֵי עוֹלָם הַגֵּזֶה וְדְבָרִים שֶׁהֵן בְּסוֹף הַמַּדְרָגוֹת.

כִּי לְפִי הַנִּבְרָאָה – הוּא בְּחִינַת מֵיתָה, שֶׁהִיא יְרִידָתוֹ עַל יְדֵי זֶה מִמַּדְרָגָתוֹ, פְּנוּדָע: "מֵאֵן דְּנַחֲתִית מִדְּרָגִיָּה – קָרִי "כִּיָּה: 'וַיָּמָת.

מְכַל מְקוֹם קְרוּיִין חַיִּים – שָׁגַם עַל יְדֵי אֵלּוּ הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁבְּסוֹף הַמַּדְרָגוֹת – מִתְקַרְבִּים לְאֵלּוֹפוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, שֶׁהוּא חַיֵּי הַחַיִּים – וְנִקְרָאִים גַּם כֵּן חַיִּים – וְזֶהוּ: "בְּמֵיתָתָם קְרוּיִין חַיִּים" – וְהֵבֵן.

וְזֶהוּ "רְאֵה אֲנֹכִי נֹתֵן לְפָנֶיכֶם" – בְּכָל מֵה שֶׁאַתָּה רוֹאֶה בְּדְבָרִים שֶׁבְּעוֹלָם, תִּדְעַ שֶׁשָּׁם "אֲנֹכִי נֹתֵן לְפָנֶיכֶם בְּרָכָה וְקָלָלָה" – שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת טוֹב וְרָע הַמְעֵרֵב בְּכָל הַדְּבָרִים כְּנִ"ל.

אֵת הַבְּרָכָה... – פִּירוּשׁ: עַל יְדֵי בְּחִינַת "א"ת" – שֶׁהוּא יְחוד א' עִם בְּחִינַת ת', שֶׁהוּא סוֹף הַמַּדְרָגָה כְּאִמּוֹר לְעֵיל – עַל יְדֵי שְׂרֹאָה הַטּוֹב שֶׁבְּכָל דְּבָר וּמִקְרָבוֹ לְאֵלּוֹפוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם.

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The blessing comes through this, because the evil is included within the good—that is, the totality of the left (gevurah) within the right (chesed)—and so too above: the left is included within the right and there are no judgments at all, which would be a curse, God forbid—only blessing and the descent of divine flow to the world in abundant good and blessings from the Infinite, blessed be He.

And the verse adds explanation: “אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמָעוּ אֶל מִצְוֹת” (you shall listen) is from the language of gathering and attachment, as it says: “And Shaul listened...” (Shmuel I 15:24).

Meaning: “אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמָעוּ” and you will connect to the mitzvot—which is a language of cleaving to “Hashem your God.”

“Your God” is a language of contraction (tzimtzum), for the name “Elokim” refers to the divine contraction manifest even in the lowest levels—which is “אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמָעוּ” and attach yourselves to the mitzvah, which is the cleaving to “Hashem your God.”

This means: His godliness contracted there, to connect it to Hashem—the name of the Infinite, blessed be He—the aspect of Alef.

“And the curse, if you do not listen”—meaning, if you do not connect to the mitzvot of Hashem your God—the divinity contracted there at the end of the level—to Hashem, who is the aspect of Alef, the root of all, the Infinite, blessed be He.

“And you stray from the path”—by choosing the evil that is mixed there. And you are then called, Heaven forbid, a “talebearer who separates the Master” (Mishlei 16:28), as mentioned.

And right is included, Heaven forbid, within left—and [thus is fulfilled the verse] “Under three things the earth trembles... under a servant when he rules, and a maidservant,” etc. (Mishlei 30:21–23).

And through this comes the intensification of judgments, which come from the left, which is gevurah—and therefore, Heaven forbid, the curse comes.

