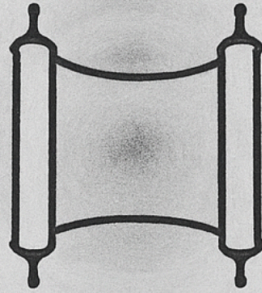


בס"ד

Reb Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir

Parshas Ki Tisa



Dedicated To:

אילנה דבורה בת שרה מרים

May Hashem Bless You With

Shefa Brachos

To find more Maamarim and to dedicate one visit:

ChassidusNow.com

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir
Parshas Ki Tisa

כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם וְנִתְּנוּ אִישׁ כַּפָּר נַפְשׁוֹ לֵה' בַּפְּקֹד אֹתָם וְלֹא יִהְיֶה בָהֶם נֶגֶף בַּפְּקֹד אֹתָם
(ל, יב)

"When you take a census of the Children of Israel according to their number, then each man shall give an atonement for his soul to Hashem when counting them, so that there will not be a plague among them when counting them." (Exodus 30:12)

I heard from my cousin, of blessed memory, that he said in the name [of Rabbi Meir of Premishlan]

שָׁמַעְתִּי מִבֶּן דּוֹדֵי ז"ל שְׁאָמַר בְּשֵׁמוֹ [שֶׁל רַבֵּי
[מֵאִיר מִפְּרִימִשְׁלָן]

"When you take a census of the Children of Israel according to their number"

'כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם

He said: "'When you take the head'—when you appoint a righteous person to be the head of the Children of Israel" (The initial letters of "Head of the Children of Israel" (ראש בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) form "Rabbi" (רַבִּי)).

אָמַר כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת רֹאשׁ' כַּאֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה צְדִיק שְׂיִהְיֶה רֹאשׁ לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל [רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רֹאשֵׁי תְבוֹת
[רַבִּי]

Whom should you appoint as your head? "According to their number"—one who knows all their deficiencies, as in the phrase "Not a man of us was missing" (Numbers 31:49).

אֵת מִי תַעֲשֶׂה לָּהּ לְרֹאשׁ, לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם' שְׂיִדַּע אֵת כָּל חֲסֻרוֹנֵיהֶם לְשׁוֹן לֹא נִפְקַד מִמֶּנּוּ אִישׁ' (בַּמְדַּבֵּר לֹא מַט)

And who can fill their deficiencies, the deficiency of each and every one, whether in livelihood, in spirituality, or in all that is good. This is "according to their number"—in both matters.

וְשִׂיכּוֹל לְמַלְאוֹת אֵת חֲסֻרוֹנָם חֲסֻרוֹן שֶׁל כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד הֵן בְּפִרְנֻסָּה וְהֵן בְּרַחֲנִיּוֹת וְכָל טוֹב, וְזֶה לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם' עַל הַשְּׂנֵי דְבָרִים

Furthermore, the righteous leader will do even more: "Each man shall give an atonement for his soul"—on behalf of Israel.

וְעוֹד יוֹתֵר יַעֲשֶׂה הַצְּדִיק הָרֹאשׁ וְנִתְּנוּ אִישׁ כַּפָּר נַפְשׁוֹ בְּעִבּוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל

If, Heaven forbid, something is decreed upon the Children of Israel, whether in material matters or in spiritual matters, the leader will sacrifice his own soul for Israel.

אִם יִפְקַד חַס וְשְׁלוֹם לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל דְּבַר הֵן בְּגִשְׁמִיּוֹת וְהֵן בְּרוּחַנִיּוֹת יִמְסַר הָרֹאשׁ נַפְשׁוֹ בְּעִבּוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל

This is what it means to be the head of the Children of Israel.

זֶה יִהְיֶה רֹאשׁ לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

[NOTE Summary

This teaching from Rabbi Meir of Premishlan offers a penetrating interpretation of the verse, "כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל"—"When you take the head (count) of the Children of Israel" (Exodus 30:12). Homiletically, the Maggid reads this as "When you appoint a head for the Children of Israel," emphasizing leadership rather than census. He notes that the initials of the phrase "ראש בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל" spell "רַבִּי" (Rabbi), implying that a true Rabbi must be the head of the people.

Such a leader is not merely an administrator or figurehead, but one who deeply understands every individual's lacks—material and spiritual—and can fill those deficiencies. "לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם" ("according to their number") is interpreted to mean that the leader knows each person by their specific need and can uplift them accordingly.

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir
Parshas Ki Tisa

Beyond this, the tzaddik-leader is one who gives himself over entirely for the people: “Each man shall give a ransom for his soul” is understood to mean that the tzaddik offers himself on behalf of Israel. If, Heaven forbid, calamity befalls the Jewish people—physically or spiritually—the leader sacrifices himself to protect and redeem them.

