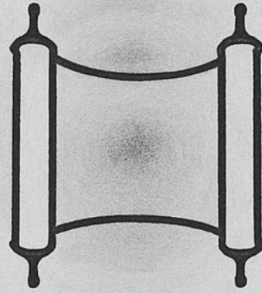


בס"ד

# The Maharal Of Prauge

תפארת ישראל

## Chapter 15



לע"נ

שׁוּרָה מְרִים בַּת אַבְרָהָם

*Dedicated By:*

משפחת ליטשקאווסקי

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# The Maharal of Prague

תפארת ישראל

## The Splendor of Israel

### Chapter 15 - פְּרָק הַמְּשֵׁה עֶשֶׂר - עֶשֶׂר

#### Introduction

This discourse by the Maharal of Prague—Rabbi Yehuda Loew (c. 1525–1609), the leading rabbinic authority in Bohemia—delves into the Mishnah at the beginning of *Sanhedrin* that defines who does *not* have a share in the World to Come. Living in Prague during the Renaissance, the Maharal was renowned for his synthesis of rational philosophy and mystical tradition, and his works profoundly shaped Jewish thought. This teaching explores the structure and metaphysics of the World to Come itself, revealing that it is not merely a future reward but the very reality created through the Torah. With deep philosophical precision, the Maharal demonstrates how denial of resurrection, Torah from Heaven, or the Divine source severs the soul from that eternal reality. Even subtle deviations—such as misusing Torah for bodily needs or diminishing its intellectual holiness—are shown to disrupt one's access to the eternal realm.

קיום התורה הוא העולם הבא עצמו.

#### The fulfillment of Torah is the World to Come itself.

In the final chapter of *Sanhedrin* (90a): “All Israel has a share in the World to Come... but these have no share in the World to Come: one who says there is no resurrection of the dead from the Torah, and that the Torah is not from Heaven, and an epikoros.

בפרק בתרא דסנהדרין (א, א): כל ישראל יש להם חלק לעולם הבא. ואלו שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא; האומר אין תחיית המתים מן התורה, ואין תורה מן השמים, ואפיקורוס.

Rabbi Akiva says: also one who reads external books, and one who whispers over a wound and says: “All the sickness that I placed upon Egypt I will not place upon you, for I am Hashem your healer” (*Shemos* 15:26).

רבי עקיבא אומר: אף הקורא בספרים החיצוניים, והלוחש על המכה ואומר: "כל המחלה אשר שמתי במצרים לא אשים עליך כי (אני ה' רפואה) (שמות טו, כו).

Abba Shaul says: also one who pronounces the Divine Name with its letters. Up to here.

אבא שאול אומר: אף ההוֹנֵה אֶת הַשֵּׁם בְּאוֹתֵיחוֹ. עד כאן.

The explanation of this Mishnah is very difficult—how could they list things like reading external books or whispering over a wound, but not other sins? This is a great difficulty.

באור המשנה הזאת קשה מאד, איך הזכירו אלו דברים הקורא בספרים חיצוניים, והלוחש על המכה, אבל שאר החטאים לא הזכירו, וזה קשה עצומה.

From what is known to all: a person cannot acquire any spiritual level unless he is fit for that level. And all the more so, if he completely opposes that level—then he is certainly unworthy to receive it.

מן הדברים אשר הם ידועים לכל, שלא יקנה האדם שום מדרגה רק אם הוא מוכן לאותה המדרגה. ומכל שכן אם הוא מתנגד לגמרי לאותה המדרגה, שאין ראוי שיקנה אותה.

Therefore, when their eyes beheld with wisdom the essence of the level called “the World to Come,” they said: “These have no share in the World to Come.”

ולפיכך פאשר עיניו חכמים במהות מדרגת עולם הבא, אמרו: אלו שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא.

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For the World to Come is based upon three things: first, the one who brings it about—for nothing exists on its own, it requires a cause. This is the first.

וְזֶה כִּי עוֹלָם הַבָּא הוּא עַל־יְדֵי שְׁלֹשָׁה דְבָרִים; הָאֶחָד, הוּא הַפּוֹעֵל עוֹלָם הַבָּא. כִּי לֹא נִמְצָא דָבָר מֵעֲצָמוֹ, וְצָרִיךְ אֵל זֶה פּוֹעֵל, וְזֶה הוּא הָאֶחָד.

