

Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl

Me'or Einayim

Parshas Chukas

Introduction

This discourse by **Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl**—known as the Me'or Einayim—explores the essence of Torah through the lens of *Chukas haTorah* and the Parah Adumah. Living in the 18th century in Ukraine, Rabbi Menachem Nachum was a close disciple of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid of Mezritch. He was the founder of the Chernobyl Chassidic dynasty and spiritual ancestor of the many Chernobyler rebbes. His writings are deeply rooted in the mystical tradition of Chassidus, emphasizing divine unity, the hidden light (*Or HaGanuz*), and spiritual refinement through cleaving to the Infinite (*Ayin*).

In this profound interpretation of the red heifer, he draws a line from the revealed aspects of Torah to the concealed divine light that transcends reason, arguing that true transformation occurs only when one connects to the inner core of Torah. This ISPC offers a reflection on that vision.

<p>And Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: “This is the statute of the Torah...” etc., “and they shall take to you a red heifer...”</p> <p>For it is known that the Torah consists of letters, vowel-points (nekudos), cantillation marks (taamim), and crownlets (tagin), but this is the aspect of the revealed Torah (Torah d'Atgalyah), for all these things can be comprehended by the human intellect, each person according to his own level.</p> <p>But the light within it—about which the Sages said, “The light in it returns them to the good” (Eicha Rabbah 2:13)—this refers to the level of Ayin, which cannot be grasped, because it is beyond reason.</p> <p>And it is the source from which the Torah flows forth—namely, the Creator, blessed is He—through which He and the Torah are one.</p> <p>And each person who engages in Torah study must bind his vitality specifically to this inner light—called Ayin—which is above reason.</p> <p>For this is why the cantillation marks (taamim) are so called—because they are still within the realm of comprehension and explanation (giving a taam, a reason), even though they are lofty.</p> <p>But the inner dimension is called Ayin, for it has no reason and cannot be grasped.</p>	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר זֹאת חֲקַת הַתּוֹרָה גּוֹי וַיַּקְהֵל אֶלְיךָ פָּרָה גּוֹי</p> <p>דִּנוּר שְׁתִינָה הִיא אֲוֹתִיּוֹת וְנְקֻדּוֹת וְטֻعַמִּים וְתַגִּין, אֲכָל זֶה הוּא בְּבָחִינָה הַתּוֹרָה דְּאַתְגָּלִיא, כִּי כָל זֶה אָפָּשָׁר לְשַׁכֵּל אֲנוֹשִׁי לְהַשְׁגִּיל אֶחָד לְבַבִּי מִקְרָגָתוֹ</p> <p>אֲכָל הַמְּאוֹר שְׁבָה שְׁעַלְיוֹ אֲמָרוּ חִזְיָל הַמְּאוֹר שְׁבָה מִזְחִירָן לְמוֹטָב, הוּא בְּבָחִינָה אַיִן שָׁאוּן לוֹ תְּפִיסָה, מִפְנֵי שַׁהוּא לְמַעַלָּה מִן הַטּוּם</p> <p>וְהוּא הַמִּקְוָר שְׁמַפְנָנוּ גְּבִיעַת הַתּוֹרָה שַׁהוּא הַבּוֹרָא בְּרוֹךְ הִיא, שְׁעַל יְדֵי זֶה, הוּא וְהַתּוֹרָה אַחֵר</p> <p>וְאַרְיךָ כָל אַחֵד הַעֲסָק בְּתּוֹרָה, לְדַבָּק אֶת חַיָּתוֹ בְּמַאוֹר שְׁבָה דִּין קָא הַגְּנָרָא אַיִן שַׁהוּא לְמַעַלָּה מִן הַטּוּם</p> <p>כִּי לְכָה נִקְרָא הַטּוּם שֶׁל הַגְּגִינּוֹת טֻעַמִּים, מִפְנֵי שְׁהָן עֲדֵין בְּבָחִינָה שֶׁאָפָּשָׁר לְהַשְׁגִּיל וְלַתְּהַטֵּם, אֶרְךָם דְּבָר גָּבוֹהַ</p> <p>אֲכָל הַפְּנִימִיּוֹת נִקְרָא אַיִן, שָׁאוּן לוֹ טֻעַם וְתְּפִיסָה</p>
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And the learner must cleave to the light that flows from the aspect of Ayin, and then surely it will return him to the good—since his innermost being becomes bound to the inner light of Torah.	ואָרֵיךְ הַלּוּמָד לְדָבָק בָּאָוֹר הַגְּשָׁפָע מִבְּחִינַת אַיִן, וְאֵז בָּרוּכָה מִתְּזִירוֹ לְמוֹטָב, מַאֲחָר שְׁנָדְבָק פְּנִימִיָּתוֹ בָּאָוֹר, פְּנִימִיּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה,
