

תפארת ישראל The Splendor of Israel Chapter 11 - פֶּרֶק אָחָד עָשָׂר

הַבְּבָקוּת בַּבָּה' יִתְבָּרַךְּ שְׁמוֹ הוּא רַק עַל יְדֵי לְמוּד תּוֹרָה וְלֹא בִּשְׁאָר חָכְמוֹת בַּבָּה' יִתְבָּרַךְּ שְׁמוֹ הוּא רַק עַל יְדֵי לְמוּד תּוֹרָה וְלֹא בִּשְׁאָר חָכְמוֹת Cleaving to Hashem, blessed is He, is only through Torah study and not through other wisdoms.

It is not in the heavens, and not distant from us, this question—	ָלֹא בַּשָּׁמַיִם וְלֹא רָחוֹקָה מֵאָתָּנוּ שְׁאֵלָה זֹאת,
After it has been clarified to you in the previous chapter that man does not attain the ultimate success through wisdom, but only through cleaving to Him, blessed is He.	אַחַר שֶׁהִתְבָּאֵר לְךָּ בַּפֶּרֶק הַקּוֹדֵם כִּי לֹא יִקְנֶה הָאָדָם הַהַצְּלָחָה הָאַחַרוֹנָה עַל־יְדֵי הַחָּכְמָה, רַק עִם הַדְּבּוּק בּוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְּ
Therefore, the question: Why doesn't a person attain eternal success through knowledge of the wisdom that deals with the nature of the world, the essence of the spheres, and of the angels, which are called "separate forms"?	וּלְפִיכָךְ הַשְּׁאֵלָה לָמָה לֹא יִקְנֶה הָאָדָם הַהַצְּלָחָה הַנִּצְחִית עַל־יְדִי יְדִיעַת הַחָּכְמָה שֶׁעוֹמֵד עַל עַנָיָן הַטֶּבַע, וּמַהוּת הַגַּלְגַּלִים, וְהַמֵּלְאָכִים שֶׁיָּקְרְאוּ צוּרוֹת יִנְפְרָדוֹת?
And why is eternal success attained instead through knowing the laws of "The four primary categories of damages" (Bava Kama 2a), the divisions of ovens and stoves (Sanhedrin 7b), and the other laws of the Torah?	וְיָהְנֶה קוֹנֶה הַהַצְלָחָה בִּידִיעַת מִשְׁפַּט הָנֵק אַרְבָּעָה אָבוֹת נְזִיקִין (בָּבָא־קֵמָא ב, א), וּבְחָלּוּק תַּנּוּר וְכִירַיִם ?(סַנְהַדְרִין ז, ב), וּשְׁאָר מִשְׁפְּטֵי הַתּוֹרָה
For if success were attained through wisdom, it would be logical to say that the more wisdom one has, the more fitting he is to achieve eternal success.	שֶׁנָּה הָיָה שְׁאֵלָה: אָם הָיָה קוֹנֶה הַהַצְלָחָה עַל־יְדֵי חָכְמָה, הָיָה רָאוּי לוֹמַר שֶׁכָּל אֲשֶׁר הוּא יוֹתֵר חָכְמָה רָאוּי שֶׁתִּהְיֶה עַל יָדוֹ הַהַצְלָחָה הַנִּצְחִית.
But the matter is not so. Rather, success through wisdom is only when it brings about cleaving to Him, blessed is He.	אֲבָל אֵין הַדָּבָר כָּךְ, רַק הַהַצְלָחָה מֵה שֶׁעַל־יְדֵי הַחָּכְמָה יִקְנֶה הַדְּבֵקוּת בּוֹ יִתְבָּרַדְּ.
And now we must seek: which of these areas of knowledge are more fitting for divine attachment—knowledge of the spheres and the nature of the four elements, or knowledge of the laws of the Torah?	וּמֵעַתָּה נְבַקֵּשׁ, אֵיזֶה מִן הַדְּבָרִים הֵם יוֹתֵר רָאוּיִים אֶל הַדְּבּוּק הָאֱלֹהִי—אָם הַיָּדִיעָה בַּגַּלְגַּלִים וּבְמַהוּת ?אַרְבָּעָה הַיְסוֹדוֹת, אוֹ הַיְדִיעָה בְּמִשְׁפְּטֵי הַתּוֹרָה
Behold, the spheres themselves have no cleaving to Him, blessed is He—so how could one attain ultimate success through them?	וַהֲבֵי הַגַּלְגַלִים בְּעַצְמָם אֵין לָהֶם דְּבֵקוּת בּוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְּ, ?וְאִם־כֵּן אֵיךְ יִקְנֶה בָּזֶה הַהַצְלָחָה הָאַחֲרוֹנָה
And behold, among the things that are known is this: there is nothing more fitting to cleave to Him, blessed is He, than uprightness (yosher);	וְהָנֵה מִן הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הֵם יְדוּעִים, כִּי אֵין דָּבָר שֶׁהוּא יוֹתֵר רָאוּי לְהִתְדַּבֵּק בּוֹ יִתְבָּרַהְ רַק הַיּשֶׁר,
And whatever deviates from uprightness becomes distant from Him.	וַאֲשֶׁר הוּא יוֹצֵא מָן הַיּשֶׁר הוּא מָתְרַחֵק.

For regarding uprightness itself, there is no designation of departure or distance at all.	ָכִי עַל הַיֹּשֶׁר לֹא נִקְרָא שֵׁם וְצִיאָה וְלֹא שֵׁם רְחוּק כְּלָל,
Only that which departs from uprightness can be called distant or outside. In such a case, departure and remoteness apply.	ַרָק שֵׁם וְצִיאָה נִקְרָא עַל הַיּוֹצֵא מָן הַיּשֶׁר, וּבָזֶה שַׁיָּךְ יָצִיאָה וְרַחוּק,
And this uprightness is found in the Torah;	ָוְהַיֹּשֶׁר הוּא בַּתּוֹרָה;
Therefore, through Torah one attains closeness and attachment to Him, blessed is He,	וּלְפִיכָך עַל־יְדֵי הַתּוֹרָה הוּא שֶׁקוֹנֶה הַקֵרוּב וְהַחִבּוּר בּוֹ יָתִבָּרַדְּ,
Because in uprightness there is no estrangement or remoteness at all.	ָּכִי אֵין לַיַּשֶׁר וְצִיאָה כְּלָל.
And so it is through the performance of the mitzvos,	ָןכַן עַל־יְדֵי עֲשִׂיַת הַמִּצְוֹת,
Because the Torah is uprightness itself,	ָמִפְנֵי שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה הִיא הַיֹּשֶׁר בְּעַצְמוֹ,
And uprightness contains no distance; therefore, it is close to Hashem, blessed is He.	וְהַיּשֶׁר אֵין בּוֹ הָרְחוּק, וּלְכָךְ הוּא קָרוֹב אֶל הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְּ
Behold the distinction between Israel and one who engages in other wisdoms:	הָרֵי הַהֶּפְרֵשׁ שֶׁיֵשׁ בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל, לַאֲשֶׁר הוּא עוֹסֵק בִּשְׁאָר חָכְמוֹת;
For the Torah is uprightness itself, and uprightness is closeness and attachment to Him, blessed is He.	פִּי הַתּוֹרָה הִיא הַיּשֶׁר בְּעַצְמוֹ, אֲשֶׁר הַיּשֶׁר הוּא קֵרוּב וְחִבּוּר אֵלָיו יִתְבָּרַדְּ.
Whereas the other wisdoms do not contain this uprightness.	ָןאָלוּ שָׁאָר חָכְמוֹת אֵין בָּהֶם הַיֹּשֶׁר,
For even "The heavens are not pure in His eyes" (Iyov 15:15),	ָטו (אִיּוֹב טו, טו (אַיּנִין לֹא זַכּוּ בְעֵינָין),
And even "He charges His angels with folly" (Iyov 4:18),	וְאַף "בְּמַלְאָכָיו יָשִׂים חָּהֶלָה" (אִיוֹב ד, יח),
For all of them lack uprightness.	שֶׁבֶּלֶם מְחֶסְרֵי הַיֹּשֶׁר.
Therefore, engaging in those subjects lacks uprightness,	וּלְפִיכָךְ הַהַשֶּׁנָה בְּאֵלוּ דְּבָרִים, אֵין בַּהַשֶּׁנָה הַוֹּאת הַיּשֶׁר,
Because the engagement is with existents that themselves lack uprightness,	בָּאֲשֶׁר הַהַשָּׁנָה הִיא בַּנִּמְצָאִים שֶׁהֵם מְחֶסְרֵי הַיּשֶׁר,
And therefore, they do not bring a person close to Hashem, blessed is He.	וּלְכָךְ אֵינָם מְבִיאִים הַקֵּרוּב אֶל הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ.
For even if you say that the Torah deals with material matters,	ָכִּי אַף אָם תֹּאמֵר שֶׁהַתּוֹרֶה הְעַיִן בַּדְּבָרִים הַגַּשְׁמִיִם,
We have already explained this many times—this matter is not comparable.	הַלֹא בַּאַרְנוּ דָּבָר זֶה פְּעָמִים הַרְבֵּה כִּי אֵין דָּבָר זֶה דּוֹמָה
For the Torah is not interested in the <i>essence</i> of physical things themselves,	פִי אֵין הַתּוֹרָה מְעַנֶנֶת בְּמֵהוּת הַגַּשְׁמִיִּים עַצְמֶם.