Practical Takeaway

A true leader in Israel is not just someone with scholarship or charisma, but someone whose soul is intertwined with the people. One who sees their lacks, who understands their pains, and who takes personal responsibility to uplift and protect each Jew. This standard should inform how we view rabbinic and communal leadership today: not by titles or popularity, but by self-sacrifice, understanding, and spiritual responsibility.

Chassidic Story

[Rabbi Meir of Premishlan was once approached by a man who had lost all his money. Broken and ashamed, the man stood silently in front of the Rebbe. Without a word, Rabbi Meir stood up, walked over to the man’s side, and began to cry. “I don’t know what to do either,” he whispered. “But your pain is mine now.” That night, a wealthy benefactor appeared, offering help without being asked. The man later said: “It wasn’t his tears that saved me—it was that he gave me back my dignity by carrying my pain.” **END NOTE]**

זֶה יִתְּנוּ כָּל הָעֹבֵר עַל הַפְּקָדִים מִחֲצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ עֶשְׂרִים בְּרָהּ הַשֶּׁקֶל מִחֲצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל תְּרוּמָה לַה' ל, יג

"This they shall give—everyone who passes among the counted: half a shekel according to the holy shekel, twenty gerahs to the shekel; half a shekel as a donation to Hashem." (Exodus 30:13)

The holy Rabbi Meir of Premishlan, may his merit protect us, said

אָמַר הָרַב הַקְּדוֹשׁ רַבֵּי מְאִיר מְפָרִימְשְׁלָאן זְכוּתוֹ יִגְן עָלֵינוּ

regarding the verse: "'This they shall give—everyone who passes among the counted'"

'עַל הַפְּסוּק זֶה יִתְּנוּ כָּל הָעֹבֵר עַל הַפְּקָדִים

The word "זה" ("this") has the numerical value of 13, including the kollel, and alludes to the 13 Attributes of Mercy.

זֶה' בְּגִימְטְרִיא י"ג עִם הַכּוֹלֵל, וְרוֹמֵז לִי"ג מִדּוֹת שֶׁל רַחֲמִים

The verse hints that those who transgress against Hashem’s commandments, so to speak, give to Hashem the crown of glory of the 13 Attributes of Mercy.

וְרוֹמֵז הַכְּתוּב שֶׁהַעֹבְרִים עַל פְּקוּדֵי ד' נוֹתְנִים כְּבִיכּוֹל לַהֲשִׂים יִתְּבַרַךְ אֶת כְּתָר הַכְּבוֹד שֶׁל י"ג מִדּוֹת הָרַחֲמִים

For they cause the revelation of His kindness, even upon the lowly and the despised.

בִּיּוֹן שֶׁהֵם גּוֹרְמִים לְהַתְּגַלּוּת חַסְדֵי אֲפִלּוּ עָלֵיהֶם הַשְּׁפִלִים וְהַנְּבֻזִים

Hashem, may He be blessed, has mercy upon them and grants them unearned grace from the treasury of preservation.

שֶׁהַשֵּׁם יִתְּבַרַךְ מְרַחֵם עָלֵיהֶם וְחוֹנֵנֵם מִתְּנֵם מֵאֲוֶצֶר הַמְּנַצֵּר

[NOTE Summary:

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan explains the verse “This they shall give—everyone who passes among the counted” (Exodus 30:13) through the deeper meaning of the word “זה” (“this”). The word “זה” has the numerical value of

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir Parshas Ki Tisa

thirteen when including the kollel, and it alludes to the Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy. The verse therefore hints that the giving associated with this command connects to the revelation of Hashem's mercy in the world.

He teaches that even when a person transgresses, Heaven forbid, this too can ultimately lead to the revelation of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. When people fall and later return, their situation arouses Hashem's compassion and kindness toward those who are lowly and broken. In this way, the Divine mercy becomes revealed more strongly in the world, for Hashem extends grace even to those who do not deserve it by strict judgment.

Thus the verse hints that through human weakness and return, the crown of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy becomes revealed. Hashem, in His great compassion, draws from the treasury of preservation and grants undeserved kindness, showing that His mercy extends even to the most distant.

Practical Takeaway:

Even when a person feels spiritually distant or unworthy, he should remember that Hashem's mercy is greater than his failures. Sincere return and humility can draw down Divine compassion and kindness. Instead of despairing over mistakes, one should use them as a reason to turn back to Hashem and awaken His abundant mercy. **END NOTE]**

הַעֲשִׂיר לֹא יִרְבֶּה וְהֵדֵל לֹא יִמְעִיט מִמִּחְצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל לְתַת אֶת תְּרוּמַת ה' לְכַפֵּר עַל נַפְשֵׁיכֶם ל, טו

"The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, to give the donation of Hashem to atone for your souls." (Exodus 30:15)

"The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less."

הַעֲשִׂיר לֹא יִרְבֶּה וְהֵדֵל לֹא יִמְעִיט.