He becomes a throne for the Divine Presence to rest upon, which dwells within the Torah and flows into it.	נְשָׁעָה כְּפָא לְהַשְּׁרָאָתוֹ יַתְּבִּךְ הַשְׂוֹרָה בַּתּוֹרָה וְשׁוֹפָע בַּתּוֹרָה,
And even though when studying Torah one must understand what he is learning and articulate it so that he can grasp the meaning, still he must also intend toward the above—so that the wholeness will be complete.	וְאֵרֵיךְ בָּעֵת לְמִזְקָה לְקַבֵּין מִזְלָמָד וְלְהַעֲשִׂים בְּכָדֵי שִׁבְיָן הַטָּעַם, מִכֶּל מִקּוֹם אָרֵיךְ גַּם כֵּן לֹאָמֹר, בְּכָדֵי שִׁיָּהָא שְׁלָמוֹת הַגּוֹמָר,
For this is the hidden light reserved for the righteous, as the Sages said: “He arose and hid it...” etc., as explained elsewhere.	כִּי זֶה הוּא אֹור הַגְּנוּז לְצִדְקִים, כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמְרוּ רְזִ"ל עַמְּדָגָן וְכֵרֶב, כְּאָמָר אָצְלָנוּ בָּمִקּוֹם אָחָר
Therefore, anyone who wants the Torah to affect him and return him to the good must seek the light that flows from the source from which the Torah was hewn.	עַל כֵּן אָרֵיךְ כֵּל אָחָד שְׁרוֹצָה שְׁתַּפְּעָל בָּו הַתּוֹרָה לְמִזְקָה לְמוֹטָב, לְחַפֵּשׁ הָאֹרֶת הַשׁוֹפָע שְׁהַתּוֹרָה נִגְּרָה, מִמֶּנּוּ,
And this is called the aspect of “cow” (parah), as the Sages said: “More than the calf wants to suckle, the cow wants to nurse”—for the one who bestows is referred to as parah.	וְזֶה נִקְרָא בְּחִינַת פָּרָה, עַל זֶרֶךְ שֶׁאָמְרוּ רְזִ"ל יוֹתֶר מִמֶּה שְׁהַעֲגָל רֹצֶחֶת לְיַנְקָה רֹצֶחֶת לְגַנִּיק, שְׁהַמְשִׁפְיעַ, מִכּוֹנָה בִּשְׁמָם פָּרָה,
And this hidden light that flows into the Torah may also be referred to as parah, and the Torah is called by the name of Moshe—as it says (Malachi 3:22), “Remember the Torah of Moshe My servant.”	וְאֵרֵיךְ הַגְּנוּז הַשׁוֹפָע בַּתּוֹרָה יַכְנִיחַ בִּשְׁמָם פָּרָה, וְהַתּוֹרָה נִקְרָא עַל שְׁמֵם מֹשֶׁה, כְּמוֹ שְׁכָתוֹב (מְלָאָכִי ג', כ"ב) זְכָרוּ תּוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה עֲבָדִים,
And when one engages in Torah, he must take also the level of Ayin mentioned above and attach it to the revealed Torah, which is called the Torah of Moshe, so that there will be completeness in Torah as per the Creator’s intent.	וְאָרֵיךְ לְקַחַת בָּעֵת עַסְקָה הַתּוֹרָה גַּם בְּחִינַת אַיִן הָאָמָר, לְקַדְבֵּיקוֹ לְבִחִינַת תּוֹרָה דָאַתְגָּלְיאָ שְׁנִקְרָאת תּוֹרָה מֹשֶׁה, בְּכָדֵי שִׁיָּהָא שְׁלָמוֹת הַתּוֹרָה כְּפִי כְּנַתְּתֵה הַבּוֹרָא, יַתְּבִּיךְ
And the pure and radiant light will shine and be revealed in the letters of what is called the Torah of Moshe.	וְאֵירְיוֹפִיעַ אֹור הַזָּהָב וְמַצְחָצָה בְּהַאֲוֹתִיות שְׁנִקְרָאת תּוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה.
And this is [the meaning of] “Speak to the children of Israel and have them take to you...”—that is, to the Torah that is called by your name, the revealed Torah of Moshe, they must take a red cow.	וְזֶה דָבָר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְקַחו אֲלֵיכֶם, פִּירּוֹשׁ אֶל בְּחִינַת הַתּוֹרָה שְׁנִקְרָאת עַל שְׁמֵה, תּוֹרָה דָאַתְגָּלְיאָ תּוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה, יַקְחַו פָּרָה אֲדֻמָּה
The level called parah, which is the source of the light that shines within the Torah—and “adumah” (red) because of the great radiance and brilliant light that cannot be grasped—then	בְּחִינַת שְׁנִקְרָאת בִּשְׁמָם פָּרָה שַׁהְוָא מִקּוֹר הַשׁוֹפָע וּמְאֵיד בַּתּוֹרָה, וְאֲדֻמָּה עַל שְׁמֵם זָהָרָוִית הַגְּדוֹלָה וְאֹרֶת