Rather in the actions that a person is to perform as decreed by Hashem, blessed is He—	רָק הַמַּצְשִׂים שֶׁיִצְשֶׂה הָאָדָם מַה שֶׁגָּזַר הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרךּ,
And His decrees contain uprightness.	וּגְזֵרוֹת שֶׁלוֹ יֵשׁ בָּהֶם מִן הַיֹּשֶׁר.
But the analysis of the <i>essence</i> of things contains definite deficiency,	אֲבָל הָעִיּוּן בְּמַהוּת הַדְּבָרִים יֵשׁ בָּהֶם מִן הַחְסָרוֹן בְּוַדַּאי,
For all created things possess some degree of deficiency.	שֶׁכָּל הַנִּמְצָאִים יֵשׁ בָּהֶם מִן הַחָפָּרוֹן,
And this point will yet be clarified further soon.	וְדָבָר זֶה עוֹד יִתְבָּאֵר בְּסְמוּךְ.
And this matter is extremely insightful in understanding how through the Torah—which is uprightness—it becomes the path to cleaving to Him, blessed is He.	– וְדָבָר זֶה עַנְיָן מַפְלֶג מְאֹד לְהָבִין אֵידְּ עַל־יְדֵי הַתּוֹרָה הִיא הַיֹּשֶׁר, וְהוּא הַדָּרָךְ אֶל הַדְּבּוּק בּוֹ יִתְבָּרַדְּ.
And regarding this level and stature, they said in the chapter "Rabbi Akiva" (Shabbos 88a):	וְעַל מַדְרֵגָה וּמַעֲלָה זֹאת אֶמְרוּ בְּפֶרֶק רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא :((שַׁבָּת פח, א
That Galilean expounded before Rav Chisda: Blessed is the Merciful One who gave us a threefold Torah to a threefold people through a third-born, on the third day, in the third month.	דְּרֵשׁ הַהוּא גְלִילָאִי עֲלֵיה דְּרֵב חָסְדָּא: בְּרִידְּ רַחֲמָנָא דְיָהֵיב לָן אוּרְיָין תְּלִיתַאִי, לְעַם תְּלִיתַאִי, עַל־יְדֵי תְּלִיתָאִי, בְּיוֹם תְּלִיתַאי, בְּיַרְחָא תְּלִיתַאי.
And the explanation of this idea is that it comes to praise the	וּבָאוּר עִנְיָן זֶה, שֶׁבָּא לָתֵת שֶׁבַח אֶל
Holy One, blessed is He, for the Torah that He gave us.	יִתְבָּרֵהְ יִתְבָּרֵהְ שֶׁנָּתַן לָנוּ הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַהְ הַקָּדוֹשׁ־בָּרוּף־הוּא עַל הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁנַּתַן לָנוּ הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַהְ.
For all created beings inherently possess deficiency, since no created thing is without deficiency,	שֶׁכָּל הַנִּבְרָאִים, מִעַד שֶׁיֵשׁ בָּהֶם חָסָרוֹן, כִּי אֵין נִבְרָא בְּלֹא חִסָרוֹן,
And anything that contains deficiency also carries deviation and distance from uprightness—since it is lacking.	וְכָל בַּעַל חָפָּרוֹן יֵשׁ בּוֹ וְצִיאָה מִן הַיּשֶׁר, שֶׁהַרֵי יֵשׁ בּוֹ הָסָרוֹן.
Therefore, a person who investigates such things cannot attain perfection and elevation,	וּלְכָךְ הָאָדָם הַמְעַיִן בִּדְבָרִים כְּמוֹ אֵלּוּ, אֵינוֹ קוֹנֶה הַמַּצְלָה וְהַשָּׁלֵמוּת,
For all these things themselves are inherently deficient.	בַּמָה שֶׁכַּלָּם הֵם בַּצְלֵי חָסָרוֹן בְּעַצְמָם.
But this is not the case with the Torah,	ָרְלֹא כָּךְ הַתּוֹרָה,
For it is the decree of Hashem, blessed is He, and it is complete uprightness.	שָׁהִיא גְזֵרַת הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ, שֶׁהוּא הַיּשֶׁר לְגַמְרֵי.
And this is what he said: "Blessed is the Merciful One who gave a threefold Torah."	וְזֶה שֶׁאָמֵר: בְּרִידְ רַחְמָנָא דְּיָהֵיב אוּרְיָין תְּלִיתַאי.
For everything that is structured in a threefold manner contains uprightness, for the third element, which is in the middle, does not veer from uprightness—neither to the right nor to the left.	שֶׁכֶּל דָּבָר הַמְשָׁלָשׁ הוּא שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹ הַיּשֶׁר בַּצְבוּר הַשְׁלִישִׁי, שֶׁהוּא בָּאֶמְצַע, אֵין נוֹטֶה מָן הַיּשֶׁר לֹא לְיָמִין וְלֹא לִשְׂמֹאל.

But when there are two without a third, there is no uprightness—because there is no middle, which is the essence of uprightness.	וְכַאֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ שְׁנַיִם בְּלֹא שְׁלִישִׁי, אֵין כָּאן ישֶׁר, שֶׁאֵין כָּאן הָאֶמְצָעִי, שֶׁהוּא הַיּשֶׁר.
And so he said: "Blessed is the Merciful One who gave us a threefold Torah," meaning: the words of Torah never deviate from the upright path.	– וְקָאָמֵר: בָּרידְ רַחֲמֶנָא דְּיָהֵיב לָן אוּרְיָין תְּלִיתַאי שָׁדְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה אֵינָם יוֹצְאִים מָן הַיּשֶׁר.
And He gave it to a threefold people, those who possess uprightness.	רָנָתַן אוֹתָם לְעַם הְּלִיתַאי', לַאֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ בָּהֶם הַיֹּשֶׁר,
Because Jacob was the third among the Patriarchs, he is called <i>Yeshurun</i> (Yeshayahu 44:2), from the root <i>yosher</i> (uprightness),	וּמִפְּנֵי כִּי יַצַקֹב הָיָה הַשְׁלִישִׁי לָאָבוֹת, נִקְרָא יַצַקֹב יִיְשׁוּרוּן" (רַשַׁעְיָה מד, ב), מִלְשׁוֹן ישֶׁר,
for he was the middle between Avraham and Yitzchak.	שֶׁהוּא אָמְצָעִי בֵּין אַבְרָהָם וּבֵין יִצְחָק,
And Israel, who are the threefold people, are thus called those who possess uprightness—	ןיִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁהֵם עַם הְּלִיתַאי, מוֹרֶה שֶׁיֵשׁ בָּהֶם הַיּשֶׁר,
they are called <i>Yesharim</i> (upright ones) (Bamidbar 23:10), and also <i>Yeshurun</i> —	וְנַקְרָאִים יִשְׂרָאֵל "יִשָּׁרִים" (בְּמִדְבַּר כג, י), וְגַם "יִיִּשׁוּרוּן — ""יָשׁוּרוּן
"And He was King in Yeshurun" (Devarim 33:5).	"וְיָהִי בִישֵׁרוּן מֶלֶךְּ" (דְּבָרִים לֹג, ה").
And He gave it through the third, which is Moshe.	ָוְנָתַן אוֹתָם עַל־יְדֵי הְּלִיתָאִי', שֶׁהוּא מֹשֶׁה.
For the fact that Moshe was the third indicates that he possessed uprightness.	פִּי מַה שֶׁהָיָה משֶׁה שְׁלִישִׁי, מוֹרֶה שֶׁיֵשׁ בּוֹ הַיּשֶׁר.
And when you consider the character of Moshe, you will realize that he possessed the quality of uprightness to the highest degree.	וְכַאֲשֶׁר תַּעֲמֹד עַל מִדַּת מֹשֶׁה, תַּדַע שֶׁהָיָה בּוֹ בְּיוֹתֵר מָדַת הַיֹּשֶׁר.
For at the beginning, when he saw an Egyptian striking a Hebrew man (Shemos 2:11), he executed justice upon him—this was out of uprightness.	כִּי תְּחָלַת וְצִיאָתוֹ רָאָה אִישׁ מִצְרִי מַכָּה אִישׁ עִבְרִי (שְׁמוֹת ב, י״א), וְהָיָה עוֹשֶׂה בּוֹ דִּין. וְדָבָר זֶה מִצַּד הַיּשֶׁר.
And the next day, he said to the wicked one: "Why do you strike your fellow?" (Shemos 2:13)—this too stemmed from the uprightness in Moshe.	"וְאַחַר־כָּךְ בַּיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי אָמַר לָרָשָׁע: "לָמָה תַכֶּה רֵעֶךּ" שָׁם פָּסוּק י״ג), שֶׁבֶּל זֶה מִמִּדַּת הַיּשֶׁר שֶׁהָיָה בְּמֹשֶׁה.
And later, when he arrived in Midian, "The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moshe rose and saved them" (Shemos 2:17)—all of this from Moshe's uprightness.	וְאַחַר־כָּדְּ כְּשֶׁבָּא לְמִדְיָן: "וַיָּבֹאוּ הָרֹעִים וַיְגָרְשׁוּם, וַיָּקָם מֹשֶׁה וַיּוֹשִׁעָן" (שָׁם פָּסוּק י״ז), וְכָל זֶה מִמְדַּת הַיֹּשֶׁר.
And he said: "In the third month"—that is, the month is the third from Nissan; it is balanced and centered.	וְאָמַר: בְּיָרַח תְּלִיתַאי', שֶׁהַחֹדֶשׁ הוּא הַשְּׁלִישִׁי, בִּשְׁבִיל שָׁהַחֹדֶשׁ הוּא שְׁלִישִׁי לְנִיסָן, שָׁוֶה וּמְמֵצָע.