I heard an explanation in the name of the holy Rabbi Meir of Premishlan:

שְׁמַעְתִּי לְפָרֵשׁ בְּשֵׁם הָרַב הַקְּדוֹשׁ רַבֵּי מְאִיר מְפָרְיִמְשְׁלָאן

"The rich shall not give more"—this means that he should not say that he is giving a lot, for he is not giving from his own, but only from what belongs to the Holy One, blessed be He.

הַעֲשִׂיר לֹא יִרְבֶּה' פְּרוּשׁ שְׁלֹא יֹאמֵר שְׂנוֹתֵן הַרְבֵּה, כִּי לֹא מִשְׁלוֹ הוּא נוֹתֵן רַק מִשְׁלַ הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא

As King David, peace be upon him, said (I Chronicles 29:14):

כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמַר דָּוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ עָלָיו הַשְּׁלוֹם (דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים א' כ"ט, י"ד) כִּי מִמָּה הַכֹּל וּמִיָּדָה נִתְּנוּ לָהּ

"For everything is from You, and from Your hand we have given to You."

"And the poor shall not give less"—this means that he should not say that what he gives is little. Rather, whatever he is given, he should receive with a pleasant demeanor.

וְהֵדֵל לֹא יִמְעִיט' שְׁלֹא יֹאמֵר כִּי מְעִיט הוּא מֵה שְׂנוֹתָנִין לוֹ, רַק כְּמֵה שֶׁיִּתְּנוּ לוֹ יִקְבֹּל בְּסִבָּר פְּנִיִם יָפוֹת

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan said, in Parashat Shekalim, on the verse: "The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel"

אָמַר וְרַבֵּי מְאִיר מְפָרְיִמְשְׁלָאן [בְּפָרֶשֶׁת שְׁקָלִים עַל פְּסוּק הַעֲשִׂיר לֹא יִרְבֶּה וְהֵדֵל לֹא יִמְעִיט מִמִּחְצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir Parshas Ki Tisa

That there is no true poverty except in Torah and mitzvot, as the Zohar (III, 273b) states: "This is called poverty."

כִּי הֵנָּה אֵין עֲנִי אֶלָּא מִן הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוֹת (זוה"ק ח"ג רעג): זֶה נִקְרָא עֲנִי

The righteous person is the rich one, and the wicked person is the poor one.

וְהַצְדִּיק הוּא הָעָשִׂיר וְהַדָּל הוּא הָרָשָׁע.

This is what the verse means: "The rich"—that is, the righteous person—should not consider himself above half a shekel.

וְזֶה שְׁאָמַר הַכְּתוּב הָעָשִׂיר דְּהֵינּוּ הַצְדִּיק לֹא יִחְזִיק אֶת עַצְמוֹ מִמִּתְחַצֵּית הַשֶּׁקֶל

Meaning, he should weigh himself not as fully righteous, but as half-and-half.

כְּלוּמַר מִתְחַצֵּי שְׂשִׁשְׁקָל אֶת עַצְמוֹ יוֹתֵר מִמִּתְחַצֵּה עַל מִתְחַצֵּה

And the wicked should not diminish himself from half-and-half.

וְהָרָשָׁע לֹא יִמְעִיט אֶת עַצְמוֹ מִמִּתְחַצֵּה עַל מִתְחַצֵּה

Meaning, he should not consider himself fully wicked. Rather, both the righteous and the wicked should view themselves as "Beinoni" (intermediate).

כְּלוּמַר שְׁלֹא יִחְזִיק אֶת עַצְמוֹ לְרָשָׁע, אֶלָּא בֵּין הַצְדִּיק וּבֵּין הָרָשָׁע יִחְזִיק אֶת עַצְמוֹ לְבֵינּוֹנִי

He should consider himself as balancing the scale, and be mindful of the teaching of our Sages (Kiddushin 40b): "Until a person does one mitzvah..."

שְׂיִהְיֶה מִחְזִיק הַשֶּׁקֶל עוֹ וַיִּדַע מֵאֲמַר חֲזו"ל (קידושין מ:): עַר עָשָׂה אָדָם מִצְוָה אַחַת וְכוּ

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan interprets this verse beyond its surface meaning about monetary contribution. "The rich shall not give more" teaches that one should not become prideful over their spiritual or material abundance, for all we have is from Hashem. As King David said, "Everything is from You." Even a righteous person—the "rich one"—must never see himself as above others.

Conversely, "The poor shall not give less" means that a person who feels spiritually lacking must not despair or devalue himself. Even a small offering, if given with joy and sincerity, is fully cherished by Hashem.

The ultimate message is that both the righteous and the wicked must view themselves as "beinoni"—intermediate. No one should see themselves as fully good or fully evil, but always as someone whose next choice matters deeply. Each Jew stands on the edge of the scale, and one more mitzvah can tip it entirely.