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<p>“temimah” (perfect), for it will be a complete perfection in the Creator’s intent.</p>	<p>הזה לא אפשר להשיגו, ואו תמיימה, יהה שלמות גמור בכוונת הבורא יתברך</p>
<p>And it is also possible that this level is called “temimah” (perfect) because it is still untouched, as the Baal Shem Tov said, for the hidden light is still tamim (whole), not yet accessed by man except in the smallest measure.</p>	<p>וגם אפשר שגנראת בchina זו על שם שעדיין היא תמיימה, כמו אמר הבעל שם טוב כי אור הגנו שעדיין הוא פם שליא הגיע לו שם אך כי אם מעט מזער</p>
<p>As it says (Tehillim 19:8), “The Torah of Hashem is perfect”—that is, the level of Torah called by Hashem’s name, not Moshe’s, is still temimah, untraveled by the masses and unachieved in its depth.</p>	<p>במפתחות (תהלים י"ט, ח) תורה היא תמיימה, תורה ה' פירוש בchinaת התורה שנגנראת על שם ה' ולא על שם משה תמיימה שליא קרכו בה רבים ולא בא לו. הפהרגה</p>
<p>But in these generations, every complete person must strive to reach this.</p>	<p>אכל בדורות האלה צרייך כל אדם להשלם להתאמץ, ולהגיע לה אמור</p>
<p>And this is [the meaning of] “in whom there is no blemish”—mum (blemish) connotes deficiency, i.e., the aspect of Ayin is lacking from the revealed Torah as long as a person has not awakened himself to cleave to that level.</p>	<p>וזה אשר אין בה מום, מום הוא לשון כסרון, פירוש בchinaת אין, הוא חסר בה בchinaת תורה משא, כל זמן שליא יתעורר האדם להשלם לדבק עצמו בchinaת אין, הניל</p>
<p>And why? Because no yoke has been placed upon her—that is, he has not properly accepted upon himself the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven and thus not reached completeness.</p>	<p>ומפני מה מפני אשר לא עלה עלייה על, שלא קיבל עליון על מלכות שמים כראוי ולא הגיע לשלוות</p>
<p>And indeed, it is certain that only through this can one come to complete perfection.</p>	<p>אף בודאי שלמות גמור אי אפשר לבוא אליו כי אם בענין זה</p>
<p>And this is [the meaning of] the Targum of Onkelos: “This is the decree of the Torah that Hashem has commanded,” meaning one must reach the level from which the Torah is hewn and engraved—then he is called a complete servant of Hashem.</p>	<p>וזה שפרגום אונקלוס דא גזירת אורייתא די פקיד ה', שאריך לבוא בchinaת התורה נגורה ונחקרה ממש ווא נקרא עובד ה' הגמר</p>

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[NOTE Summary:

The discourse begins by distinguishing between two levels of Torah: the revealed (*Torah d'Atgalyah*)—made up of letters, nekudos (vowels), taamim (cantillation marks), and tagin (crowns)—and the concealed inner light of Torah, referred to as the *Ayin*, the Infinite. The revealed Torah can be understood according to one's intellect, but the *Ayin* cannot be grasped at all. It is the Divine essence—the very source from which Torah is hewn—and it is what Chazal mean when they say “the light within it returns one to the good.”

Menachem Nachum insists that engaging with the Torah's intellect alone is insufficient. A Jew must seek to bind himself to the *Ayin*, the level that is above all comprehension. This is the level from which true inner transformation occurs, where one becomes a dwelling place for the Shechinah. He explains that this *Ayin* is like the mother's milk—the Torah as a living source of Divine nurture. The verse “*Zos chukas haTorah*” introduces the Parah Adumah, and the Rebbe uses this symbol of the motherly “cow” (*parah*) to describe how the hidden divine light longs to flow into the learner even more than the learner desires it.

The term *Parah Adumah Temimah* (a red heifer, perfect and without blemish) reflects this hidden light. It is red—radiant with a fiery light that cannot be grasped. It is *temimah*—perfect and whole, untouched by the masses. This is the light that has not yet descended into human comprehension. It is the *Torah of Hashem*, not the *Torah of Moshe*, and it remains pure, like the *Or HaGanuz*, the Hidden Light created at the beginning of time.

However, the Rebbe calls upon our generation specifically to pursue this level. Even if previous generations did not fully access it, he insists that now, each sincere and spiritually complete person must strive to reach it. He teaches that until one binds the *Torah of Moshe* (the revealed Torah) with the *Ayin* (the divine source of Torah), the Torah remains lacking. This lack is referred to as a *mum*, a blemish—because the infinite light is missing.

Finally, he interprets the Targum's rendering of “*Zos chukas haTorah*”—“This is the decree of the Torah which Hashem has commanded”—as referring to the higher Torah that is hewn and engraved from the *Ayin*, the decree of Torah that comes directly from the divine source. A true servant of Hashem is one who reaches this level, where his Torah is not merely learned, but lives within him.

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Practical Takeaway

This discourse challenges us to shift from intellectual engagement with Torah toward a spiritual bond with the divine essence that flows through it. Learning must be more than comprehension—it must be *cleaving*. When studying Torah, one should:

- Begin with understanding, but seek inwardly the light that lies beyond understanding.
- Approach the Torah with humility and openness, ready to be *changed*, not just informed.
- Accept the yoke of Heaven—*kabbalas ol*—to access the Torah's higher source.
- Meditate on the fact that Hashem and the Torah are one, and that learning Torah is an act of unification, not merely education.