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For immediately after that, nature begins to veer due to the intensification of heat.	פִּי מִיָּד אַחַר־כָּךְ מַתְחִיל הַיְצִיאָה מִן הַשִּׁוּוּי בְּתִגְבֹּרֶת הַחֹם.
But during this month, the time is very balanced, and nothing veers to any extreme—and this is known.	אֲבָל בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַזָּה הַזְּמַן הוּא בְּשִׁוּוּי מְאֹד, וְלֹא יֵצֵא חוּץ לַקָּצֶה בְּשׁוּם דָּבָר, וְזֶה יָדוּעַ.
And on the third day—from the day that Hashem spoke—because the third inherently possesses the quality of uprightness, as we have said.	וּבְיוֹם תָּלִיתַאִי, מִיּוֹם שֶׁדָּבֶּר הַקָּדוֹשׁ־בָּרוּדְ־הוּא, בָּעֲבוּר כִּי הַשְּׁלִישִׁי יֵשׁ בּוֹ סְגֵלַת הַיּשֶׁר כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמַרְנוּ;
Therefore, it says (Shemos 19:11): "And be ready for the third day."	וּלְפִיכָךְ אָמַר (שְׁמוֹת י״ט, י״א): "וְהָיוּ נְכֹנִים לַיּוֹם ".הַשְּׁלִישִׁי
And all of this is for the sake of the greatness of the Torah, which is uprightness itself.	וְהַכּּל הוּא בִּשְׁבִיל מַעֲלַת הַתּוֹרָה, שֶׁהִיא הַיּשֶׁר בְּעַצְמָה.
Therefore, if Israel were not upright, it would not have been possible for the Torah—which is absolute uprightness—to be given to them.	וּלְפִיכָךְ אָם לֹא הָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל יְשָׁרִים, לֹא הָיָה אֶפְשָׁר שָׁתִּנָּתַן לָהֶם הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁהִיא הַיּשֶׁר הַגָּמוּר.
And likewise, if Moshe had not been completely aligned with uprightness, he would not have been worthy for the Torah to be given through him.	וְכֵן אָם לֹא הָיָה מֹשֶׁה מְסֵכָּל לִישֶׁר, לֹא הָיָה רַאוּי שָׁתִּנָּתֵן הַתּוֹרָה עַל יָדוֹ.
So too, the time had to be prepared accordingly.	וְכֵן הַזְּמֵן גַּם־כֵּן צָרִיךְ שֶׁיִהְיֶה מוּכָן לוֹ.

NOTE: Summary

The text establishes that true closeness to Hashem (דבקות בה') is attained *only* through the Torah, because the Torah embodies ייָשֶר (uprightness or straightness) in its purest form. All other wisdoms, such as philosophy or natural sciences, deal with creations that inherently possess הסרון (deficiency) and therefore cannot lead to complete spiritual elevation.

The Torah, by contrast, is a divine decree, completely upright and without deficiency. This uprightness is symbolized by the number three (שלושה)—a balance between extremes—and that motif is echoed in every aspect of the giving of the Torah: it was given in the third month, to a threefold people, through a third-born leader (Moshe), on the third day. Each of these elements signifies equilibrium and centrality, the core traits of ישׁר.

Moshe is held up as the paradigm of divine uprightness, consistently acting with justice and moral clarity, from his confrontation with the Egyptian to defending the daughters of Yisro in Midian. Only someone with such clarity of יישר could be the conduit for transmitting the Torah.

Even the timing of the giving of the Torah reflects this idea: the third month (Sivan) is a balanced time climatically, not leaning to heat or cold—just as the Torah is spiritually balanced.

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Thus, for the Torah—the ultimate form of divine uprightness—to be received, it required:

- 1. A nation characterized by uprightness (Yisrael/Yeshurun),
- 2. A leader embodying uprightness (Moshe), and
- 3. A time aligned with uprightness (the balanced month and day).

Key Points

- 1. True Devekus (cleaving to God) comes only through Torah, not other wisdoms.
- 2. Torah = Yosher (uprightness). It is the direct, untainted path to Hashem.
- 3. Other wisdoms lack this perfection because they deal with created entities, which by definition are deficient and not entirely upright.
- 4. The number three symbolizes balance and uprightness—neither leaning to the right nor left.
- 5. The Torah was given with the theme of "three":
 - o To a threefold people (Kohanim, Levi'im, Yisrael),
 - Through the third patriarch (Yaakov/Yeshurun),
 - o By the third child (Moshe),
 - In the third month (Sivan),
 - On the third day (preparation before Matan Torah).
- 1. Moshe's actions throughout his early life (defending the oppressed, rebuking injustice) show he was inherently aligned with the Torah's uprightness.
- 2. Time and setting had to be spiritually "straight" and balanced for the Torah to be given. **END NOTE**

For the greatness of the Torah lies in its uprightness, a quality not found in any created being.	כִּי מַעֲלַת הַתּוֹרָה מִצֵּד הַיּשֶׁר, שָׁלֹא תִּמְצָא בְּכָל הַנִּבְרָאִים.
It is proper to give praise and thanks to Hashem, blessed is He, for giving us a threefold Torah,	וְרָאוּי שֶׁיּתֵּן שֶׁבַח וְהוֹדָאָה אֶל הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְּ שֶׁנָּתַן לוֹ תּוֹרָה תְּלִיתַאי,
because this is the Torah's highest distinction: that it is uprightness itself.	כִּי זָהוּ מַעֲלָה הָעֶלְיוֹנָה עַל הַכּּל שֶׁיֵשׁ לַתּוֹרָה, בַּמֶּה שָׁהִיא הַיֹּשֶׁר.
Not so with all created beings—they all deviate from uprightness.	וְלֹא כֵן הַנְּבְרָאִים כֵּלֶּם, יֵשׁ לָהֶם וְצִיאָה מִן הַיּשֶׁר,