Second: the World to Come itself, which comes into being from the cause (the one who brings it about)—this is the second.

הַשְּׁנִי, עוֹלָם הַבָּא עֲצָמוֹ, שְׁנִמְצָא מִן הַעֲלָה שֶׁהוּא הַפּוֹעֵל, וְזֶהוּ הַשְּׁנִי.

Third: the recipient who receives the World to Come—this is man. And this is the third element: the cause, the recipient, and that which is received.

הַשְּׁלִישִׁי, הַמְקַבֵּל שֶׁמְקַבֵּל עוֹלָם הַבָּא, הוּא הָאָדָם, וְזֶהוּ דְבָר דְּבָר שְׁלִישִׁי. הָרִי שְׁלֹשָׁה דְבָרִים; הַעֲלָה, הַמְקַבֵּל, וְמֵה שֶׁמְקַבֵּל.

Therefore they mentioned these three [types of people]. When one says that there is no resurrection of the dead from the Torah—he denies the World to Come in relation to the **recipient**.

וְלָכֵן אָמְרוּ אֵלּוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה, כְּאֲשֶׁר יֹאמֵר שְׂאִין תְּחִיַּת הַיְמָתִים מִן הַתּוֹרָה, הָרִי זֶה מִתְּנַבֵּד לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא מִצִּד הַמְקַבֵּל.

For the very essence of the World to Come is the world that follows the resurrection.

כִּי אִין עֲצָם עוֹלָם הַבָּא רַק הַעוֹלָם שֶׁיָּבוֹא אַחֵר הַתְּחִיָּה.

And when he says that man does not return to life once he has died, and that the dead do not live again—then there is no **recipient** to receive the World to Come.

וְכַשֵּׁי־אֵמַר שְׂאִין הָאָדָם חוֹזֵר לְהִיּוֹת חַי כְּאֲשֶׁר כָּבַר מֵת, וְאִין חוֹזֵר הַמֵּת לְחַיִּים, וְהָרִי אִין כְּאִין מְקַבֵּל שֶׁמְקַבֵּל הַעוֹלָם הַבָּא.

Therefore, one who denies the resurrection is cut off from the World to Come.

וְלִפְיָכֵן מִי שֶׁמְכַחֵשׁ הַתְּחִיָּה, הָרִי הוּא נֶאֱבָד מִן הַעוֹלָם הַבָּא.

And so, if one says that the Torah is not from Heaven—this is one who opposes the very essence of the World to Come.

וְכֵן אִם אֹמֵר שְׂאִין הַתּוֹרָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם, זֶה שֶׁהוּא מִתְּנַבֵּד לְעֲצָם עוֹלָם הַבָּא.

For we have already said that the Torah removes a person from the natural order and gives him a transcendent level.

כִּי כָּבַר אָמְרָנוּ כִּי הַתּוֹרָה מוֹצִיאָה אֶת הָאָדָם מִן הַטְּבַע, וְנוֹתֶנֶת לוֹ מִדְּרָגָה נִבְדָּלָת.

And when one says the Torah is not from Heaven, there is no transcendent level—and how could he acquire the World to Come?

וְכַאֲשֶׁר אִין תּוֹרָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם, אִין כְּאִין מִדְּרָגָה נִבְדָּלָת, וְאִיךָ יִקְנֶה הַעוֹלָם הַבָּא.

For the World to Come is only an acquisition of a world that is separate from the physical—and therefore, if the Torah is not from Heaven, there is no transcendent World to Come.

שְׂאִין עוֹלָם הַבָּא רַק קִנְיָן הַעוֹלָם הַנִּבְדָּל מִן הַגִּשְׁמִי; וְלִפְיָכֵן כְּאֲשֶׁר אִין תּוֹרָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם, אִין כְּאִין עוֹלָם הַבָּא הַנִּבְדָּל.

Furthermore, the World to Come is eternal life—and without Torah, there is no eternal life.

וְעוֹד, כִּי עוֹלָם הַבָּא הוּא הַחַיִּים הַנִּצְחָיִים. וְכַאֲשֶׁר אִין תּוֹרָה, אִין כְּאִין חַיִּים נִצְחָיִים.

As it is written (Devarim 30:20): “For it is your life and the length of your days.” And therefore, Torah is the very essence of the World to Come.