To truly be “returned to the good,” we must desire the warmth of the flame more than its explanation. This is the perfection of Torah, the *Parah Temimah*, which flows into the soul when one seeks the *Ayin*—the hidden, the divine, the infinite.

Chassidic Story

Once, Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl was visited by a young scholar who prided himself on his mastery of Talmud and Halacha. The man asked, “Is there really more in Torah than what the mind can grasp? I feel complete just learning the reasoning of the halachos.”

The Me'or Einayim looked at him gently and said, “When you warm yourself by a fire, is it the flame that heats you—or the light?”

“The flame,” the man replied.

“But can you hold the flame?” the Rebbe asked.

“No,” said the scholar.

“Then what enters you is not the flame, but the warmth *from* the flame. So too with Torah: what transforms you is not just what you grasp, but the light hidden within it—what you cannot grasp. That is the *Ayin*, the warmth that returns you to truth.”

The scholar began to cry. “Then how can I ever reach that warmth?”

The Rebbe answered, “You must *want* the truth more than you want to understand it. Then Torah will draw you in, like a nursing mother who longs to nourish her child.”

(Source: Oral tradition within the Chernobyl dynasty) END NOTE]

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<p>“This is the Torah: when a man dies in a tent” (Bamidbar 19:14) — our Sages said: The Torah is only upheld by one who kills himself over it, etc.</p>	<p>זאת התורה אָדָם כִּי יָמוֹת בַּאֲכָל, אָמָרוּ רְזִ"ל אֵין התורה מתקיימת אלא במי שאמנית עצמו עליה כי</p>
<p>It is known that there are 600,000 letters in the Torah, and corresponding to them are 600,000 root souls—though there are in Israel many more [souls]—nonetheless, the essential [structure] is 600,000 roots, and the rest come from the divisions of the sparks.</p>	<p>ידוע כי יש ששים רבוא אותיות ל תורה, וכנגדו יש ששים רבוא שရשי נשמות, אף שיש בישראל כהנה וכננה, כל פניהם העקר הם ששים רבוא שရשים והמוניין באין מחלוקת הנצאות</p>
<p>And each individual in Israel has a letter in the Torah, and the Torah and the Holy One Blessed be He are one.</p>	<p>וכל אחד בישראל יש לו אות בתורה, ואוריתא וקדשא בריך הוא חד</p>
<p>And it is the divine portion within man that is literally that same letter from which his soul's root derives.</p>	<p>והוא חלק אלה שבחורב האדם, הוא מפשש אותן האות שמשם שרש נשות</p>
<p>And the letter bestows upon the person influence and vitality of holiness.</p>	<p>וְהַאֲוֹת מְשִׁפְיעַ עַל הָאָדָם שְׁפָעַ וְחַיָּת הַקָּדְשָׁה</p>
<p>And one must know that the letter dwells in the mouth of a person, and each letter includes within it the whole Torah.</p>	<p>וציריך ל�עת כי אותן שורה בפי האדם, וכל אותן פלא מכל התורה</p>
<p>Thus, the entire Torah is in the mouth of a person.</p>	<p>ונמצא שכל התורה בפי האדם</p>
<p>For behold, a Torah scroll lacking even one letter is invalid and not considered a Torah, for this reason—because each letter is considered Torah when joined together with all the rest.</p>	<p>כפי קלא ספר תורה שיחסר ממנה אותן אחת פסולה, ואינה חשובה לתורה מטעם זה, כי כל אותן חשובות תורה בהצטברן גלו יפה</p>
<p>And the entirety of serving Hashem is included in this: that a person must draw near to his root—which is the Torah, which is a full stature of 613 mitzvos.</p>	<p>וכל עבودת ה' הכל הוא בזיה, שאריך האדם לקרב לראשו ולבינו תורה שהיא קומה שלימה פרינ"ג מצות</p>
<p>And man too is comprised of 248 limbs and 365 sinews, as is known.</p>	<p>וְהָאָדָם בְּלֹול גַּם בְּנוּ רְמִ"ח אַבְרִים וְשִׁׁסְ"ה גִּידִים בְּנוּקָע בשילומיו</p>
<p>Just as a Torah scroll lacking even one letter is incomplete, so too [the same applies to the body of Israel].</p>	<p>וכמו שאם חסר אותן אחת מ ספר תורה אינה בשילומיו</p>
<p>Therefore the Sages said: Whoever destroys a single Jewish soul, it is as if he destroyed an entire world; and the opposite—whenever sustains, etc.—it is as if he sustained an entire world. Understand this well.</p>	<p>לכה אמרו רז"ל כל המאבד נפש אחת בישראל כאלו אבד עולם מלא, והחפץ כל המקיים וגוי כאלו קיים עולם מלא, והבן</p>
<p>Therefore we say before every prayer: “Behold, I accept upon myself the positive commandment of ‘And you shall love your fellow as yourself,’” because all is complete unity—just like the Torah, which is only called “Torah” when all the letters are joined together.</p>	<p>ולכן אומרים קדם כל תפלה הריני מקובל עלי מזות עשוה של ואהבת לרעך וגוי, כי הכל הוא אחדות גמור כמו התורה שזכורת תורה בהצטבר כל אותןיות גלו</p>