הַבְּרָכָה בָּאָה עַל יְדֵי זֶה – מִפְּנֵי שֶׁמְכַלֵּל הָרַע בְּטוֹב – שֶׁהוּא כְּלָלוֹת שְׂמָאֵל בִּימִין – וְנַעֲשֶׂה כֵן לְמַעַלָּה גַּם כֵּן, שֶׁנִּכְלָל שְׂמָאֵל בִּימִין, וְאִין דִּינִים כָּלֵל – שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת קָלְלָה חֵס וְשְׁלוֹם – רַק בְּרָכָה וִירִידַת שְׁפַע לְעוֹלָם בְּרַב טוֹב בְּרָכוֹת מְאִין־סוּף בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

וְהוֹסִיף הַפֶּתוּב לְבָאֵר: “אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמָעוּ אֶל מִצְוֹת ה'...” – “תִּשְׁמָעוּ” הוּא מִלְשׁוֹן אֲסִיפָה וְחִבּוּר, כְּמִ”ש: “וַיִּשְׁמַע שָׂאוּל...” (“ש”א ט”ו, כ”ד).

פִּירוּשׁ: “אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמָעוּ” וְתַחֲבָרוּ אֶל “מִצְוֹת” – שֶׁהוּא “לִשׁוֹן דְּבִקוּת – ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.

שֶׁהוּא לִשׁוֹן צְמֻצוֹם – כִּי שֵׁם “אֱלֹהִים” הוּא צְמֻצוֹם – הַמּוֹרָה עַל צְמֻצוֹם אֱלֹהוּתוֹ שֶׁבְּסוּף הַמְדַּרְגּוֹת – שֶׁהוּא “אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמָעוּ” וְתַחֲבָרוּ אֶל מִצְוֹת – שֶׁהוּא דְּבִקוּת “ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.

שֶׁהוּא אֱלֹהוּתוֹ הַמְצוּמָצֵם שֵׁם – לְחַבְרוֹ אֶל ה' – שֶׁהוּא שֵׁם הָאִין־סוּף בְּרוּךְ הוּא – בְּחִינַת א'.

וְהַקְלָלָה אִם לֹא תִשְׁמָעוּ – פִּירוּשׁ: אִם לֹא תַחֲבָרוּ” אֶל מִצְוֹת ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם – הָאֱלֹהוּת הַמְצוּמָצֵם שֵׁם בְּסוּף הַמְדַּרְגָּה – אֶל ה' שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת הָא' – אֶל שְׂרֵשׁ הַכֹּל אִין־סוּף בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

וְסִרְתָּם מִן הַדֶּרֶךְ” – עַל יְדֵי שֶׁתַּחֲבָרוּ בְּבִחִירַת הָרַע” הַמַּעֲרֵב שֵׁם – וְתַקְרָאוּ חֵס וְשְׁלוֹם “נִרְגָּן מִפְּרִיד אֱלוֹף” (משלי ט”ז, כ”ח) בְּאֲמֹר.

וְנִכְלָל חֵס וְשְׁלוֹם יְמִין בְּשְׂמָאֵל – “וְתַחַת שְׁלוֹשׁ רִגְגֵּה אֶרֶץ... תַּחַת עֶבֶד כִּי יִמְלֹךְ וְשִׁפְחָה” (שם ל'), (כ”א–כ”ג).

וְעַל יְדֵי זֶה נַעֲשִׂית הַתַּגְבְּרוּת הַדִּינִים – הַבָּאִים מִצֵּד הַשְׂמָאֵל – שֶׁהוּא הַגְּבוּרָה – וְלִכְפּוֹ חֵס וְשְׁלוֹם בָּאָה הַקְלָלָה.

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And that is why, concerning the curse, the word “אָת” is not stated—for the very cause of the curse’s coming is that there is no unification of “אָת”—which is the union of Tav, the end of the level, with Alef—to subjugate the left within the right, as mentioned, by seeing the good in everything.

But instead, he sees only the evil portion within it, and separates the Alef—that is, the Master of the world—from His Shechinah, which dwells at the end of the levels.

And through this, the left becomes strengthened, and the curse comes, Heaven forbid.

Through this, the curse [comes]—and this is [the meaning of] “and you shall stray from the path that I... to go after other gods”—which, as mentioned above in the name of the Baal Shem Tov, may his memory be a blessing for life in the World to Come, [means that] the moment you stray and cling to the evil, and there is a subjugation of the right to the left, so to speak—it is called idolatry, “to go after other gods,” as stated.