דְּכַתִּיב (דְּבָרִים ל, כ): "כִּי הִיא חַיִּיךָ וְאֶרְךְ יָמֶיךָ"; וְלִפְיָכֵן הַתּוֹרָה הִיא עֲצָם עוֹלָם הַבָּא.

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### Chapter 15 - פֶּרֶק חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר

And so too with the epikoros. For an epikoros is one who does not believe that there is a Cause and First Source.

וְכֵן אֶפִיקוֹרוֹס. כִּי הָאֶפִיקוֹרוֹס הוּא מִי שְׁאִינוֹ מֵאֱמִין שְׁיֵשׁ כָּאֵן עֲלֶיהָ וְסִבָּה רֵאשׁוֹנָה.

Therefore he is called “epikoros,” from the word hefker (ownerless), because he does not accept upon himself the authority of Heaven, that Hashem is the First Cause. And this comes through heresy.

וּלְפִיכֹה נִקְרָא אֶפִיקוֹרוֹס מִלְשׁוֹן הַפְקָר, כִּי אֵין עֲלָיו עַל מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם שֶׁהוּא סִבָּה הָרֵאשׁוֹנָה, וְזֶהוּ עַל-יְדֵי מִינּוֹת.

And what our Sages of blessed memory said (Sanhedrin 99b): “Who is an epikoros? One who disgraces a Sage, or who disgraces his fellow before a Sage.”

וּמָה שְׁאָמְרוּ זְכוֹרָנָם לְבִרְכָה (סְנֵהֲדְרִין צט, ב): אֵיזֶהוּ אֶפִיקוֹרוֹס – זֶה הַמְבַזֵּה אֶת הַחֲכָמִים, אִו לְשִׁמְבִזֵּה חֲבֵרוֹ בְּפָנֵי הַחֲכָמִים.

This means: it is not necessary that he be a complete heretic who denies the First Cause. Even one who lacks fear of Heaven and disgraces a Sage—or disgraces his fellow before a Torah scholar—is also called epikoros.

רָצָה לוֹמַר, כִּי אֵין צְרִיךְ שְׁיִהְיֶה כּוֹפֵר לְגַמְרֵי בְעֲלֵהָ וּבְסִבָּה רֵאשׁוֹנָה. רַק אִם אֵין יִרְאַת ה' עַל פָּנָיו, וְאֵין עֲלָיו עַל שָׁמַיִם – לְבֵית אֶת הַחֲכָמִים, אִו לְבֵית חֲבֵרוֹ בְּפָנֵי תַלְמִיד חֲכָם – זֶהוּ אֶפִיקוֹרוֹס.

For this is rebellion against the First Cause. For if he truly accepted the authority of Heaven, he would submit himself to the Cause and to His sages. He would not disgrace a Torah scholar, nor would he shame his fellow before a scholar—for that itself is a disgrace to the scholar.

וְדָבָר זֶה פְּרִיקוּת מֵעַל הַסִּבָּה הָרֵאשׁוֹנָה. כִּי אִלוּ הִיָּה עַל מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם עֲלָיו, הִיָּה נִכְנָע מִן הָעֲלֵה וּמִן אֲשֶׁר הֵם חֲכָמָיו, וְלֹא הִיָּה מְבַזֵּה תַלְמִיד חֲכָם, אִו שְׁלֹא הִיָּה מְבַזֵּה אֶת חֲבֵרוֹ בְּפָנֵי תַלְמִיד חֲכָם, כִּי זֶהוּ גְּנָאִי לְתַלְמִיד חֲכָם גַּם-כֵּן.

And it is said: “You shall fear Hashem your God” (Devarim 10:20)—to include Torah scholars, as our Sages said in Pesachim 22b and Bava Kama 41b.

וְאָמְרֵינוּ: “אֵת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ תִירָא” (דְּבָרִים י, כ) – לְרִבּוֹת תַּלְמִידֵי חֲכָמִים, כְּדָאֲמַרְיֵנוּ בְּפֶרֶק שְׁנֵי (דְּפָסְחִים כב, ב), וּבִבְבָא קַמָּא (מא, ב).

Therefore, all of this is included under the category of epikorsus, and the person is called an epikoros.

וּלְפִיכֹה כֹּל זֶה נִכְלָל בְּכָלֵל אֶפִיקוֹרוּת, וְנִקְרָא אֶפִיקוֹרוֹס.

And when there is no Cause, then there is no World to Come, for the World to Come is found only through Him.