For the deniers of Torah lack uprightness—even if they possess all forms of knowledge.	כִּי מַכְחִישֵׁי הַתּוֹרָה אֵין לָהֶם הַיּשֶׁר; וְאַף אָם יוֹדְעִים כָּל הַחָּכְמוֹת,
As it has been clarified: "Even the heavens are not pure in His eyes" (Iyov 15:15), and "He places error in His angels" (Iyov 4:18).	ְהַרֵי הִתְבָּאֵר: "שָׁמַיִם לֹא זַכּוּ בְעֵינָיו" (אִיּוֹב טו, (טו), "וּבְמַלְאָכָיו יָשִׂים תָּהֲלָה" (אִיּוֹב ד, יח,
These are not expressions of upright perception.	ָןאֵין זֶה הַשָּׂגַת הַיּשֶׁר.
For uprightness is specifically that learning which is fitting to lead to attachment to Hashem, blessed is He.	כִּי הַיֹּשֶׁר הוּא הַהַשָּׁנָה בִּפְרָט שֶׁרָאוּי שֶׁעַל־יְדֵי זֶה יָהָיֶה חִבּוּר בְּהַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַהְ.
Therefore, whatever one attains through it—great or small—is true uprightness,	וּלְכָךְ כָּל דָּבָר שֶׁמֵּשִּׂיג בָּזֶה, הֵן גָּדוֹל הֵן קָטָן, הוּא הַיֹּשֶׁר הָאֲמִתִּי,
and through this one can cleave to Hashem, not through knowledge of other wisdoms.	וָרָאוּי שֶׁיּהָיֶה עַל־יְדֵי זֶה הַדְּבֵקוּת בּוֹ יִתְבָּרַדְּ, לֹא בִּידִיעַת שְׁאָר הַחָּכְמָה.
As it is alluded to (Niddah 73a): "Whoever reviews halachos is assured to be a son of the World to Come," as we explained above.	וּכְמוֹ שֶׁרָמְזוּ בָּזֶה (נִדָּה עג, א): כָּל שֶׁשׁוֹנֶה הַלָּכוֹת מֵבְטָח שֶׁהוּא בֶּן עוֹלָם הַבָּא, וּכְמוֹ שֶׁפַּרַשְׁנוּ לְמַעְלָה.
Therefore, it is through Torah and mitzvos that one should acquire the World to Come, and nothing else, in addition to what we already explained above.	לְכָדְ הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמָּצְוֹת עַל יָדָם רָאוּי שֶׁיִּקְנֶה עוֹלָם הַבָּא, וְלֹא זוּלָת זָה, נוֹסָף עַל הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁפֵּרַשְׁנוּ לְמַעְלָה.
And there is no distinction whether the study is in great or	
small matters; what matters is the value and stature of the learning,	וְאֵין חָלּוּק בֵּין שֶׁהָעִיּוּן הוּא בְּדָבָר גָּדוֹל אוֹ בְּדָבָר קָטָן, רַק דָּבָר זֶה הוּא חֲשִׁיבוּת וּמַעֲלַת
small matters; what matters is the value and stature of the	
small matters; what matters is the value and stature of the learning, as long as one is engaged with the decree of Hashem upon His	קטָן, רַק דָּבָר זָה הוּא חֲשִׁיבוּת וּמַצְלַת הַהַשָּׁנָה, כַּאֲשֶׁר עוֹסֵק בְּגְזֵרַת הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ עַל
small matters; what matters is the value and stature of the learning, as long as one is engaged with the decree of Hashem upon His creations, in which uprightness resides. And this is the ultimate highest stature, and it is fitting to offer	קטָן, רַק דָּבָר זָה הוּא חֲשִׁיבוּת וּמַצְלַת הַהַשֶּׁנָה, פַּאֲשֶׁר עוֹסֵק בְּגְּזֵרַת הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ עַל בְּרוּאָיו, שֶׁיֵשׁ בָּהֶם הַיּשֶׁר. וְזָהוּ תַּכְלִית הַמַּצְלָה הָעֶלְיוֹנָה, וְרָאוּי שֶׁיִּהְיָה
small matters; what matters is the value and stature of the learning, as long as one is engaged with the decree of Hashem upon His creations, in which uprightness resides. And this is the ultimate highest stature, and it is fitting to offer the greatest praise for this. If so, what wonder is there in saying that success is acquired by a person through the Torah—because of the uprightness in the	קְטָן, רַק דָּבָר זֶה הוּא חֲשִׁיבוּת וּמַצְלַת הַהַשֶּׁנָה, כַּאֲשֶׁר עוֹסֵק בְּגְזֵרת הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְּ עַל הַרּאָיו, שָׁיֵשׁ בָּהֶם הַיּשֶׁר. וְזָהוּ תַּכְלִית הַמַּעֲלָה הָעֶלְיוֹנָה, וְרָאוּי שֶׁיִּהְיָה הַשֶּׁבַח הַגָּדוֹל עַל זֶה וְאִם כֵּן, מַהוּ הַמְּמִיהָה עַל זֶה לוֹמֵר שֶׁהַהַצְלָּחָה

But all other things, because they are lacking in uprightness, possess deviation and distance.	אֲבָל שְׁאָר הַדְּבָרִים, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהֵם מְחֻפָּרִים הַיֹּשֶׁר, יֵשׁ בָּהֶם יְצִיאָה וְרַחוּק,
And this is already clearly explained.	וָדָבָר זֶה מְבֹאָר בְּיוֹתֵר.
It is impossible that uprightness should exist in any created being in and of itself;	ָוְאִי אָפְשָׁר שֶׁיִהְיֶה הַיּשֶׁר בְּשׁוּם נִמְצָא בְּצַד עַצְמוֹ,
Therefore, study of anything else does not grant the attainment of uprightness—except for the Torah, which is uprightness.	אָם־כֵּן הַהַשֶּׁנָה בּוֹ אֵין בּוֹ הַשָּׁגַת הַיּשֶׁר, חוּץ מָן הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁהִיא הַיּשֶׁר.
Behold then the matter of Torah: it is fitting that success should come through the Torah specifically, and not through anything else—	הָרֵי לְּךּ עִנְיָן הַתּוֹרָה, שֶׁרָאוּי שֶׁתִּהְיֶה הַהַּצְלָחָה יָעַל־יְדֵי הַתּוֹרָה דַּוְקָא, וְלֹא בְּזוּלַת זָה;
whether through the performance of mitzvos of the Torah, which are uprightness,	הָן בְּמַעֲשֵׂה מִצְוֹת הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁהֵם הַיּשֶׁר,
or through comprehension of the Torah, which is uprightness itself—	ָאוֹ בְּהַשָּׁגַת הַתּוֹרָה שָׁהִיא הַיּשֶׁר בְּעַצְמוֹ,
for both lead to closeness and cleaving to Him, blessed is He.	ּוְהַם הַקַּרוּב וְהַדִּפּוּק בּוֹ יִתְבָּ <u>ר</u> ק.
The second reason why it is more fitting that success should come through the Torah rather than through anything else:	הָעִנְיָן הַשֵׁנִי אֲשֶׁר יוֹתֵר רָאוּי שֶׁתִּהְיֶה הַהַצְּלְּחָה עַל־יְדֵי הַתּוֹרָה, מִפָּה שֶׁתִּהְיֶה בְּזוּלַת זֶה.
It is known that the greatness of study depends on the greatness of the subject.	פַּאֲשֶׁר נוֹדַע כִּי מַעֲלַת הַהַשָּׁנָה לְפִי מַעֲלַת הַנּוֹשֵׂא.
For if one were to increase wisdom and intention in the craft of shoemaking, adding much intellectual depth, it would amount to nothing—because the subject itself is worthless.	שֶׁאָם הָיָה מַרְבֶּה חָכְמָה וְכַוּנָה בִּמְלָאכֶת הָרַצְעָנוּת, וְהָיָה מוֹסִיף דִּבְרֵי חָכְמָה מְאֹד, אֵין זֶה נֶחְשָׁב לָכְלוּם, כִּי אֵין הַנּוֹשֵׂא שֶׁל כְּלוּם.
Similarly, if someone learns wisdom and understanding about the elements and celestial spheres, the subject in and of itself is insignificant—	ְוְכֵן אָם הוּא לָמוּד חָכְמָה וּבִינָה בְּעִנְיָן הַיְסוֹדוֹת וְהַגַּלְגַּלִים, אֵין הַנּוֹשֵׂא מִצַּד עַצְמוֹ נֶחְשָׁב,
for all created beings in the world do not possess complete perfection.	שֶׁכָּל הַנִּבְרָאִים בָּעוֹלָם אֵין בָּהֶם הַשְּׁלֵמוּת הַגָּמוּר;
Therefore, when one acquires knowledge in these areas, whose subjects are not inherently lofty, this cannot be a person's ultimate success.	וּלְפִיכָהְ כַּאֲשֶׁר קוֹנָה הַיְדִיעָה בְּאֵלוּ דְּבָרִים שֶׁאֵין מַעֲלְחָם בְּעַצְמָם כָּל־כָּהְ, אִי אֶפְשָׁר שֶׁיִהְיָה זָה הַצְלָחָתוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם הָאַחָרוֹנָה.
But the Torah, which is the ways of Hashem, blessed is He, and His decrees which He has issued—	אֲבָל הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁהִיא דַּרְכֵי הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְּ, וּגְזֵרוֹתִיו אֲשֶׁר גָזַר הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ

And consider this: when one acquires knowledge in the four principal categories of damages (Arba Avos Nezikin)—this means he acquires knowledge in ox and pit—or if he gains understanding in matters of man and his conduct alone—	וְאֵל יַחְשֹׁב כַּאֲשֶׁר קוֹנֶה הַיְדִּיעָה בְּאַרְבַּע אֲבוֹת נְזִיקִין, שֶׁהוּא קוֹנֶה הַיְדִּיעָה בְּשׁוֹר וּבוֹר, אוֹ שֶׁקָנָה יְדִּיעָה בְּעִנְיַן הָאָדָם וּבְהַנְהָגָתוֹ בִּלְבַד.
It might seem to you that greater stature lies in acquiring knowledge of the celestial spheres and similar created things.	וְיִקְשֶׁה לְדּ כִּי הָיָה יוֹתֵר בְּמַדְרֵגָה כַּאֲשֶׁר יִקְנֶה יִדִּיעַת הַגַּלְגַל, וְכַיּוֹצֵא בָּזֶה מִן הַנִּמְצָאִים.
That question would be difficult—if acquiring knowledge of man himself and what relates to man were the goal.	דָּבֶר זֶה הָיָה קַשְׁיָא אָם הָיָה קוֹנֶה יְדִּיעָה בָּאָדָם עַצְמוֹ, וְהַמַּגִּיעַ אֶל הָאָדָם, אָז הָיָה אֶפְשָׁר לְשְׁאוֹל קַשְׁיָא זֹאת.
But the Torah is a decree from Hashem, blessed and exalted is His Name—	אֲבָל הַתּוֹרָה הִיא גְּזַרָה מִן הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִתְעַלֶּה שָׁמוֹ
and it is above man—just as the entire Torah is above man—for it is a decree that transcends him.	ְהָיא לְעַל עַל הָאָדָם, כְּמוֹ שֶׁהִיא כָּל הַתּוֹרָה כֵּלָה, שֶׁהִיא גְּזֵרָה וְעַל עַל הָאָדָם.
Therefore, when a person acquires knowledge in even one section such as the four Avos Nezikin, or similar laws of Torah,	לְכָךְ כַּאֲשֶׁר יִקְנֶה הָאָדָם הַיְדִיעָה בְּהֶוּק אַרְבָּעָה אֲבוֹת נְזִיקִין, וְכַיּוֹצֵא בּוֹ מִמְּשְׁפְּטֵי הַתּוֹרָה,
it is considered that he has acquired knowledge of Hashem's exalted decree upon man's behavior.	נֶחְשָׁב זֶה שֶׁקֶנָה הַיְדִּיעָה בִּגְּזֵרַת הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַדְּ וְיִתְעַלֶּה שְׁמוֹ, אֲשֶׁר גָּזַר עַל הָאָדָם הַנְהָגָתוֹ.
And this is the great difference between Torah knowledge and knowledge of the spheres and elements themselves:	ָוְזֶהוּ הַהֶּפְרֵשׁ הַגָּדוֹל שֶׁיֵשׁ בֵּין יְדִיעַת הַתּוֹרָה, וְהַיְדִּיעָה בְּעִנְיַן הַגַּלְגַּלִים וְהַיְסוֹדוֹת עַצְמָן.
These created things themselves are not truly elevated, for "even the heavens are not pure in His eyes" (Iyov 15:15), and "He places error in His angels" (Iyov 4:18)—	כִּי עַצְמָן שֶׁל דְּבָרִים אֵלּוּ אֵינָם כָּל־כָּךְ בְּמַדְרֵגָה, כִּי אַף שָׁמַיִם לֹא זַכּוּ בְּעֵינָיו" (אִיּוֹב טו, טו), וְגַם"), נ"בַּמַּלְאָכִים יָשִׂים תָּהֶלָה" (אִיּוֹב ד, יח,
so one has not acquired anything of real spiritual stature through them.	וְאָם־כֵּן לֹא קָנָה דְּבַר מַעֲלָה כְּלָל.
But knowledge in Torah—even if it is in ox or donkey, or in other things that are not important in themselves—	אֲבָל הַיְדִּיעָה בַּתּוֹרָה, אַף אָם הַיְדִּיעָה בְּשׁוֹר וַחֲמוֹר, וּבִשְׁאָר דְּבָרֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר אֵינָם חֲשׁוּבִים בְּצַד עַצְמָם,
the value of that learning does not lie in the matter itself,	אֵין הַמַּדְרַגָּה שֶׁל הַשָּׁנָה הַזֹּאת בְּצַד עַצְמָם,
rather, it lies in the fact that these are Hashem's	רָק] בְּצַד שֶׁדְּבָרִים אֵלוּ הֵם גְּזֵרַת הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַדְ
decrees—exalted is His Name—upon His creations.	וְיָתְעַלֶּה שְׁמוֹ עַל הַבְּרוּאִים,
And this is the spiritual stature of such knowledge.	ָן וֶהוּ מַדְרֵגַת הַיְדִּיעָה הַוֹּאת.
And even though we said that the entire Torah and its	וָאַף כִּי אָמַרְנוּ כִּי הַתּוֹרָה כֻּלָּה וּמִצְוֹתֶיהָ הֵם חָקִּים
commandments are statutes and laws relevant to man,	וּמִשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר לָאָדָם שֵׁיָּכִים,
and even though we said that Hashem, blessed and exalted is His	אַף כִּי אָמַרְנוּ כִּי לֹא אִכְפַּת אֶל הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַדְ
Name, has no interest in whether one slaughters from the neck	ְוִתְעַלֶּה שְׁמוֹ אָם שׁוֹחֵט מִן הַצַּוָּאר אוֹ מִן הָעֹרֶף,
or from the nape—only that this is what is fitting for man—	רַק כִּי כָּדְ רָאוּי אֶל הָאָדָם.

Nevertheless, everything is ordered by Hashem, blessed and exalted is He, arranged by Him.	מָכָּל מָקוֹם הַכּּל מְסֵדָּר הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַדְּ וְיִתְעַלֶּה שְׁמוֹ, אֲשֶׁר סֵדֶר מֵאָתּוֹ יִתְבָּרַדְּ
And in this regard, one who engages in Torah is one who engages in the divine order arranged by Hashem,	וּמִצַּד הַזֶּה, הָעוֹסֵק בַּתּוֹרָה הוּא הָעוֹסֵק בַּפַּדָר אֲשֶׁר ,סִדֵּר הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ
and this is not something based in man at all.	וְאֵין זָה דָּבָר מִצַּד הָאָדָם.
On the contrary, the decree is above man.	וְאַדְרַבָּה, הַגְּזֵרָה הִיא עַל עַל הָאָדָם.
Therefore, this knowledge is not considered as knowledge one acquires about man, but rather knowledge of the decree of Hashem and His divine system.	אָם־כֵּן, אֵין הַיְדִּיעָה הַזֹּאת מִתְיַחֶסֶת שֶׁיִקְנֶה יְדִּיעָה בָּאָדָם, רַק הַיְדִּיעָה בִּגְּזֵרַת הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַדְּ וְסֵדָר שֶׁלּוֹ.
And this is the opposite of acquiring knowledge about the celestial spheres, where one gains knowledge of the things themselves—which is not a lofty spiritual level at all.	ְוָדֶבֶר זֶה הָפוּךּ כַּאֲשֶׁר יִקְנֶה הַיְדִּיעָה בַּגַּלְגַּלִים, שָׁהוּא בִּידִיעַת עַצְמָן, וְאֵין זֶה מַדְרֵגַת מַעֲלָה כְּלָל.
And when a person thinks that by analyzing the essence of the elements, the plants, and the living beings, he has attained a great level—	וּמַה שֶׁהָאָדָם חוֹשֵׁב כִּי כַּאֲשֶׁר עוֹמֵד עַל מַהוּת הַיְסוֹדוֹת וְהַצְּמָחִים וּבַעֲלֵי חַיִּים, שֶׁקָנָה מַדְרֵגָה ,גְּדוֹלָה
this is only because this matter is hidden from people.	ָזֶה הוּא בִּשְׁבִיל שֶׁהַדָּבָר הַזֶּה נָעְלָם מִבְּנֵי אָדָם,
And he thinks that since he has mastered a form of knowledge that is not easy, he has achieved something very great—because the knowledge is obscure.	וְחוֹשֵׁב כַּאֲשֶׁר הִשִּּיג הַהַשֶּׁנָה שֶׁאֵינָה קַלָּה, הִשִּּיג לָדָבָר גָּדוֹל מָאֹד, לְהָעָלַם הַהַשָּׁנָה.
But this is not the case.	ָןאֵין הַדְּבֶר כָּדְ;
For if so, one who attained deep expertise in carpentry—something others cannot do—would also be considered as having attained something lofty.	שָׁאִם־כֵּן, מִי שֶׁהָשִּׂיג הַשָּׁנָה עֲמֻקָּה בְּנַגָּרוּת, שֶׁלֹּא הָיו יְכוֹלִים לַעֲשׂוֹת שְׁאָר בְּנֵי אָדָם,
And we would say likewise that he reached something great—but that is not the case.	יוֹמֵר גַּם־כֵּן בָּזֶה שֶׁהִגִּיעַ לְדָבָר גָּדוֹל, וְזֶה אֵינוֹ.
And from here, what comparison is there between the words of Torah and knowledge of all created things?	וּמֵעַתָּה מַה דְּמְיוֹן יֵשׁ לְדִבְרֵי תּוֹרָה אֶל הַיְדִּיעָה בִּנְּבָרָאִים כֻּלָּם?
Can that which is acted upon be compared to the One who acts?	וְכִי מִתְדַּמֶּה הַפְּעוּל אֶל אֲשֶׁר פְּעָלוֹ?
For knowledge of all created things is merely knowledge of the created being and its essence, which holds no intrinsic spiritual level—	כִּי הַיְדִּיעָה בְּכָל הַנִּבְרָאִים הִיא יְדִיעַת הַנִּבְרָא הַהוּא וּמַהוּתוֹ, שָׁאֵין בָּזֶה מַדְרֵגָה שֶׁל כְּלוּם,
unless this knowledge is acquired for the purpose of recognizing the One who created all.	רַק אָם קָנָה הַיְדִּיעָה בָּהֶן לָעֲמֹד עַל הַפּּוֹעֵל שֶׁבָּרָא הַכּּל.