Practical Takeaway

Never overestimate yourself—and never underestimate yourself. If you are spiritually "wealthy," remain humble. If you are "poor," never believe your offering is too small. Every person should see themselves as holding the world in balance, and live as if the next mitzvah can change everything. **END NOTE]**

וַיִּקַּח מִיָּדָם וַיִּצַר אֹתוֹ בַּחֲרָט וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ עֵגֶל מִסִּכָּה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל הָאֲשֶׁר הָעֵלּוּךְ מֵאֲרָץ מִצְרַיִם
(לב, ד)

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir Parshas Ki Tisa

"And he took [the gold] from their hand, and he fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf. And they said, 'This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.'"
(Exodus 32:4)

"And he fashioned it with a graving tool."

וַיִּצַר אֹתוֹ בְּחַרְטָם.

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan, of blessed memory, said:

אָמַר הָרַב רַבֵּי מְאִיר [מִפְּרֵמִישְׁלָאן] ז"ל

It is known that when a person repents, he becomes a new creation, like a newborn child.

כִּי יָדוּעַ אִם הָאָדָם עוֹשֶׂה תְּשׁוּבָה נַעֲשֶׂה בְּרִיָּה וַיִּצְרָה חֲדָשָׁה כְּקֶטֶן שְׁנוּלֵד דְּמִי.

This is the meaning of "And he fashioned it"—that a new formation was made.

וְזֶהוּ וַיִּצַר אֹתוֹ שֶׁנַּעֲשֶׂה יִצְרָה חֲדָשָׁה.

"With a graving tool"—meaning, through remorse and complete repentance.

בְּחַרְטָם פְּרוּשׁ בְּשִׁבִיל חַרְטָה וְתִשׁוּבָה שְׁלֵמָה.

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan offers a radical reinterpretation of one of the Torah's most tragic episodes—the fashioning of the Golden Calf: "וַיִּצַר אֹתוֹ בְּחַרְטָם"—“And he fashioned it with a graving tool” (Exodus 32:4). While on the surface this verse describes a grievous sin, the Maggid reveals a redemptive layer: the word “וַיִּצַר” (he fashioned) alludes to spiritual re-formation. Just as one who does Teshuvah becomes “a new creation,” so too can even a moment of failure become the beginning of renewal.

The "graving tool" (בְּחַרְטָם) is read not as an instrument of idolatry, but as “חרטה”—remorse. That is, the shaping of the self into a new creation is done through sincere Teshuvah and inner transformation. What was once a symbol of sin is reinterpreted as the blueprint for rebirth—if one uses it correctly.

Practical Takeaway

Even our lowest moments can become the raw material for redemption. With sincere remorse and wholehearted Teshuvah, a person can transform even their sins into a catalyst for becoming a new creation. The very tools that once formed a “molten calf” can now carve out a path back to holiness.

Chassidic Story

A young man once came to Rabbi Meir of Premishlan in despair, weeping that he had sinned so grievously that he could never return. The Rebbe said, “Take your pain and carve it deep into your heart—not to wound yourself, but to inscribe a new beginning. That is what a graving tool is for.” The man later became a baal teshuvah of great renown, known for lifting others out of the same darkness he had once inhabited.

END NOTE]

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir
Parshas Ki Tisa

וְעַתָּה אִם תִּשָּׂא תַּטְּאתָם וְאִם אֵין מַחְנִי נָא מִסְפָּרְךָ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ. וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה מִי אֲשֶׁר חָטָא לִי אֶמְחֶנּוּ
מִסְפָּרֵי שְׁמוֹת ל"ב, ל"ב—ל"ג

“And now, if You will forgive their sin; and if not, erase me now from Your book which You have written.” “And Hashem said to Moshe: Whoever has sinned against Me, I will erase him from My book.” (Exodus 32:32–33).

In the name of the holy rabbi Rabbi Meir of Premishlan, of blessed memory, on the verse: “If You will forgive their sin; and if not, erase me now from Your book which You have written.”

בְּשֵׁם הַרֵב הַקְדוֹשׁ רַבִּי מְאִיר מִפְּרֵמיֶשְׁלָאן ז"ל
בְּפִסּוּק אִם תִּשָּׂא תַּטְּאתָם וְאִם אֵין מַחְנִי נָא מִסְפָּרְךָ
אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ.

And He said to him: “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will erase him from My book.”

וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ ה' מִי אֲשֶׁר חָטָא לִי אֶמְחֶנּוּ מִסְפָּרֵי

And he examined this: was it not that Moshe our teacher, peace be upon him, requested on behalf of the sinners that He forgive them?

וְדָקְדַק הֲלֵא מֹשֶׁה רַבְּנּוּ עָלָיו הַשְּׁלוּם בְּקֶשׁ בְּעַד
הַחֹטְאִים שְׂיִמְחַל לָהֶם.

And certainly regarding the righteous he had nothing to request.