וּכְאֲשֶׁר אֵין עֲלֵה, אֵין כָּאֵן עוֹלָם הַבָּא, שְׁנִמְצָא מֵאֵתוֹ עוֹלָם הַבָּא.

Therefore, these three have removed themselves from the World to Come.

וּלְכֹה אִלוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה מְסַלְקִים מֵהֵם עוֹלָם הַבָּא.

And you can also say: the World to Come, in which a person returns and receives life from Hashem, Who bestows life—also consists of three components: the person who returns to life, the life itself, and Hashem Who grants that life.

וְתוֹכֵל לוֹמַר גַּם-כֵּן, כִּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא שְׁיִחְזֹר הָאָדָם וְיִקְבַּל הַחַיּוֹת מִן הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ, אֲשֶׁר הוּא מְשַׁפִּיעַ הַחַיּוֹת – הָרֵי גַם-כֵּן שְׁלֹשָׁה דְבָרִים: הָאָדָם שְׁחֹזֵר לְהַיּוֹת חַי, וְהַחַיּוֹת, וְהַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ אֲשֶׁר הוּא מְשַׁפִּיעַ הַחַיּוֹת.

And one who denies the resurrection of the dead—that the dead do not live—is denying that there is a recipient of life.

וְהַכּוֹפֵר בְּתַחֲיַת הַמֵּתִים – שְׁאֵין הַמֵּתִים חַיִּים – הָרֵי זֶה כּוֹפֵר שְׁאֵין כָּאֵן מְקַבֵּל הַחַיִּים.

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And one who says the Torah is not from Heaven is denying the life itself—for the Torah is life, as it is written (Devarim 30:20), “For it is your life and the length of your days.”

וְהָאָמַר שֶׁאֵין תּוֹרָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם – הוּא כּוֹפֵר בְּחַיִּים עֲצֻמּוֹ, כִּי הַתּוֹרָה הִיא הַחַיִּים, וְכִדְבָרֵיב (דְּבָרִים ל, "כ'): "כִּי הִיא חַיֵּיךָ וְאֵרֶךְ יָמֶיךָ

And the epikoros—it is as if there is no one granting and giving life. Therefore, he is lost from the World to Come.

וְאֶפִיקוֹרוֹס – הוּא כְּאִלּוּ לֹא הֵיחָה כָּאֵן מְשַׁפִּיעַ וְנוֹתֵן הַחַיִּים; וְלִפְיֶכָה נֶאֱבָד מִן עוֹלָם הַבָּא

However, Rabbi Akiva added two more. His intention was: not only those three that utterly remove a person from the transcendent world entirely, but even one who deviates to the right or left from the path of the World to Come is also lost from it.

אָמַנְם רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא הוֹסִיף עוֹד שְׁתֵּימִם. וְרָצָה בְּזֶה כִּי לֹא לְבַד אֱלוֹי שְׁלִשָּׁה דְּבָרִים שֶׁהֵם סְלוּק עוֹלָם הַנְּבָדֵל לְגַמְרֵי מְכַל וְכַל, רַק אַף הַנוֹטָה מִן עוֹלָם הַבָּא לְיָמִין וְלְשֻׂמְאֵל – נֶאֱבָד מִן עוֹלָם הַבָּא

And this is what Rabbi Akiva said: “Also one who reads external books, and one who whispers over a wound.”

וְזֶה שֶׁאָמַר רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא: אַף הַקּוֹרֵא בְּסִפְרִים חִיצוֹנִים וְהַלּוֹחֵשׁ עַל הַמַּכָּה

The explanation is: external books deviate from the Torah of truth, for the Torah teaches the path of truth and uprightness, whereas external books teach a person matters that are of no substance.

וּבִיאור זֶה: כִּי סִפְרִים חִיצוֹנִים סְרִים מִן תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת, כִּי הַתּוֹרָה מְלַמֶּדֶת דְּרֹךְ אֱמֶת וְדְרֹךְ הַיִּשְׁרָא, וְאֵלּוֹ סִפְרִים חִיצוֹנִים מְלַמְּדִים לְאֲדָם דְּבָרִים שֶׁאֵין בָּהֶם מַמְשׁ

And this removes a person from the World to Come—especially from the world of intellect—entirely.