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<p>And even if one sees in his fellow something evil, he should hate the evil within him—but love the holy part very much, as his own soul.</p>	<p>וְאֵלֶּن חַלְקַת קָדוֹשׁ יְאֵה בָּנָנוּ מִאֵלָן כִּנְפָשׁוֹ,</p>
<p>For the Baal Shem Tov of blessed memory said: A completely righteous person who has no evil within him sees no evil in any person.</p>	<p>כִּי הַבָּעֵל שֶׁם טוֹב גָּבֵגְיָם אָמֵר שְׁהַצָּדִיק הַגָּמָר שְׁאֵין רֵעַ בְּקָרְבָּוֹ אֵינוֹ רֹאֶה שֶׁום רֵעַ עַל שֶׁום אָם</p>
<p>But whoever sees any evil in his fellow—it is like one looking in a mirror: if his own face is dirty, he sees dirt in the mirror; if his face is clean, he sees no blemish.</p>	<p>אֵלֶּל מִי שָׁרוֹאֶה שֶׁום רֵעַ בְּחַבְירֹו, הַעֲגַנְנוּ הַוָּא כִּמוֹ שְׁמַסְתַּכְלֵל בְּמִרְאָה, אֵם פְּנֵיו מַטְנֵפְנֵי רֹאֶה שֶׁום גָּם בְּמִרְאָה כֵּה, וְאֵם פְּנֵיו גְּקִיִּים אֵינוֹ רֹאֶה בְּמִרְאָה שֶׁום דָּוִי</p>
<p>As he is, so he sees.</p>	<p>כִּמוֹ שְׁהָוָא כֵּה רֹאֶה</p>
<p>And this is (Vayikra 19:18) “And you shall love your fellow as yourself”—meaning, <i>as yourself</i>: just as a person knows within himself some evil, yet does not hate himself, even though he hates the evil within—so too regarding his fellow.</p>	<p>וְזֹהוּ (וַיְקַרְא י'ט, י"ח) וְאֵהֶבֶת לְרֵעֶךְ כִּמוֹךְ, פִּירְוִישׁ כִּמוֹךְ כִּמוֹ שָׁאֵם יוֹדֵעַ הָאֵדֶם בְּעַצְמָוֹ שֶׁום רֵעַ בְּקָרְבָּוֹ מִשּׁוֹם זֶה אֵינוֹ שׁוֹנֵא אֶת עַצְמָוֹ, אֶף שׁוֹנֵא הַרְעָה, שְׁבָקָרְבָּוֹ, כֵּה גָּם פָּנִים עַל חַבְירֹו</p>
<p>For in truth, all is one—for behold, his fellow also has a divine portion just like him, and he too has a letter in the Torah.</p>	<p>כִּי בְּאֶמֶת הַכָּל אָחָד, כִּי הַלָּא גָם לְחַבְירֹו יִשְׁגַּב גָּם כְּנָחָלָק אָלָה כִּמוֹהָג, וַיֵּשׁ לוֹ אֶזֶת בְּתוֹרָה.</p>
<p>But the nations of the world—their souls are from the side of impurity. Therefore their speech is also impurity, for most of their speech is vulgar speech or other similar things.</p>	<p>גְּאוֹמוֹת הַעוֹלָם נִפְשְׁם הַוָּא מִאֵלָן קָהָלִיפָּה, לְכֵד דְּבוּרָה הַוָּא גָּם כְּנָחָלָק כְּלִילָה כִּי רֹוב דְּבוֹרָם הַוָּא נִבּוֹל פָּה אוֹ שְׁאַר דְּבוּרִים פִּיוֹצָא בּוֹ</p>
<p>But from where do the <i>kelipos</i> (husks of impurity) derive the power to influence through speech? It is from the <i>lashon hara</i> (evil speech) that Jews speak, or idle talk.</p>	<p>אֵלֶּל מַאֲכִיכוּ לְקַם הַכְּמַת לְקָלִיפָּות לְהַשְׁפִּיעַ עַלְיכֶם כְּדָבָר, הַוָּא מַלְשָׁוֹן הַרְעָה שְׁמַדְבָּרִים יִשְׂרָאֵל אוֹ דְּבָרִים בְּטַלִּים</p>
<p>Therefore, the sin of <i>lashon hara</i> is weighed against the three cardinal sins: idolatry, sexual immorality, and bloodshed.</p>	<p>לְכֵד שְׁקוֹל עַזָּן לְשׁוֹן הַרְעָה כְּנָגֵד גַּעֲבָרוֹת עַבּוֹזָה זָרָה, גִּילּוּי עֲרֵיוֹת וְשִׁפְכִּוֹת ذָמִים</p>
<p>For from this [sin] comes speech and power to the nations of the world, who are idolaters, immoral, and bloodshedders.</p>	<p>כִּי מִכְּה זֶה בָּא קְדֹבָר וְהַכְּמַת לְאוֹמוֹת הַעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר הַמְּעוֹבָדִי עַבּוֹזָה זָרָה וּמְגַלֵּן עֲרֵיוֹת וְשִׁפְכִּוֹת ذָמִים.</p>
<p>Therefore the verse says (Tehillim 34:13): “Who is the man who desires life, who loves days to see good”—and not evil, as it is said: to be in the level of a tzaddik who sees no evil in his fellow.</p>	<p>עַל כֵּן אָמֵר הַפְּתֻ� (פְּהַלְלִים ל'ז, י"ג) מִי הַאִישׁ הַחֲפִץ חַיִם, אֲקֵב יָמִים לְרֹאֶות טוֹב — וְלֹא רֵעַ כִּמְאוֹר — שִׁיחָה בְּבָחִינָה צָדִיק שְׁאֵינוֹ רֹאֶה רֵעַ שְׁבָקָרְבָּוֹ</p>
<p>“Guard your tongue from evil... turn away from evil...” and then “do good.”</p>	<p>גְּצֹוֹר לְשׁוֹנָה מַרְעָע... סָוֶר מַרְעָע, וְאֵז וְעַשְׂתָּה טוֹב</p>
<p>For in truth, the primary matter is <i>sur meira</i>—that is, the complete abandonment of sin and regret in the heart.</p>	<p>כִּי בְּאֶמֶת הַעֲקֵר הַוָּא סָוֶר מַרְעָע, דְּהַיִנּוּ עַזְיִבָּת הַחַטָּא בְּלֵב שָׁלָם וְהַתְּרִטָּה</p>