וּבְיִודָאֵי עַל הַצַּדִּיקִים לֹא הָיָה לוֹ מֵה לְבַקֵּשׁ

Yet in the end He answered him: “Whoever has sinned against Me,” etc., which is obvious that certainly the sinners and not the righteous.

וּלְבִסּוּף הִשְׁיִיב לוֹ מִי אֲשֶׁר חָטָא לִי כִּי דְפָשִׁיטָא דְיִודָאֵי
הַחֹטְאִים וְלֹא הַצַּדִּיקִים.

And he explained thus: the Holy One, blessed be He, answered him, “Whoever has sinned against Me”—

וּפְרָשׁ כִּף הִשְׁיִיב לוֹ הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מִי אֲשֶׁר חָטָא
לִי—

meaning, whoever confesses his sin and says that he has sinned against Me,

מִי אֲשֶׁר יְתַנְּדֵה עַל חַטָּאתוֹ לֵאמֹר כִּי חָטָא לִי

I will erase him from My book—meaning from the book in which the sins were written upon him.

אֶמְחֶנּוּ מִסְפָּרֵי, הֵינּוּ מִסְפָּר שְׁנִכְתְּבוּ עָלָיו הָעֲוֹנוֹת

And the words of the mouth of a wise man are grace.

וְדַבְרֵי פִי חֶכֶם חֵן

[NOTE Summary:

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan explains the exchange between Moshe and Hashem after the sin of the Golden Calf. Moshe pleads, “If You will forgive their sin—but if not, erase me from Your book which You have written” (Exodus 32:32). Hashem responds, “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will erase him from My book” (Exodus 32:33). At first glance this response seems obvious, since Moshe was asking forgiveness for the sinners, not for the righteous.

Rabbi Meir explains that the Divine response contains a deeper meaning. “Whoever has sinned against Me” refers to the one who openly acknowledges his sin and confesses that he has sinned before Hashem. When a person admits his wrongdoing and takes responsibility for it, Hashem erases him “from My book,” meaning

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir Parshas Ki Tisa

from the record where his sins were written. In other words, sincere confession and recognition of one's wrongdoing lead to the removal of the sin itself.

Thus the verse teaches that the path to forgiveness is not denial or self-justification but honest recognition of one's mistakes before Hashem. When a person says truthfully, "I have sinned," he opens the door for Divine mercy to erase the record of that wrongdoing.

Practical Takeaway:

When a person makes a mistake, the most powerful step is honest acknowledgment before Hashem. Instead of hiding or minimizing the wrongdoing, admitting it sincerely allows the person to begin the process of repair. True humility and confession can transform a moment of failure into an opportunity for forgiveness and spiritual renewal. **END NOTE]**

ועתה אב-נא מצאתי חן בעיניך הודעני נא את-דרךך ואדעה למען אמצא-חן בעיניך וראה כי עמך הגוי הזה שמות ל"ג:י"ג

**“And now, if I have found favor in Your eyes, please make known to me Your way, that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your eyes; and see that this nation is Your people.”
(Exodus 33:13).**

On the verse: “Make known to me Your way that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your eyes; and see that this nation is Your people.”

בפסוק הודעני נא את דרךך ואדעה למען אמצא חן בעיניך וראה כי עמך הגוי הזה.

I heard from Rabbi David HaMalach, may his light shine, who heard from my uncle, the righteous and holy Rabbi Yisrael of Kalish, may his merit protect us,

שמעתי מרבי דוד מלאך גרו יאיר ששמע מדודי הרב הצדיק הקדוש רבי ישראל מקאליש זכותו יגן עלינו

who heard from the holy mouth of Rabbi Meir of Premishlan, of blessed memory, who questioned the double expression “make known to me” and “that I may know You,”

שמע מפיו הקדוש של הרב רבי מאיר מפרמישלאן ז"ל שהקשה כפל הלשון הודעני ואדעה

for it is obvious that if Hashem makes it known to him, then he will know it.

פשיטא אם יודיעהו ה' ידע אותו.

Rabbi Meir explained that Moshe our teacher, peace be upon him, asked Hashem to make known to him the true path

ואמר הרב רבי מאיר ז"ל כי משה רבנו עליו השלום בקש מהשם יתברך להודיעו דרך האמת

among all the many paths that exist in serving Him, blessed be His Name.

מכל הדרךים הנמצאים לעבודתו יתברך שמו

This is the meaning of “make known to me Your way,” written in the singular,

ונהו פונת הכתוב הודעני נא את דרךך

referring to the chosen path, the path in which the true light of serving Him dwells.

דרך המבקר דרך ישכן אור האמת לעבודתו יתברך שמו.

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir Parshas Ki Tisa

And Hashem answered him: “and that I may know You,”
meaning “and I will make you know”—

והשיבו השם יתברך ואדעך כמו ואודיעך

this is the true path in which you should walk to do My will in
truth.

זה הוא הדרך האמת אשר תלך בו לעשות רצונו
באמת.

First: “so that I may find favor in Your eyes”—that in all your
service your intention should be only to give pleasure to your
Creator.