For in the end, knowledge of the created being is only as it is a creation from the Creator, blessed and exalted is His Name.	ןסוֹף סוֹף, הַיִּדִּיעָה בַּנִּבְרָא – בַּמָּה שֶׁהוּא נִבְרָא מִן הַבּוֹרֵא יִתְבָּרַךְ וִיִתְעַלֶּה שְׁמוֹ.
But knowledge of the Torah is knowledge of the decree of the King, Hashem Tzevakos Himself.	'אֲבָל יְדִיעַת הַתּוֹרָה, הִיא הַיְדִּיעָה בִּגְּזַרַת הַמֶּלֶךְ ה צְבָאוֹת עַצְמוֹ
And even though it is called the Torah of man, that is only in regard to the receiver of the decree.	ָוְאָם כִּי הִיא תּוֹרַת הָאָדָם, זֶהוּ מִצַּד הַמְקַבֵּל הַגְּזֵרָה.
But the decree itself is the decree of Hashem, blessed and exalted is He—and this is not considered knowledge of a created being at all.	אֲבֶל הַגְּזֵרָה עַצְמָה, גְּזַרַת הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַהְּ וְיִתְעַלֶּה שְׁמוֹ תִּקָּרֵא, וְהִנָּה זָה לֹא נִקְרָא הַיְדִּיעָה בַּנִּבְרָא כְּלָל
Therefore, we say that if one acquires knowledge of the essence of man and his limbs, and everything that relates to man,	לָכֵן אָנוּ אוֹמְרִים שֶׁאָם יִקְנֶה הַיְדִּיעָה בְּמַהוּת הָאָדָם וּבְאֵבָרָיו, וּבְכָל אֲשֶׁר מַגִּיעַ אֶל הָאָדָם,
that knowledge is of no consequence unless it serves to know the work of the One who fashioned all.	אֵין הַיְדִּיעָה שֶׁל כְּלוּם, אָם לֹא יִהְיֶה רַק כְּדֵי לָדַעַת פּוֹעַל יוֹצֵר הַכֹּל.
But when one acquires knowledge in the law of ovens and stoves (Sanhedrin 7b), he acquires eternal success.	וְכַאֲשֶׁר יַשִּׂיג הַיְדִּיעָה בְּמִשְׁפָּט תַּנּוּר וְכִירַיִם (סַנְהֶדְרִין ז, ב), הוּא יִקְנֶה הַצְלָחָה נִצְחִית.
And the difference between these two types of knowledge is well known to every wise and understanding person.	וָהֶפְרֵשׁ דָּבָר זֶה יִדוּעַ לְכָל אִישׁ חָכָם מַשְׂכִּיל;
For knowledge of man himself is not all that significant.	פִּי יְדִיעַת הָאָדָם בְּעַצְמוֹ אֵינָהּ נָחְשֶׁבֶת כָּל־כָּהְ.
But knowledge of human law is knowledge of Hashem's decrees, and it does not pertain to man but to the King, Hashem, who issues the decree as a king issues a command from His kingship.	וְהַיְדִּיעָה בְּמִשְׁפְּטֵי הָאָדָם, הִיא הַיְדִּיעָה בִּגְּזֵרוֹתָיו יִתְבָּרַךְּ, אֲשֶׁר אֵין זֶה מִתְיַחֵס אֶל הָאָדָם, כִּי אִם אֶל הַמֶּלֶךְ ה', אֲשֶׁר גּוֹזֵר גְּזֵרָה זֹאת כְּמֶלֶךְ הַגּוֹזֵר מִצַּד מַלְכוּתוֹ, וְאֵלָיו מִתְיַחֵס,
And this is the spiritual stature of knowledge in the mitzvos.	ָן זֶהוּ מַעֲלַת הַיְדִּיעָה בַּמִּצְוֹת.
Therefore, in all forms of wisdom where the intellect is attached to materiality, the comprehension is not complete—since it is dependent on the physical.	לָכֵן, בַּמָּה שֶׁכָּל הַשָּׁגַת הַחָּכְמָה הוּא מְצֹרָף אֶל הַחֹמֶר אֲשֶׁר הִשִּׁיג בּוֹ, וְאֵין זֶה מַשְׂכָּל גָּמוּר, שֶׁהָרֵי הוּא נִסְמָךְ אֶל הַחֹמֶר.
And even when one comprehends the angels, who are separate from physicality, it is still impossible that they should be entirely disconnected from some trace of material attachment.	וְאַף כַּאֲשֶׁר הוּא מַשִּׂיג בַּמַּלְאָכִים, שֶׁהֵם נִבְדָּלִים מָן הַגַּשְׁמוּת, אִי אָפְשָׁר שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה אַף לַמַּלְאָכִים שׁוּם צרוף אֶל הַחֹמֶר.
For the level of absolute abstraction from physicality exists only in Hashem, blessed is He, who is holy and completely removed from matter.	פִּי מַדְרֵגָה זוֹ – שָׁהִיא הַפְּשָׁטָה מָן הַחֹמֶּר לְגַמְרֵי – אֵינָה כִּי אָם אֶל הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ, שֶׁהוּא קָדוֹשׁ, נִבְדָּל מִן הַחֹמֶר לְגַמְרֵי.