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As our Sages said: If a man betroths a woman on condition that he is righteous, and he is [in fact] wicked, she is betrothed [nonetheless] out of doubt, for perhaps he had a thought of repentance.	וכמאמר רז"ל, המקודש את האשה על מנת שאני צדיק ונמצא רשות, מוקודשת מפק שמא ההר תשובה
And the thought alone is enough for him to be called righteous.	ונהרהור בלבד מפק לו שיארא צדיק
And to understand this matter—why is it so?	ולכך הזכר מפני מה הוא כך
The matter is: For every transgression creates an accusing force (mekatreg).	הענין הוא כי בכל עבירה בורא מקטרג אחד
And how is it created? Because every sinner first thinks, in thought, to do it—and thereby creates a <i>nefesh</i> (soul) for the <i>kelipah</i> .	ואיך בוראו? אלא מפני שכל עובר עבירה החושב מוקדם במחלוקת לעשותו, אז בורא נפש לקליפה
And afterwards, when he performs the deed, he creates the <i>body</i> [of the klipah].	ואחר כך פשעosa הפעלה, בורא הגוף
And then, when he thinks thoughts of <i>teshuvah</i> , he repairs the <i>hirhur</i> (thought), and withdraws the vitality from the <i>kelipah</i> —and what remains is a lifeless stone.	ואמר כך קשלה הרהר בתקווה, מתקו ההרהור ומוציא את חמימות מהקליפה, ונשאר אבן דום
But why is the abandonment of sin in the heart called <i>charatah</i> (regret)? It is from the language of <i>charat enosh</i> (engraving of man).	אבל מפני מה נקרא עזיבת החטא בלב חרטה? הוא מלשון חרט אנטוש
For it is known that <i>vidui</i> (confession) with the mouth is the main thing—and also that it be from the heart.	כידוע כי הודהי בפה הואעיקר, וגם שיחיה מן הלב
For one who damages and sins erases, so to speak, his letter, from which the root of his soul derives, and is severed from holiness.	כى הפוגם וחוטא מוחק בביבול אותו שלו שמשם שרש בשנות, ונפסק מן הארץ
And when he confesses with speech—and speech is drawn from the letter, as stated—then he renews the letter and rewrites what had been erased.	וכשמתוודה בדבר, ודבר נמחק מן האות כאמור, אז מחקש את האות וכותבו מחדש מה שפק
And the main thing is that it be from the heart, like the <i>charat</i> (engraving)—that is, the quill does not write unless it is dipped by the hand.	ועיקר שיחיה מן הלב, כמו חרטת, זהינו הקולמוס לא יכתב בו אם לא יטבלו בידו
And the tongue is called “the pen of a scribe,” as it says (Tehillim 45:2), “My tongue is the pen of a skilled scribe.”	וכלשונו נקרא עט סופר, כמו שפטוב (תהלים מ"ה, ב')
And the heart must join with it primarily, and afterward one should do good and not return to his former ways.	ואזיר להאטטרף אליו הלב בערך, ואחר כך יעשה טוב ולא ישוב לסורו