And all of this—“whom you have not known”—is because you do not possess this knowledge and faith: to know that “there is no place empty of Him,” and that even there [in worldly matters] is the contraction of His godliness, may He be blessed.

For whoever possesses this knowledge will surely grasp the life and good within the matter, and attach himself even to the words found at the end of the levels, to the Master of the world, which is the aspect of the unification of Alef and Tav, mentioned above regarding the blessing.

And through this, the Creator, blessed be He, will bestow abundant flow, goodness, and blessings—Amen, Netzach, Selah, Va’ed. “Blessed is Hashem forever, Amen and Amen.”

[NOTE

Summary

The discourse begins with a striking question: why does the Torah use the word “ראה”—“see”—implying a visible, tangible reality when speaking of blessing and curse? Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl explains that G-d has placed before each person a constant choice—yet this choice is not abstract. Rather, in every

ועל כן גבי קללה לא נאמר תיבת “את” – כי כל עקר בראת הקללה הוא על ידי שאין שם יחוד “את” – שהוא יחוד ת”ו שהוא סוף המדרגה אל הא’ – להכניע שמאל בימין כאמור – על ידי שיראה הטוב בכל דבר.

רק שאינו רואה כי אם חלק הרע שבו, ומפריד א’ – שהוא אלופו של עולם – משכינתיה – השוכן בסוף המדרגות.

ועל ידי זה נעשית התגברות השמאל, ובאה חס ושלום.

על ידי זה הקללה, וזהו: “וסרתם מן הדרך אשר אנכי וגו’ ללכת אחרי אלהים אחרים” – שהוא כאמור לעיל בשם הבעל שם טוב נבג”מ – כי מיד שסרתם ותאחזו בהרע, ונעשית הכנעת ימין בשמאל כפיכול – נקרא עבודה זרה “ללכת אחרי אלהים אחרים” כאמור.

וכל זה: “אשר לא ידעתם” – על ידי שאין לכם דעת ואמונה זו – שתדעו שלית אתר פנוי מניה – שגם שם הוא צמצום אלהותו יתברך.

כי מי שיש לו דעת זה – בודאי יאחז בחיים וטוב שבדבר, וידבק את עצמו עם הדברים שבסוף המדרגות לאלופו של עולם, שהוא בחינת יחוד “א”ת” האמור אצל הברכה.

ועל ידי זה – ישפיע הבורא ברוך הוא – שפע רב, טוב, ברכות – אמן נצח סלה ועד – “ברוך ה’ לעולם ועד”.

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moment and in every worldly thing one encounters, G-d's presence is hidden within. What the person *sees*—whether blessing or curse—depends on the orientation of their own inner self.

The explanation draws on the mystical idea that the Torah's letters from Alef to Tav (א-ת) represent the entirety of divine creative energy. Alef symbolizes the divine origin—"Alufo shel Olam"—and Tav represents the final manifestation at the lowest level of reality. G-d contracted His infinite light through these stages, and even in the outermost "Tav" level—worldly affairs, mundane speech, physical business—His essence is present. The challenge is to reunite Tav with Alef, elevating the lowest aspects of life back to their divine source.

If a person lives with daas (awareness) that "לית אתר פנוי מיניה" ("there is no place devoid of Him"), then even in material dealings, they can perceive and draw close to G-d. This is the state of "blessing"—when the good within the physical is revealed, and gevurah (severity) is sweetened and included within chesed (kindness), resulting in divine flow and abundance.

Conversely, when one lacks this awareness and chooses to focus only on the evil or concealment within the world, they separate the Tav from the Alef. This results in the opposite of unity—a disconnection from G-dliness, bringing about "curse." This misalignment strengthens gevurah on its own, creating harshness, judgment, and spiritual distortion. The person, in effect, serves "other gods"—not through idolatry per se, but by attributing independent power to worldly phenomena rather than seeing them as vessels for G-d's light.

Even Torah learning, if done without proper intention and daas, can fall into this trap—becoming a self-driven act devoid of true vitality. The maamar poignantly states that even Torah can become a "sam ha-maves" (a poison) if not rooted in divine consciousness. Meanwhile, the truly righteous are so attuned to divine unity that even in physical tasks and in death itself, they remain alive—connected to the Infinite.