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Therefore, we sanctify Hashem by saying "Kadosh," meaning: He alone is separate and holy, removed from all matter.	וּלְכָךְ מַקְדִּישִׁין אֶת הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ לוֹמֵר קָדוֹשׁ, כְּלוֹמַר: שֶׁהוּא יִתְבָּרַךְ בִּלְבַד נִבְדָּל וְקָדוֹשׁ מִן הַחֹמֵר.
And this is the meaning of sanctification in all places.	ָּרָבֶר עָנְיָן הַקְּדָּשָׁה בְּכֶל מָקוֹם. וְזֶהוֹ עָנְיָן הַקְדָּשָׁה בְּכֶל מָקוֹם.
Therefore, even knowledge of the angels is not pure intellect, for it cannot be entirely detached from matter.	וּלְפִיכָךְ אַף הַהַשָּׂנָה בַּמַּלְאָכִים אֵינָה שֵׂכֶל גָּמוּר פָּשׁוּט שֶׁלֹא יִהְיֶה צֵרוּף אֶל הַחֹמֶר.
Even if they have no body, they still possess some level associated with physicality.	כִּי אַף אָם אֵינָם בְּגוּף, יֵשׁ לָהֶם בְּחִינָה מָה מְצֹרֶפֶת אֶל הַגוּף.
And if angels were entirely removed from physicality, G-d forbid to say so—for then what distinction would remain between them and the Most High, blessed is He?	וְאָם הָיוּ הַמַּלְאָכִים נִבְדָּלִים לְגַמְרֵי מִן הַגּוּף, חַס וְשֶׁלוֹם לוֹמֵר כָּךְ; שֶׁאִם־כֵּן, מֶה הָיָה הֶבְדֵּל בֵּינֵיהֶם ?וּבֵין הָעֶלְיוֹן יִתְבָּרַךְ
But the Torah, as a decree from Hashem, blessed is He, is not dependent on anything. It is pure wisdom. It is holy Torah.	אֲבָל הַתּוֹרָה, בַּמָּה שֶׁהִיא גְּזֵרַת הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךּ, אֵינָה נִסְמֶכֶת עַל שׁוּם דָּבָר, וְהִיא חָכְמָה בִּלְבַד, וְהִיא תוֹרָה קְדוֹשָׁה.
And even though the Torah connects to material matters, that is of no significance.	וְאַף כִּי הַתּוֹרָה נִסְמֶכֶת אֶל הַדְּבָרִים הַגַּשְׁמִיִּים, זֶה אֵינוֹ כְּלוּם.
For if the mitzvos of the Torah were binding due to the material itself—like the ox's logic being compelled by the ox—then it would be possible to say such a thing.	כִּי אָלוּ הָיוּ מִצְוֹת הַתּוֹרָה בְּעִנְיָן זֶה, שֶׁהָיָה מִשְׁפַּט הַשׁוֹר מִתְחַיֵב מִן הַשׁוֹר, כְּמוֹ שֶׁמִּתְחַיֵב מֶשְׂכַּל הַשׁוֹר מִן הַשׁוֹר בְּעַצְמוֹ, הָיָה אֶפְשָׁר לוֹמֵר כָּךְ.
But the laws of the Torah are binding from Hashem, blessed is He, who decrees the Torah's rulings upon man: that he should behave thus and thus.	אֲבָל מִשְׁפְּטֵי הַתּוֹרָה מִתְחַיְּבִים מִן הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךּ, הַגּוֹזֵר גְּזַרַת הַתּוֹרָה עַל הָאָדָם שֶׁיִּנְהֵג כָּךּ וְיִנְהֵג כָּדְּ.
This does not derive from the material itself—it is the decree of the King, and not merely a function of the material world.	דָּבָר זֶה אֵינוֹ נִסְמָךְ עַל דָּבָר גַּשְׁמִי, רַק שֶׁהֵם גְּזֵרוֹת עַל הָאָדָם מִן הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרֵךְ, לֹא מִן הַדָּבָר הַגַּשְׁמִי בִּלְבַד, כְּמוֹ שֶׁהִתְבָּאֵר לְמַעְלָה.
For the mitzvos of the Torah are decrees from Hashem based on His ultimate truth, as we explained above.	כִּי מִצְוֹת הַתּוֹרָה, גְזֵרָה מִן הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ מִצַּד אֲמִתָּתוֹ, וּכְמוֹ שֶׁהֶאֱרַכְנוּ לְמַעְלָה.
Thus, the Torah is pure intellect not dependent on anything, because it is Hashem's decree.	וַהַרֵי הַתּוֹרָה שֵׂכֶל בִּלְתִּי נִסְמֶךְ עַל דָּבָר, לְפִי שֶׁהִיא גְזַרַת הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְּ
Therefore, even though the mitzvos are in physical matters, their bond is not with the physical itself, since they do not arise from the material, but are the decree of the King who is above all.	וּלְפִיכָךּ, אַף כִּי הַמִּצְוֹת הֵם בַּדְּבָרִים הַגַּשְׁמִיִּים, אֵין לָהֶם יִחוּס אֶל הַגַּשְׁמִי, אַחַר שְׁהֵם אֵינָם מִצֵּד הַדָּבָר הַגַּשְׁמִי, רַק שָׁהוּא גְּזֵרַת הַמֶּלֶךְ לְעַל עָלָיו.

[NOTE: Summary

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This concluding section distinguishes Divine Torah wisdom from all other forms of knowledge, including that of angels and natural philosophy. It explains that all non-Torah knowledge is either rooted in or dependent upon materiality—even the loftiest creations such as angels retain some association with form or limitation.

In contrast, Torah wisdom is entirely distinct. It is not a derivative of the material world but a direct decree of Hashem, who is completely separate from creation. Even when Torah relates to physical entities (like laws of an ox or oven), those laws do not emerge from the nature of the physical object but are superimposed by Divine command.

Thus, the value of Torah and mitzvos is not due to their content or form, but due to the source: they come directly from the will of the King, Hashem. This is what makes Torah a pure, holy, unembodied intellect—a completely transcendent and eternal truth, unmatched by any other domain of wisdom or philosophy.

Key Points

- 1. All non-Torah wisdom (even knowledge of angels) is connected to materiality and thus limited.
- 2. True abstraction from matter exists only in Hashem, who is absolutely holy and separate.
- 3. The holiness of Torah is not in the subject it discusses but in the fact that it is a Divine decree.
- 4. Even though mitzvos involve physical things, their origin and authority come from Hashem, not from the material world itself.
- 5. Torah law is not logically or naturally compelled from objects (e.g., an ox doesn't "cause" its halacha); it is commanded by Hashem.
- 6. Therefore, Torah is pure intellect, unbound by form or matter—a spiritual reality above creation.
- 7. Engaging in Torah connects one not to creation, but to the Creator Himself, since it is His revealed will. **END NOTE**]

And even if you say that it is also possible to have understanding and intellect in the framework through which Hashem, blessed is He, ordered all the created things—

וְאַף אִם אַתָּה אוֹמַר שָׁגַּם־כֵּן אָפְשָׁר שֶׁיִּהְיֶה מַשְּׁכִּיל וּמֵבִין בַּחֲדַר אֲשֶׁר סִדַּר הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרֵךְ אֶת הַנִּמְצָאִים כָּלָם,

and if man likewise understands other things, he also understands the structure Hashem created—

וְאָם־כֵּן גַּם־כֵּן כַּאֲשֶׁר מֵבִין בַּשְׁאָר דְּכָרִים, הוּא מֵבִין גַּם־כֵּן בָּסַדֵּר הַשָּׁם יִתִּבָּרַדְּ.

there is still a difference: that framework is the framework of the lowly things themselves that Hashem, blessed is He, created and ordered.	חָלּוּק יֵשׁ: כִּי אוֹתוֹ סֵדֶר – הוּא בְּעַצְמוֹ, הֵם הַדְּבָרִים הַתַּחָתוֹנִים אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרֵדְ וְסִדֵּר אוֹתָם.
Ultimately, the understanding is in those things and their structure for sustaining existence.	ןסוֹף סוֹף, הַהַשֶּׂנָה הִיא בְּאוֹתָם הַדְּבָרִים וּסֵדֶר קִיּוּמָם.
And although Hashem, blessed is He, arranged them, that arrangement pertains to the things themselves.	וְאַף כִּי הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרֵךְּ סִדֵּר אוֹתָם, הֲרֵי הַסֵּדֶר הַזָּה שַׁיָּךְ לְעַצְמָם, עַל אוֹתָם דְּבָרִים.
But this is not so with the Torah. Although the Torah is a system for human action, the Torah is above man.	מַה שֶׁאֵין כֵּן בַּתּוֹרָה. אַף וַדַּאי שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה הִיא סֵדֶר הָאָדָם, אֵין סֵדֶר הַזָּה שֶׁכָּךְּ רָאוּי לַעֲשׁוֹת לָאָדָם שֶׁהוּא בַּעַל חֹמֶר וְנָפֶשׁ.
On the contrary, the entire Torah is above man.	אַדְרַבָּה, כָּל הַתּוֹרָה הִיא לְעַל עַל הָאָדָם.
And since the Torah is above the physical man, the structure does not relate to the material at all.	וּמֵאַחַר שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה הִיא לְעַל עַל הָאָדָם הַגַּשְׁמִי, אָם־כֵּן אֵין הַפַּדֶר מִתְיַחֵס אֶל הַחֹמֶר כְּלָל.
Rather, this structure is proper for the intellectual human inasmuch as the intellect within him accepts Hashem's decree upon him.	רַק כִּי הַסַּדֶר הַזֶּה הוּא שֶׁכָּךְ רָאוּי אָל הָאָדָם הַשֵּׂכְלִי, מָצֵד הַשֵּׂכֶל שָׁבּוֹ מְקַבֵּל גְּזֵרַת הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ עָלָיו.
And this is not called the structure of nature.	ןלא נְקָרָא זָה סַדֶּר הַטֶּבַע.
We already said above that the Torah, which is a structure for the actions man shall perform, is intellect.	וּכְבָר אָמִרְנוּ לְךָּ כִּי הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁהִיא סֵדֶר מַעֲשֵׂה הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה הָאָדָם, הֵם שֵׂכְלִים.
For although man is connected to nature, his actions are not based in nature—as we elaborated at length—and understand this well.	כִּי אַף שֶׁהָאָדָם הוּא מִתְיַחֵס אֶל הַטֶּבַע, מִכֶּל מָקוֹם מַצְשָׂיו בְּלִי מִתְיַחֲסִים אֶל הַטֶּבַע, כְּמוֹ שֶׁהָאֱרַכְנוּ מְאֹד, וְהָבֵן דָּבָר זֶה.
If so, Torah is absolute intellect, and for this reason Torah is called "light"—as it says (Mishlei 6), "For a commandment is a lamp and Torah is light."	וְאָם־כֵּוְ, הַתּוֹרָה הִיא שֵׂכֶל גָּמוּר, וּבִשְׁבִיל טַעַם זֶה תִּקְרָא הַתּוֹרָה 'אוֹר' שֶׁנָּאֱמַר (משלי ו): כִּי נֵר מִצְוָה וְתוֹרָה אוֹר.
The explanation: the individual mitzvah is like a lamp, which is specific, but the Torah in its totality is a great light.	פֵּרוּשׁ, כִּי הַמִּצְוָה הַפְּרָטִית הִיא כְּמוֹ נֵר, שֶׁהוּא בְּרָטִי, וְהַתּוֹרָה בִּכְלָלָה הִיא אוֹר גָּדוֹל.
And light is further removed from material than a lamp, since a lamp is a small, individual entity and does not contain the full spectrum of light.	ְוָהָאוֹר רָחוֹק מָן הַחֹמֶר יוֹתֵר מָן הַנֵּר, מָפְּנֵי קַטְנוּתוֹ שֶׁהוּא נֵר יְחִידִי, אֵין בּוֹ מַדְרֵגֶת הָאוֹר כָּל כָּךְ.
But light, which is not a particular thing, has a greater degree of abstraction and is more pure intellect.	אֲכָל הָאוֹר, שֶׁאֵינוֹ דָּכָר פְּרָטִי, יֵשׁ לוֹ מַדְרֵגָה יוֹתֵר, וְהוּא פָּשׁוּט יוֹתֵר.