ראשית למען אמצא חן בעיניך על כל עבודה
שתעבדני יהיה פונתך לעשות נחת רוח ליוצרו.

And you should say: I perform this mitzvah not for any
expectation of reward,

ותאמר אנכי עושה זו המצוה לא לשום תקנה
תשלום גמול

but only so that I may find favor in Your eyes.

רק למען אמצא חן בעיניך

Second: it is not enough that you alone serve your Creator
truthfully;

ושנית לא די לה אשר אתה לעצמך תעבד את בוראך
באמת.

rather, you must also guide the people in the good and upright
path that is pleasing before Me.

רק תראה להנשיר גם את העם בדרך הטוב והישר
ורצוי לפני.

until all will testify and declare before Me: “this nation is Your
people.”

עד שיהכל יעידון ויגידון לפני עמך הגוי הזה.

This is the meaning of “see that this nation is Your people,”

וזהו פונת הכתוב וראה כי עמך הגוי הזה.

meaning that you must watch over them and guide them on the
true path

הינו תשגיח עליהם להדריךכם בדרך האמת

until it will be said about them forever: “this nation is truly Your
people,”

עד שיאמר עליהם מן העולם ועד העולם כי עמך
הגוי הזה.

as it is written: “Blessed is Hashem, the God of Israel, from
everlasting to everlasting.” (Psalms 106:48).

על דרך הכתוב ברוך ה' אלקי ישראל מן העולם ועד
(העולם) (תהלים ק"ו:מ"ח).

[NOTE Summary:

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan explains the verse “Make known to me Your way, that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your eyes; and see that this nation is Your people” (Exodus 33:13). He raises a question about the seemingly repetitive language: if Hashem makes His way known, then Moshe will naturally know it. Why does the verse say both “make known to me” and “that I may know You”?

Rabbi Meir explains that Moshe Rabbeinu was asking Hashem to reveal the single, true path among the many possible ways of serving Hashem. The verse says “Your way” in the singular to indicate the chosen and authentic path in which the true light of Divine service dwells. Moshe sought clarity about the purest and most correct way to serve the Creator.

Hashem’s response teaches that this true path consists of two essential principles. First, a person must serve Hashem purely for His sake, with the intention of bringing pleasure to the Creator rather than seeking reward.

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir Parshas Ki Tisa

One should say to himself that he performs mitzvot only to find favor in Hashem's eyes, not for any personal gain.

Second, it is not sufficient for a person to serve Hashem privately and alone. He must also guide and uplift others, helping them walk in the good and upright path. True service of Hashem includes responsibility for the spiritual growth of the community, until it becomes evident to all that the Jewish people are truly the nation of Hashem.

Practical Takeaway:

Authentic service of Hashem requires both purity of intention and responsibility toward others. A person should strive to perform mitzvot solely to bring satisfaction to the Creator, while also helping guide and inspire those around him toward the path of truth.

Chassidic Story:

It is told that Rabbi Meir of Premishlan once encountered a man who spent long hours immersed in prayer and study but rarely involved himself with the needs of others. The man felt that by focusing on his own spiritual growth he was serving Hashem in the highest way.

Rabbi Meir gently told him that the greatest service is not only to rise spiritually oneself but to lift others along the way. "If your light shines only for yourself," he said, "then the world remains dark. But if you help another Jew find his path, your service becomes the path that Moshe asked for—the true way of Hashem."

END NOTE]

וְהָיָה בְּעֵבֶר כְּבוֹדֵי וְשִׁמְתִיךָ בְּנִקְרַת הַצּוּר וְשִׁכַּתִּי כַּפֵּי עֲלֶיךָ עַד עֲבָרִי שְׁמוֹת ל"ג:כ"ב

“And it shall be, when My glory passes by, that I will place you in the cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with My palm until I pass.” (Exodus 33:22).

I heard from the pious rabbi Rabbi Yoski Kremer, peace be upon him, from Chernivtsi,	שְׁמַעְתִּי מִהֶרֶב הַחֲסִיד רַבִּי יוֹסְקֵי קְרַעֲמִיר עֲלָיו הַשְּׁלוֹם מִטְּשַׁעֲרָנְאוּוִיץ
who heard from the holy mouth of Rabbi Meir of Premishlan, of blessed memory, on the verse:	שָׁשַׁמְעַ מִפִּי קִדְשׁוֹ שֶׁל רַבִּי מְאִיר מִפְּרֵמִישְׁלָאן ז"ל בְּפָסוּק
“And I will cover you with My palm until I pass.”	וְשִׁכַּתִּי כַּפֵּי עֲלֶיךָ עַד עֲבָרִי.
He said that Hashem, blessed be He, promised Moshe our teacher, peace be upon him,	שָׁאָמַר אֲשֶׁר הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ הִבְטִיחַ לְמֹשֶׁה רַבְּנוֹ עֲלָיו הַשְּׁלוֹם
that He grants him such great Divine power,	שְׁמוֹסֵר לוֹ כֹּל כַּחַ אֱלֹקֵי כָּל כָּף
that, so to speak, he could overturn His governance,	עַד שֶׁכִּבְנִכּוֹל יַעֲבִיר הַנְּהַגְתּוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ
in the manner of the teaching: “The Holy One, blessed be He, decrees a decree and the righteous nullifies it” (Moed Katan 16b).	עַל דֶּרֶךְ הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא גּוֹזֵר גְּזֵרָה וְצַדִּיק מְבַטְלָהּ (מוֹעֵד קַטָּן ט"ז).