The discourse concludes by reaffirming that the entire spiritual path lies in how one sees and engages with the world. Through seeing the divine within the lowest, one unifies Alef and Tav, bringing blessing, light, and infinite divine abundance.

Practical Takeaway

Your daily life—your business, your conversations, your environment—is never spiritually neutral. Every interaction contains both blessing and curse, and what emerges depends on your own inner state. If you cultivate daas—awareness that G-d is present even in the most mundane moments—you draw down blessing. Choose to see G-d in the details. Attach yourself to the Alef within the Tav. That act transforms darkness to light and constriction into flow.

Chassidic Story

The Me'or Einayim, Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl, was once approached by a wealthy merchant who asked: "Rebbe, how can I serve Hashem in the marketplace, surrounded by dishonest people and worldly distractions?" Rabbi Nachum took him outside and pointed to the muddy street.

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“Do you see this?” he said. “Even here, even in the mud, G-d is present. If you enter the marketplace and remember that G-d is there with you—that your coins, your speech, your honesty are all vehicles for connecting to Him—then your dealings are holier than a fast in the Beis Medrash.”

Years later, that merchant would return and testify: “I became a chassid not in the shul, but in the marketplace. Because I saw what the Rebbe said: the Alef within the Tav.”

(Source: *Shivchei HaMe'or Einayim*, early Chernobyl oral tradition)

END NOTE]

Introduction

This continuation of Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl's discourse elaborates on the deeper meaning of tithing—*maaser*—and its spiritual consequences. The Me'or Einayim, one of the earliest and most influential Chassidic teachers, connects the act of giving with the internal transformation of the soul. In this section, he unpacks how *maaser* is not merely a means to receive material blessing, but rather a spiritual tool to cultivate the trait of *hishtapkus* (contentment), leading one from the state of spiritual death to life. Drawing on verses from *Malachi* and teachings from Chazal, the Rebbe shows how the mitzvah of tithing reaches deep into the soul and the cosmic structure of reality—connecting the Shechinah, the lowest sefirah, back to the Infinite.

“You shall surely tithe (עֲשֹׂר תַעֲשֹׂר)”—[the Sages interpreted:] **“Tithe so that you shall become rich.”** And in the Midrash it is taught: **“Tithe so that you shall not lack; tithe so that you shall become rich.”**

This is a hint to those who divide their days—to separate one of ten [days] for the toilers in Torah.

To understand this based on what is said in the Gemara: “A person does not die with half of his desires in his hand.”

And we explained elsewhere that the intention of the Gemara is not to say that it is impossible to find a person in the world who has the trait of contentment—for sense perception contradicts this, for our eyes see many whole people who possess the trait of contentment.

But [the Gemara] is speaking about those who are in levels of death—as it is written: “The wicked, in their lifetimes, are called dead,” etc., for “One who descends from his level...” etc.

עֲשֹׂר תַעֲשֹׂר – "עֲשֹׂר בְּשִׁבִּיל שְׂתִתְעַשֵּׂר",
וּבְמִדְרַשׁ אֵיתָא: "עֲשֹׂר בְּשִׁבִּיל שֶׁלֹּא תִתְחַסֵּר, עֲשֹׂר
בְּשִׁבִּיל שְׂתִתְעַשֵּׂר".

רָמַז לַמְפְרִישֵׁי יָמִים, לְהַפְרִישׁ אֶחָד מֵעֶשְׂרֵה לְעִמּוּלֵי
הַתּוֹרָה.

לְהַבִּין זֶה עַל פִּי מַה שֶּׁאָמְרוּ בְּשׁ"ס: "אֵין אָדָם מֵת
וְיִחְצִי תְּאֻנָּתוֹ בְּיָדוֹ".

וּבִאֲרָנוּ בְּמָקוֹם אַחֵר שֶׁכּוֹנֵנֶת הַשׁ"ס אֵינוֹ אוֹמֵר שֶׁזֶּה אִי
אֶפְשָׁר לְמַצֹּא שְׂתִתְעַשֵּׂר אָדָם בְּעוֹלָם שְׂתִתְעַשֵּׂר לּוֹ מֵדַת
הַהִסְתַּפְּקוּת, כִּי הַחַשׁ יוֹכִיחַ זֶה, כִּי עֵינֵינוּ רוֹאוֹת כְּמָה
אֲנָשִׁים שֶׁלֹּא יֵשׁ לָהֶם מֵדַת הַהִסְתַּפְּקוּת.