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Therefore, the Torah as a whole is more abstract intellect.	וּלְפִיכָךְ, הַתּוֹרָה בִּכְלָלָה – שֵׂכֶל פָּשׁוּט יוֹתֵר.
The Torah is not composed of separate segments, each mitzvah standing alone, but all the mitzvos of Torah connect to one unified intellect.	שָׁאֵין הַתּוֹרָה חֲלוּקָה כָּל מִצְוָה וּמִצְוָה לְפְנֵי עַצְמָה, רַק כָּל הַמִּצְוֹת שֶׁבָּה מִתְחַבְּרִים אֶל מַשְׂכֵּל אֶחָד בָּשׁוּט.
Therefore, the Torah as a whole is called "light," because it is more abstract and unified.	וּלְפִיכָךְ, כָּל הַתּוֹרָה תִּקְרֵא 'אוֹר', שֶׁהוּא פָּשׁוּט יוֹתֵר.
But the mitzvah, which is an individualized attainment, does not possess the simplicity of intellect as much—	אֲבָל הַמִּצְוָה שֶׁהִיא הַשָּׂגָה יְחִידִית, וְאֵין מַשְׂכָּל הַמִּצְוָה הַיְחִידִית פָּשׁוּט כָּל־כָּךְ,
for the greater the intellect, the greater is its simplicity.	[פִי] לְפִי גֹדֶל הַמֵּשְׂכָּל, הוּא פְּשִׁיטוּתוֹ].
And therefore the mitzvah is called "lamp," and the Torah is called "light."	וּלְכָךְ, הַמִּצְוָה נִקְרֵאת נֵר , וְהַתּוֹרָה אוֹר .
Even though we explained a different interpretation of this above (in Chapter 4), and that is the primary one,	אַף כִּי פַּרַשְׁנוּ פֵּרוּשׁ אַחֵר בָּזֶה בְּסָמוּךְּ (פֶּרֶק ד׳), וְהוּא עָקָר.
nevertheless, the fact that the Torah is called "light" teaches that the Torah is the most abstract intellect of all—	מִבֶּל מָקוֹם, מַה שֶׁנִּקְרֵאת הַתּוֹרָה אוֹר , יוֹרָה זָה: כִּי הַתּוֹרָה מַשְׂבָּל פָשׁוּט יוֹתֵר מִכֹּל,
and for that reason, it is called "light."	שֶׁלְּכָדְ נָקְרֵאת הַתּוֹרָה אוֹר ִ.
And in this, it is distinguished from all other forms of knowledge.	וּבְדָבָר זֶה, הִיא מְיֻחֶדֶת מִבֵּין שְׁאָר הַשְּׂכָלוֹת.
And behold, you have three clear matters, when you understand these points—	וַהָרֵי לְדָּ שְׁלֹשָׁה דְבָרִים בְּרוּרִים כַּאֲשֶׁר תָּבִין הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה:
that acquisition of eternal success comes only through Torah and nothing else.	כִּי אֵין קִנְיָן הַהַצְלָחָה רַק עַל־יְדֵי הַתּוֹרָה, וְלֹא זוּלַת זָה
And this will be further clarified.	וְעוֹד יִתְבָּאֵר.

[NOTE: Summary

This discourse, a deep philosophical exposition by the Maharal of Prague, presents a comprehensive argument for why Torah is the only true path to eternal success and true knowledge, surpassing all other wisdoms, sciences, and even the understanding of celestial beings like angels.

The Maharal begins by stating that deveikus (cleaving) to Hashem cannot be achieved through natural wisdom or philosophical speculation, but only through the study and fulfillment of Torah and mitzvos. This is because all other wisdom is grounded in the study of creation—which is inherently limited and composite—whereas Torah is the revealed will and decree of the Creator Himself, and therefore transcends creation entirely.

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כרק אַחָד עַשֵּׂר - 11 Chapter 11

Even the study of angels or galgalim (celestial spheres) does not escape the bounds of creation, because these too retain some trace of connection to matter or form, and thus are not purely abstract intellect. In contrast, Torah is pure, abstract seichel (intellect), because it does not derive from the natural qualities of the things it legislates about. For example, the Torah's laws about damages, ovens, or oxen do not result from the nature of those items, but from Divine command.

Furthermore, the Maharal explains the verse "Ki ner mitzvah v'Torah or"—"For a mitzvah is a lamp, and Torah is light" (Mishlei 6:23)—to mean that an individual mitzvah is a limited, specific act (a lamp), whereas the Torah in its totality is a unified, expansive, non-material light. All mitzvos are not isolated commands but interconnected expressions of one divine intellect. Hence, Torah is more abstract and elevated than even the greatest philosophical ideas.

In closing, the Maharal teaches that one who immerses in Torah—even in areas that appear mundane, such as damages or ritual law—is not learning about "oxen" or "people," but rather learning the decrees of the King, Hashem Himself. Torah is not a commentary on the world—it is the blueprint above the world.

Practical Takeaway

- Engaging in Torah learning is not only spiritually beneficial—it is the only direct avenue
 to cleave to Hashem, because Torah is His revealed will, not a product of human logic or
 nature.
- Even areas of Torah that seem technical or physical (like civil law or ritual practices) are vehicles of Divine wisdom, not reflections of the physical world. So learning "mundane" halachic details is actually an act of transcendent connection.
- While worldly knowledge has value, it is always tethered to creation. Torah alone gives
 access to the infinite and the absolute, making it the ultimate investment for eternal
 success.

Chassidic (True) Story: The Maharal of Prague

A famous and historically attested story about the Maharal of Prague illustrates his view of Torah as a living, divine force above nature.

📜 The Golem and the Divine Blueprint

In the 16th century, the Jewish community of Prague faced repeated accusations and threats from hostile forces. According to tradition, the Maharal, seeing the dire need for protection, employed

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Chapter 11 - פַרָק אַחַד עָשֵיר

Kabbalistic knowledge from Sefer Yetzirah to create a Golem—a powerful humanoid figure made from earth, animated by sacred Names of Hashem.

But what is often misunderstood is why the Maharal did it. He was not performing magic. In his own writings and those of his students, it's explained that the Torah itself contains the blueprint of creation. Just as Hashem created the world with Torah, a tzaddik who understands it can draw from those same spiritual foundations to affect reality.

After a period of using the Golem for defense, the Maharal eventually deactivated him, erasing the Shem Hashem (Divine Name) from his forehead. He recognized that the Torah is not to be used to control the world, but to connect to its Source—and such powers must be kept within the framework of kedushah and humility.

Moral: The Maharal's creation of the Golem was not a demonstration of magical control—but a lived example of the principle taught in this very discourse: Torah is not a product of the world—it is what shapes the world. It is not subject to nature—it commands it.

Source: Natai HaMitzvah, Shivchei HaMaharal, and oral tradition recorded by students of the Maharal and the Beis Din of Prague. **END NOTE**]