וְדָבָר זֶה הוּא הַסְּרָה מִן עוֹלָם הַבָּא, בְּפֶרֶט מִן הָעוֹלָם הַשְּׂכָלִי לְגַמְרֵי

For when he reads external books, and they are things of no substance, through this he turns away from the World to Come—and therefore he has no share in it.

שֶׁכַּאֲשֶׁר הוּא קוֹרֵא בְּסִפְרִים חִיצוֹנִים, וְהֵם דְּבָרִים שֶׁאֵין בָּהֶם מַמְשׁ – בְּדָבָר זֶה סָר מִן עוֹלָם הַבָּא, וְלִכְךָ אֵין לוֹ עוֹלָם הַבָּא

And likewise, one who whispers over a wound is using the Torah for something that is the opposite of Torah—that the Torah should serve as a physical remedy. For the Torah is intellectual, and he is applying the Torah to a bodily matter.

וְכֵן הַלּוֹחֵשׁ עַל הַמַּכָּה, הוּא מְשַׁתְּמֵשׁ בַּתּוֹרָה לְדָבָר שֶׁהוּא הַפֶּה הַפָּד לַתּוֹרָה, שֶׁתִּהְיֶה הַתּוֹרָה רְפוּאָה לְגוֹף, כִּי הַתּוֹרָה הִיא שְׂכָלִי, וְהוּא מְשַׁתְּמֵשׁ בַּתּוֹרָה לְדָבָר גּוֹפְנִי

This is a lowering of the Torah’s intellectual stature into something bodily, which is its opposite.

וְזֶהוּ הַסְּרָה מִמַּעֲלַת הַתּוֹרָה הַשְּׂכָלִית אֶל עֲנִינֵי גּוֹפְנִי שֶׁהוּא הַפֶּה הַשְּׂכָלִי

And we have already said that the Torah is the World to Come itself, as is known to those who understand and are wise.

וּכְבָר אָמַרְנוּ כִּי הַתּוֹרָה הִיא הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא בְּעֲצֻמּוֹ, כַּאֲשֶׁר יָדוּעַ לְמַבִּינִים וְלַחֲכָמִים

And when one deviates from the intellectual Torah—which is the World to Come—then he is cut off from the World to Come.

וְכַאֲשֶׁר הוּא נוֹטָה מִן הַתּוֹרָה הַשְּׂכָלִית שֶׁהִיא עוֹלָם הַבָּא, אָז הוּא נֶאֱבָד מִן הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא

These are the two matters: first, one who reads external books; second, one who whispers over a wound. Both are deviations from the Torah—whether to the right or to the left.

וְאֵלּוֹ שְׁנֵי דְבָרִים: הָאֶחָד, הַקּוֹרֵא בְּסִפְרִים חִיצוֹנִים, וְהַשֵּׁנִי, הַלּוֹחֵשׁ עַל הַמַּכָּה – הֵם הַסְּרָה מִן הַתּוֹרָה לְיָמִין וְלְשֻׂמְאֵל

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תפארת ישראל

### The Splendor of Israel

#### פרק חמשה עשר - Chapter 15

For one who reads external books does not value the Torah at all. If he did value it, he would not read books that contain nothing of substance, mere nonsense.

כי הקורא בספרים חיצונים אינו מחשיב התורה כלל. שאילו היה מחשיב התורה, לא היה קורא בספרים חיצונים שאין בהם ממש, והם דברי הבאי.

But the one who whispers over a wound is the opposite—he values the Torah, but brings it down even to physical things, to heal a wound.

והלוחש על המכה הפך זה, שהוא מחשיב אותה, ולוקח התורה אף לדברים הגופניים, לרפאות המכה.

Understand these matters well, and it is impossible to write more about them, for what has been hinted here is exceedingly deep.

והכו הדברים האלו, ואי אפשר לכתב מזה יותר, כי הדברים אשר רמזנו פה – עמקים מאד.

And Abba Shaul added: “One who pronounces the Name with its letters”—this too causes one to lose the World to Come.

ואבא שאול הוסיף: ההונח השם באותיות שלו – זהו גם כן שיוצא מן עולם הבא.

For this Name is the unique Divine Name, and it is fitting that it be hidden—as our Sages expounded (Pesachim 50a) on the verse (Shemos 3:15), “This is My Name forever (לעלם)”—read as “to be concealed (לעלם).”