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir Parshas Ki Tisa

As it is said that the Holy One, blessed be He, said to David: “I decree a decree and you nullify it.”

שָׁאָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְדָוִד אֲנִי גֹזֵר גְּזֵרָה וְאַתָּה מְבַטְּלָהּ.

This is the meaning of “And I will cover you with My palm over you until I pass,”

וְזֶה פְּרוּשׁ וְשִׁכְתִּי כְּפִי עָלֶיךָ עַד עֲבָרִי.

meaning that you will, so to speak, cause My decree to pass away,

כְּלוֹמַר שְׁאֵתָה תַעֲבִיר דַּעְתִּי כְּכִיכּוֹל.

that I decree a decree and you nullify it.

כְּלוֹמַר שְׁאֲנִי גֹזֵר גְּזֵרָה וְאַתָּה מְבַטְּלָהּ.

And lips shall kiss.

וְשִׁפְתֵימָם יִשָּׁק.

[NOTE Summary:

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan explains the verse “And I will cover you with My palm until I pass” (Exodus 33:22) in a profound way. Hashem tells Moshe that He will cover him with His hand while His glory passes. According to this teaching, the verse hints to the extraordinary spiritual power granted to a true tzaddik.

The meaning is that Hashem entrusted Moshe Rabbeinu with such closeness and authority that, so to speak, the righteous can influence the course of Divine decree. This reflects the teaching of the Sages that “The Holy One, blessed be He, decrees a decree and the righteous nullifies it” (Moed Katan 16b). Through the merit, prayer, and attachment of the tzaddik, harsh decrees can be sweetened or removed.

Thus the phrase “until I pass” is understood as indicating that the tzaddik can cause the decree to pass away.

The righteous person’s closeness to Hashem enables him to plead for mercy on behalf of the Jewish people, and through that devotion the Divine judgment can be transformed into compassion.

Practical Takeaway:

The prayers and righteousness of great spiritual leaders have immense power. This teaching also reminds every person that sincere prayer, humility, and attachment to Hashem can help bring mercy into the world and soften harsh judgments. **END NOTE]**

וַיַּעֲבֹר ה' עַל פְּנָיו וַיִּקְרָא ה' ה' אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אַרְבֵּי אַפְּיִם וְרַב חֶסֶד וְאַמֶּת שְׁמוֹת ל"ד:ו'

“And Hashem passed before him and proclaimed: Hashem, Hashem, a God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abundant in kindness and truth.” (Exodus 34:6).

On the verse: “slow to anger and abundant in kindness and truth.”

בְּפִסּוּק אַרְבֵּי אַפְּיִם וְרַב חֶסֶד וְאַמֶּת.

Once a certain man came before Rabbi Meir of Premishlan, of blessed memory, dressed in white garments and appearing like a rabbi and a righteous man.

פַּעַם אַחַת בָּא לְפָנָי הָרַב רַבֵּי מֵאִיר מִפְּרִמִּישְׁלָאן וְלֵאמֹר אִישׁ אֶחָד לְבוּשׁ בְּגָדֵי לְבָנִים וּמִתְרַאֶה כְּרַב וְצַדִּיק.

But Rabbi Meir recognized that his inside was not like his outside, and inwardly he was a sinful and blemished person.

אָבָל הָרַב רַבֵּי מֵאִיר וְלֵאמֹר הִפִּיר בּוֹ שְׂתוּכּוֹ לֹא כְּבָרוֹ וּבְפִנְיָמִיתוֹ הוּא אִישׁ חוּטֵא וְנִגְמָם.

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir Parshas Ki Tisa

Rabbi Meir began to question: it is written among the Thirteen Attributes of the Holy One, blessed be He, the attribute of “truth.”

והתחיל הרב רבי מאיר ז"ל להקשות, כתיב ביי"ג
מדות של הקדוש ברוך הוא מדת ואמת

It is puzzling how the attribute of truth could be counted among the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy.

ולפלא הוא האויף יוכל להמנות בתוף י"ג מדותיו של
רחמים מדת אמת

For truth belongs to complete judgment; if Hashem would deal with us according to truth alone,

כי הוא מצד הדין הגמור אם ילך עמנו במדת אמת

then every mitzvah and all our service would have to be completely true and without any blemish of sin.