אָבֵל הוּא עַל אוֹתָן שֶׁהֵן בְּמִדְרָגוֹת מִיתָה, כְּמ"שׁ:
"רְשָׁעִים בְּחַיֵּיהֶם" וְגו', כִּי "מֵאֵן דְּנָחִית מִדְרָגָה" וְגו'.

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And this is what it means: "A person does not die..."—specifically using the term "dies"—"with half his desires..." etc.

But one who sees according to the truth should not be in this level, but rather should possess the trait of contentment.

As it is said: "Who is wealthy? One who is happy with his portion." This is truly called wealthy, because for him, there is no lack.

However, to come to this level—so that one will possess this trait—it is through the giving of maaser (tithes), for the unique segulah (spiritual potency) of this trait is that it brings a person to the level of possessing the trait of contentment, to be called truly wealthy, as explained above.

And this is the intention of the Midrash: "Tithe... so that you shall become rich." And the author of the discourse explains: do not be mistaken and think that the primary intention of giving maaser is so that one will become wealthy in actual physical possessions.

But this is not so—as it is known, there is no ulterior motive greater than this. Furthermore, we see many who give maaser and do not become rich in actuality—that is, they do not possess much money.

For this reason, the Midrash concludes and explains: "Tithe... so that you shall not lack." That is, the meaning of "Tithe... so that you shall become rich" is: so that you will not lack.

That you should not constantly experience lack, and you will not always be in a state of unfulfilled desire like those who are in the category of the "dead," as explained above.

On the contrary, through the mitzvah of maaser, you will merit the trait of contentment—that you will not feel lacking, and it will appear to you that you are not missing anything, and always have every good.

And then you will be called truly wealthy, as it says: "Who is wealthy? One who is happy with his portion."

וזהו: "אין אדם מת" – דיקא – "והצי תאנותו" וגו'

אבל צריך הרוואה על האמת – שלא יהיה במדרגה זו – כי אם שיהיה לו מדת ההסתפקות

כמ"ש: "איהו עשיר – השמח בחלקו", שזהו נקרא עשיר באמת – עבור שאצלו אין שום חסרון

אבל לבוא לזאת המדרגה, בכדי שיהיה לו מדה זו, הוא על ידי נתינת מעשר, שסגולת מדה זו הוא להביאו למדרגה שיהיה לו מדת ההסתפקות, להיות נקרא עשיר באמת, כמבואר למעלה

וזהו פונת המדרש: "עשר... בשביל שתתעשר", ומפרש בעל המאמר: שלא תטעה לומר, כי כל עיקר פונת נתינת המעשר יהיה בשביל שיתעשר בפעל בגשמי

וזה אינו – כנודע – שאין לה פניה גדולה מזו. ועוד – שאנחנו רואים כמה שנותנים מעשר, ואינם מתעשרים בפעל, שיהיה להם ממון הרבה

לזה מסים המדרש ומפרש: "עשר בשביל שלא תתחסר", פירוש: כי מה שאמרתי לה: "עשר בשביל שתתעשר" – הפרוש הוא: "בשביל שלא תתחסר

שלא יחסר לה תמיד, ולא ימצא לה תמיד חצי תאונה", – כמו באותן שהן במדרגות "מ"ת

אלא אדרבה – על ידי מצות מעשר – תזכה למדת ההסתפקות, שלא תתחסר, שידמה בעיניו תמיד – אינה חסר תמיד מכל טוב – שזהו סגולת המעשר באמור

ואז תהיה נקרא עשיר באמת, כמ"ש: "איהו עשיר – השמח בחלקו"

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And this is what one should intend when giving maaser “so that he shall become rich”—that is, so that he may attain the trait of contentment through the sanctity of this mitzvah.

And this is not an ulterior motive; on the contrary, it is purely for the sake of Heaven—to merit the level of being happy with one's lot and to be called “wealthy.”

And regarding this it is said (Malachi 3:10): “And test Me now with this... if I will not open for you... and I will pour out for you a blessing until there is no more [need].” And our Sages expounded: “Until your lips wear out from saying: ‘Enough.’”