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But matters that a person needs—even though they are of this-worldly nature—if they are necessary, such as business dealings and the like, they too are considered <i>avodah</i> (Divine service).	אכל דברים הארץיכים לו, אף על גב דהם מעניני עולם הזה, רק שהם מקרים, לנוינו משא ומתן וכיוצא, והוא גם כן עבודה
Like one who writes a Torah scroll—he must first prepare parchment from a physical object, the hide of an animal, to make at first a vessel that holds the letters upon it.	כמו הפטוב ספר תורה, צריך מקודם לעבד קוף מדבר גשמי, מעור בהמה, לעשות בתוליה כלוי שמשרת האותיות עלינו.
For we are material beings, and therefore we need a physical vessel upon which the holiness can rest.	כי אנחנו מגוישמים, לנו אנחנו הארץיכים כלוי מגוישם להשראות הקדשה עליו.
And afterward, one must make staves for the Torah scroll, which are called “Etz Chayim” (Tree of Life), as it says (Mishlei 3:18), “It is a tree of life to those who grasp it.”	ונאמר כה צריך לעשות עמוקים לספר תורה, הבקרא עץ חיים, על שם (משל ג', י"ח) עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה ע"ש.
For through it we hold the letters.	שבעבورو אני מחזיקין את האותיות.
So too, a person who serves Hashem must make a vessel in everything: whether in business or in other necessary worldly matters.	כה צריך האדם לעבוד את ה לעשות כל בכל דבר, והוא משא ומתן, והוא בשאר דברי עולם הנה הקרים.
For this is called “those who grasp it,” for through this the Torah is sustained—as it is said: “If there is no flour, there is no Torah.”	כי זה בקרא למחזיקים בה, כי על ידי זה יתקנים התורה, כמו שכתוב: אם אין קמח אין תורה.
But everything should be for His service, blessed be He—and not for oneself, as is the way of fools and evildoers.	אכל ידה הפל לעבורה יתברך, שלא יעשה בשבייל עצמו קרך השוטים והרשעים.
For example, it says in the Gemara: “He who does charity at all times”—this refers to one who provides food and sustenance, etc.—if he does so for the sake of serving Hashem, that is, if he thinks that they too contain a divine portion, and Hashem gave me these portions, and I am like an appointed gabbai (treasurer) to support them.	למשל אמרו בגמ' עוזה אזכה בכל עת, זה הנו ומפרנסנו גור, אם הוא עוזה לעבורה יתברך, לנוינו שחו"ב כי ביהם גם כו חלק אליה, ובה"ה נטנו לי חקלים, והנני בגבאי ממנה עלייהם לפרקם.
If he thinks in this way—it is <i>avodah</i> (Divine service). But if he does it without this awareness, even though he acts—it is considered nothing.	ואם חושב כו — הוא עבורה. ואם עוזה שלא בראעת, אף שעוזה — אינה נחשבת לכלום.
As it says in the Gemara: Two who slaughtered their Pesach offerings, etc.—this one who ate it for the sake of the mitzvah, about him it is said (Hoshea 14:10), “The righteous walk in them”; and this one who ate it as gluttonous consumption, about him it is said, “but the sinners stumble in them.”	כמו שפטוב בגמ' שניהם שאכלו את פסחיהם וגור, זה שאכלו לשם מצוה — עליו נאמר (הושע י"ז, י') צדיקים ילכו בהם, וזה שאכלו לשם אכילה גסה — עליו נאמר ופטעים יכשלו בהם.

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<p>So our eyes see that it is possible in one matter—when both people do the same thing—that because their intentions differ, this one draws himself near through that act to Hashem, while the other distances himself.</p> <p>So too in everything—the main thing is the intention, as it is written (Mishlei 3:6), “In all your ways, know Him.”</p> <p>And this is [the meaning of] “This is the Torah: man...”—as stated, “man” refers to the divine portion within him, and it is the letters from the Torah.</p> <p>But the Torah is only upheld by one who “kills himself” over it—“himself” specifically, meaning: his intent should not be for <i>himself</i>.</p> <p>That he should kill the thought “for himself”—that such motivation should not be remembered or counted at all.</p> <p>Rather, all should be for His service—blessed is His Name.</p>	<p>אם פון עינינו הרזאות שיש באפשרי שבדבר אחד שיעשו שניהם שרים, אבל מפניהם שהמכוון אינו שוה, יהיה זה מקרוב את עצמו באותו דבר אל השם יתברך, וזה מתרחק.</p> <p>בכה גם פון בכל דבר, העקר הוא הנקודו, כמו שכתוב שם ג', ו') בכל דברךך דעהו.</p> <p>ונזה זאת התורה אדם — כאמור, אדם נקרא החק. אלוה שבתוכו, והוא האותיות מן התורה.</p> <p>אבל אין התורה מתקיימת אלא במי שפמיה עצמו עלייה — עצמו דיקא.</p> <p>פרוש שלא יהיה כונתו בשבייל עצמו — שמיית זאת האנשכה שבשביל עצמו — שלא יזכיר, לא יפקח.</p> <p>אלא הכל לעבורתו יתברך שם.</p>
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[NOTE Summary:

This rich and layered teaching by Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl centers on the inner essence of Torah, teshuvah, and Divine service. He begins by expanding on the verse *“This is the Torah: when a man dies in a tent,”* citing the Sages’ interpretation that Torah is only upheld by one who “kills himself” over it. But the Me’or Einayim reveals a deeper meaning: this “death” is not physical, but the nullification of self-centered intention. True Torah only endures in one who surrenders his ego and serves not for his own sake, but entirely for the sake of Heaven.