כי השם הזה, הוא השם המיוחד, ראוי להעלים אותו, כמו שדרשו זקונם לברכה (פסחים ג, א) הכתוב (שמות ג, טו): "זה שמי לעלם" – לעלם קתיב.

For it is fitting to conceal the Name, for the unique Name possesses a hidden and concealed level.

כי ראוי להעלים את השם, כי יש לשם המיוחד מדרגה נעלמת וצפונה.

And one who pronounces the Name with its letters exits from that hidden and concealed level—and therefore has no share in the World to Come.

ומי שהונהג השם באותיותיו, יוצא מן המדרגה הנעלמת והצפונה, ולכך אין לו עולם הבא.

For the World to Come has a hidden and concealed level, as it is written (Tehillim 31:20): “How abundant is Your goodness which You have hidden for those who fear You.”

כי העולם הבא יש לו מדרגה נעלמת וצפונה, דקתיב (תהלים ל"א, כ): "מה רב טובך אשר צפנת ליראיך".

And this is the wine preserved for the righteous in the future.

והוא היין המשמר לצדיקים לעתיד.

These matters are clear, and it is not possible to write more about them, in order to preserve their concealment.

ודברים אלו ברורים, ואי אפשר לכתב מזה יותר – להעלם ולהסתיר אלו דברים.

Only the wise will grasp these matters, for they are words of deep wisdom, alluded to in this Mishnah. And this suffices to explain this severe Mishnah.

רק החכם ישפיל אלו דברים, כי הם דברי חכמה מאד מה שרמזו כאן במשנה הזאת. ונדי בזה לבאר המשנה הקמורה.

#### [NOTE Summary

The Maharal opens with the assertion that *the fulfillment of Torah is the World to Come itself*, not merely a path to it. Drawing from *Sanhedrin 90a*, the discourse examines why only certain heresies—like denying resurrection, Torah from Heaven, or being an epikoros—are singled out as causing loss of one’s share in the

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World to Come. The answer lies in a metaphysical model: the World to Come consists of three parts—the source (Hashem, Who bestows life), the recipient (the soul), and the vitality itself (Torah and divine life). Denying resurrection means denying the recipient of eternal life. Denying Torah from Heaven means rejecting the vitality itself. Being an epikoros denies the source—the very cause of existence. Thus, each heresy undoes one element of this threefold structure and annihilates the possibility of entering the World to Come.

Rabbi Akiva expands the list to include subtler deviations—like reading secular (external) books or using Torah to heal physical wounds—because these acts pull a person away from the transcendent purpose of Torah. Torah is intellectual, divine, and otherworldly; to turn it into a tool for physical gain is to profane its essence. Even reading empty, worldly literature reflects a lack of reverence for Torah's truth. Finally, Abba Shaul adds one who pronounces the divine name with its full letters—exposing what must be concealed. Since the World to Come is also a hidden, spiritual dimension (“the wine preserved for the righteous”), violating divine concealment disconnects one from it. In conclusion, the Mishnah's list is not random—it precisely maps the ways one severs their tie to the divine, eternal, transcendent reality we call the World to Come.

#### Practical Takeaway

Your connection to the World to Come is not only about belief but alignment. Every action, word, or thought that honors Torah as a divine, transcendent truth strengthens your link to eternity. Misusing Torah—whether through cynicism, bodily exploitation, or intellectual dishonor—distorts that link. Treat Torah with reverence, study it with depth, and avoid bringing it down to a worldly plane. Respect the hidden, respect the sacred, and remember: the World to Come is not far away—it is formed here, now, through your engagement with Torah and truth.

#### Chassidic Story

In the late 16th century, a fierce storm swept through Prague. Citizens feared it was a sign of divine judgment. The Maharal of Prague was asked to speak. Instead of thunderous rebuke, he entered the shul, opened a Gemara, and began teaching. His subject? The very Mishnah from Sanhedrin about who loses a share in the World to Come. But he taught not with condemnation, but with awe—explaining how each heresy was not a punishment, but a metaphysical impossibility: they had torn themselves away from the very reality of eternity. A student, shaken, asked, “Rebbe, is there hope for someone who's fallen into doubt?” The Maharal closed the Gemara and said, “If Torah is from Heaven, then so is teshuvah. And if Hashem breathes life into the soul—He can breathe it back.” It is said the storm lifted that hour.

(Source: Oral tradition, attributed to the writings of Rabbi Chaim Brody, a student of the Maharal's circle)

**END NOTE]**