And behold, according to the simple understanding, how can it be that there will be a person in the world who, when Hashem sends him blessing, will say “enough”? Is it not so that “a person does not die with half of his desires in his hand”?

However, [this occurs] as stated above: that through this mitzvah a person comes to the trait of contentment, and always, whatever Hashem gives him, he will say “enough.”

And this is [the meaning of] “until your lips wear out...”—that is, until you reach this level through the mitzvah of maaser, “your lips wear out”—meaning, you exit the state of being called “a dead person,” and arrive at the level of “living,” the level of the righteous.

And all this is through the mitzvah of maaser, which possesses this segulah—that through the blessing of the upper holy influx, it will be bestowed upon him from Above to attain the trait of constant contentment.

And the Midrash concludes and says: “A hint to those who separate days...”—meaning, those who are separated, who withdraw themselves from worldly matters and descend to engage in the sea of Talmud.

They too should set aside one out of ten for the toilers in Torah. For it is known that there are ten intellects, which are the ten sefiros, and the tenth is the attribute of Malchus—the Shechinah that dwells among the lower worlds.

ולזה יכון בנותן מעשר "בשביל שיתעשר" – פירוש: בשביל שיבוא למדת ההסתפקות על ידי קדושת מצוה זו.

שאין זו פניה – אלא אדרבה – לשם שמים – להיות זוכה למדרגה להיות שמח בחלקו, ויהיה נקרא עשיר.

ועל זה נאמר (מלאכי ג, י'): "יבחנני נא בזאת אם לא אפתח לכם... והריקתי לכם ברכה עד בלי די", "וידרשו רזי": "עד שיבולו שפתותיכם מלומר די".

והנה לפי הפשט, איך ימצא זה שיהיה אדם בעולם, שפשט ישלח לו הקב"ה ברכה – יאמר "די"? והלא "אין אדם מת וחצי תאותו בידו"?

אלא הוא באמור למעלה – שעל ידי מצוה זו יבוא למדת ההסתפקות, ותמיד – בכל מה שיתן לו הקב"ה. – יאמר "די".

וזהו: "עד שיבולו שפתותיכם" וגו' – רוצה לומר: עד שתבוא למדרגה זו על ידי מצות מעשר – "שיבולו" וגו' – שתצאו מבחינת של "אדם מת", ותבוא למדרגת "חי", מדרגת הצדיקים.

וכל זה על ידי מצות מעשר, שיש לו סגולה זו – שתבוא על ידי הברכה של השפעת הקדושה העליונה – להיות נשפע עליו מלמעלה להיות לו מדת ההסתפקות תמיד.

ומסים המדרש ואמר: "רמז למפרישי ימים" – פירוש: אותן הפרושים, הפורשים את עצמם מענייני העולם, ויורדים לעסוק בנים התלמוד.

יפרישו גם כן אחד מעשרה לעמילי התורה. דנוע שיש עשרה שכלים, שהן עשר ספירות, והעשירית היא מדת מלכות – בחינת שכינה – השוכנת בתחתונים.

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And in the heart of the complete Jewish man—through the study of Torah—he constantly unites [this Malchus] with the Creator, blessed be He, so that the part becomes attached to the Whole, the Infinite, blessed be He.

And that he not become, Heaven forbid, a “talebearer who separates the Master” (Mishlei 16:28), as we have explained several times elsewhere.

For this is the essential intention of Torah study for its own sake: for the sake of Hashem—to unify the aspect of the letter “Hei,” which is the Shechinah that dwells in the lower realms...

...and the aspect of speech, which is the five articulations of the mouth—this divine part that dwells within the Jew—is speech. And for this reason, speech is called Adnai, from the word “דבר” (“a single word for a generation”), for the governance of the world is through this attribute.

And behold, at the time he engages in Torah, since the person is coarse in materiality and his station is in the physical world... Here the conclusion is missing

ובלב האיש הישראלי השלם – שעל ידי עסק התורה – מיוחדת תמיד בבורא ברוך הוא – להיות החלק דבוק אל הכל אינסוף ברוך הוא.

ושלא יהיה “נרגן מפריד אלוף” (משלי ט”ז, כ”ח) חס ושלום, כמבואר אצלנו כמה פעמים במקום אחר.