Each Jew, he teaches, has a letter in the Torah—corresponding to the 600,000 root souls. When one sins, he erases his personal letter. Through sincere *vidui* (verbal confession), especially when flowing from the heart, the soul rewrites its place in the scroll of holiness. The metaphor of the *kli* (vessel) is critical: just as a Torah scroll needs a parchment and staves (Etz Chayim), man must create vessels in the physical world—like business, speech, or daily needs—so they may hold the light of Torah. The goal is not to escape the material world, but to spiritualize it.

Even mundane acts like business dealings can be Divine service—if they are done with awareness that the other person, too, holds a portion of the divine. But if one acts without holy intent, his actions—even mitzvos—are void of spiritual power. The proof is the Pesach offering: two people can do the same deed; one draws near to Hashem, the other stumbles—depending solely on inner intent.

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This leads to his bold interpretation of “*charatah*” (regret): not just remorse, but *engraving*—a deliberate re-etching of one’s spiritual letter. Sin is born of thought, and so teshuvah must begin with thought. Regret rewrites, redirects, and restores the flow of holy vitality. When one truly turns, he doesn’t just return—he becomes a living vessel for the letters of Torah once again.

Practical Takeaway

This discourse calls us to radical spiritual honesty. The heart of Divine service is not the action, but the **intention**. A mitzvah without consciousness may fulfill the body of Torah but not its soul. To draw close to Hashem:

- Transform daily tasks—business, speech, needs—into vessels of holiness by dedicating them to G-d.
- Remember that each person is a letter in the Torah. To harm another is to erase part of G-d’s scroll; to help them is to restore it.
- In teshuvah, focus not just on regret but on re-engraving your soul’s divine imprint through heartfelt vidui and renewed alignment with your purpose.
- Do not serve for your own gain—even spiritually. “Kill” the thought of self and live entirely for Him.

When we act this way, we don’t just learn Torah—we *become* Torah..

Chassidic Story

Once, Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl encountered a water-carrier in his village who was known for his sharp tongue. One day the man came to the Rebbe and wept: “I’ve harmed people with my speech. I’ve gossiped, cursed, and lied. I want to do teshuvah, but I don’t know where to start.”

Rabbi Nachum gave him a simple instruction: “Come tomorrow with a single feather pillow.”

The next day, the man returned. The Rebbe told him, “Take the pillow to the top of the hill and rip it open in the wind.” The man obeyed. Feathers flew in every direction.

“Now,” said the Rebbe, “go gather each feather and put them back inside.”

“But that’s impossible!” the man cried.

The Rebbe replied: “So it is with speech. But there is one thing that repairs what cannot be gathered: words of truth, spoken from a broken heart. When you speak that way to Hashem, you begin to rewrite what was torn.”

Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl

Me'or Einayim

Parshas Chukas

(Source: **Shivchei HaBaal Shem Tov**, variant transmitted in Chernobyl tradition)

Therapeutic-Psychological Integration (TPX)

This discourse offers a spiritually rich framework for psychological healing: your identity is not constructed—it's inscribed. You are a living letter in the Divine scroll. When a person feels lost, fragmented, or ashamed, it's as if their "letter" has been erased. But Rabbi Menachem Nachum teaches that this erasure isn't permanent. With sincere words and heart-based teshuvah, that letter can be rewritten.

This reflects what modern therapy tells us: **speech restores coherence**. In trauma recovery, a key turning point is the moment someone can narrate their pain honestly and safely. Rabbi Nachum anticipates this: the mouth, when connected to the heart, becomes the stylus of the soul. Speech is not just cathartic—it's reconstructive.

He also collapses the divide between sacred and secular. A person doesn't need to escape the world to find God. If your intention is pure, **your job, your transactions, your errands—all become vessels for holiness**. This mirrors Viktor Frankl's insight: meaning can be found in suffering, in work, in every corner of life—if we orient ourselves toward purpose.

At its root, the Me'or Einayim is asking: *For whom do you live?* A life lived for self, even in mitzvah disguise, stays trapped in ego. A life lived for Hashem, however mundane, is radiant with Torah light.

True Story

In 1992, Dr. Edith Eger, a Holocaust survivor and psychologist, was counseling a woman trapped in grief. The woman had lost her son in a tragic accident and couldn't stop blaming herself. "I killed my own son," she repeated in every session.

One day, Dr. Eger stopped her gently and said, "You've spoken that sentence hundreds of times. It's your new name. But what if you wrote a new sentence today—just one? Even if it feels like a lie?"

The woman began to cry. She whispered: "I want to be someone who forgives herself."

"That's it," said Dr. Eger. "That's your new letter. Say it again."

The woman repeated it—and kept repeating it. It became her morning prayer. Over time, it rewrote the way she saw herself.

(Source: **Dr. Edith Eger, *The Choice*, 2017**) END NOTE]