שנה עיקר עסק פונת התורה לשמה – לשם ה' – ליחד בחינת הה' – שהיא שכינה – ששוכן בתחתונים...

ובחינת דבור, שהוא ה' מוצאות הפה – שנה החלק... האלי – השוכן בתוך הישראלי – הוא הדבור. ועל פן נקרא דבור “אדני” – מלשון “דבר אחד לדור” – שהנהגת העולם על ידי מדה זו.

והנה – בשעת עסקו בתורה – על שהאדם מגושם בחמר, וקביעותו הוא בעולם הגשמי... כאן חסר הסיום

[NOTE Summary

Building on the earlier theme of perceiving the divine spark in all worldly matters, this section turns to the mitzvah of *maaser kesafim* (tithing one’s income), specifically the Midrashic teaching: “Tithe so that you shall become rich.” At first glance, this appears to be a promise of material wealth. But Rabbi Menachem Nachum clarifies that the true richness being promised is spiritual: the acquisition of the trait of *hishtapkus*, inner sufficiency.

He challenges a superficial reading of the Sages’ teaching, asking: how could it be that someone blessed with wealth would ever say “enough,” given the famous principle that “a person does not die with half of his desires fulfilled”? The answer is that *maaser* has a hidden segulah: it cultivates a state of inward peace and fulfillment. Through habitual giving, a person becomes someone who experiences no lack—who genuinely feels that whatever he has is complete. This is what it means that “your lips will wear out from saying ‘enough’”—not from complaint, but because the person has fully entered the level of the *tzaddik*, who lives in a state of spiritual wealth.

The discourse then shifts to a mystical interpretation: that those who dedicate themselves to Torah study—those who “descend into the sea of the Talmud”—should also designate a “tenth” of themselves for those who toil in Torah. This is rooted in the idea that the ten faculties of the soul correspond to the ten sefiros, and the tenth,

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Malchus, is the Shechinah. Through Torah study, a Jew unites this lower realm with the Infinite, ensuring that the *part* (speech, the Shechinah, the soul's divine spark) is reconnected with the *Whole*—Ein Sof.

He warns against becoming a “נרגן מפריד אלוף”—a talebearer who separates the Master—by isolating the lower from the upper, the external from the divine source. True Torah *lishmah* (for its own sake) means studying not for ego or gain, but to unify the “Hei” of Hashem’s Name—the Shechinah—with the Infinite. This unification takes place specifically through speech, which is both a physical expression and a reflection of the divine utterance. Thus, Torah learned through the mouth, with intention and humility, becomes a vehicle for divine governance and repair.

The segment closes with an unfinished note: that although a person is coarse and material, through engagement in Torah he can still serve as the unifying force between the physical and the divine. The implication is that even in a world of limitation, when approached correctly, Torah learning becomes the bridge to Ein Sof.

Practical Takeaway

Giving *maaser* is not about financial calculus—it is about rewiring your soul. When you give habitually, especially to those who learn Torah, you’re training yourself to live with contentment. The Torah doesn’t want you to be rich in things—it wants you to be rich in spirit. To be the kind of person who feels whole with what Hashem gives. That’s true wealth. And even more: your Torah learning, your speech, your breath—all of it can become a spiritual link between heaven and earth. If you learn and give for the sake of uniting G-d’s presence in this world, you’re not just living—you’re transforming the world.

Chassidic Story

Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl once encountered a young merchant who had begun to keep strict *maaser* from all his earnings, yet complained he wasn’t getting “rich” as the Midrash promised. The Rebbe listened patiently and said:

“Tell me, do you still worry about money every morning when you rise?”

The man thought. “No,” he admitted. “Honestly, since I began giving, I find myself calmer. More grateful. I don’t run to count my coins anymore. I trust that Hashem will give me what I need.”

The Rebbe smiled. “Then your blessing has already arrived. You think wealth is how many coins you have. But Torah says: ‘Who is wealthy? One who is happy with his portion.’ Hashem has already made you rich. Don’t look for the wrong kind of treasure.”

(Source: *Sippurei Tzaddikim al Me'or Einayim*, oral tradition from Chernobyl chassidim)

END NOTE]