כי לפי מדת אמת צריכין לעשות כל מצוה באמת וכל
עבודתנו צריכה להיות באמת בלי שום פגם עברה

Otherwise it would be false, and that would be strict judgment.

דאם לא כן שקר הוא אם כן זהו מדת הדין גמור

He explained that when Hashem sees a person who presents himself as a completely righteous man

והסביר הדבר כי אם הקדוש ברוך הוא רואה אדם
שעושה את עצמו לצדיק גמור

wearing white garments so that everyone thinks he is perfectly righteous,

כי לובש את עצמו בבגדי לבן וסוברין כל רואיו כי
איש צדיק תמים הוא

by strict justice Hashem would have to judge him with the exact precision used for the righteous.

והנה מן הישר שהקדוש ברוך הוא ידקדק עמו כחוט
השערה באשר מדקדק עם כל הצדיקים

But because Hashem is compassionate and gracious,

אולם רחום וחנון הוא השם יתברך

He deals with the person according to the true reality,

על כן מתנהג עמו רק כפי האמת

for Hashem knows the thoughts of people and sees that inwardly he is actually a simple person.

באשר השם יתברך יודע מחשבות בני אדם ורואה
בפנימיותו כי איש פשוט הוא באמת

Therefore Hashem treats him as a simple person.

על כן מתנהג עמו כמו עם איש פשוט

This itself is the attribute of mercy when Hashem conducts Himself with the attribute of truth.

וזהו מדת הרחמים אם מתנהג במדת האמת

[NOTE Summary:

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan explains the verse describing the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy: “Hashem, Hashem, a God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abundant in kindness and truth” (Exodus 34:6). At first glance, it is puzzling that the attribute of “truth” would be counted among the attributes of mercy. Truth seems to belong to strict judgment, because if Hashem judged the world purely according to truth, every mitzvah and every act of service would need to be completely perfect, without any flaw or sin.

Rabbi Meir illustrates this idea through a story. Once a man came before him dressed in white garments and presenting himself as a righteous person. However, Rabbi Meir perceived that the man’s inner reality did not match his outward appearance. In truth, he was spiritually flawed despite the image he projected.

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir Parshas Ki Tisa

Rabbi Meir explained that if Hashem were to judge such a person according to how others perceive him, He would have to scrutinize him with the extreme precision applied to the truly righteous. Yet Hashem, who is compassionate and gracious, judges a person according to the deeper truth that He alone sees. Since Hashem knows the inner thoughts and true level of a person, He may treat someone according to his genuine spiritual state rather than according to the higher standard that others imagine he has reached.

In this way, the attribute of truth itself becomes an expression of mercy. By judging a person according to his authentic inner level rather than his external appearance, Hashem tempers strict judgment with compassion.

Practical Takeaway:

A person should strive for sincerity rather than outward appearance in his service of Hashem. True spiritual growth comes from honesty about one's inner state. When a person serves Hashem with humility and authenticity, he opens the door for Divine mercy.

Chassidic Story:

It was known among the chassidim that Rabbi Meir of Premishlan could see beyond appearances. Once, when a visitor came dressed in impressive clothing that suggested great piety, Rabbi Meir quietly remarked that garments can make a person look righteous, but only the heart reveals the truth.

The lesson spread among his followers that the goal of serving Hashem is not to appear holy before others but to be genuine before the One who sees the inner heart. When a person focuses on inner truth rather than outward display, his service becomes real and lasting. **END NOTE]**

אֱלֹהֵי מַסְכָּה לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לָךְ שְׁמוֹת ל"ד:י"ז

“Molten gods you shall not make for yourself.” (Exodus 34:17).

<p>The words of my uncle, my elder, the holy rabbi Rabbi Meir of Premishlan, may his merit protect us, Amen, on the verse “Molten gods you shall not make for yourself.”</p>	<p>דְּבַרֵי דוֹדֵי זַמְנֵי הָרַב הַקְּדוֹשׁ רַבֵּי מְאִיר מְפְרִימְשְׁלָאן זְכוּתוֹ יִגְן עָלֵינוּ אָמֵן עַל הַכָּתוּב אֱלֹהֵי מַסְכָּה לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לָךְ.</p>
<p>The word “masecha” (molten image) can be understood from the expression “she mixed her wine” (Proverbs 9:2).</p>	<p>.(מִשְׁלֵי ט':ב')</p>
<p>This teaches that one should not drink to drunkenness and through this cry out to Hashem</p>	<p>.וְרָצָה לומר שְׁלֹא תִשְׁתֶּה לְשִׁכְרָה .וְעַל יְדֵי זֶה תִצְעַק לֵה'</p>
<p>and imagine within himself that he has come to an attainment of godliness</p>	<p>.וּתְדַמֶּה בְּנַפְשׁוֹ כִּי בָאתָ לְהַשְׁגֵּת אֱלֹקוֹת</p>
<p>and to a lofty level in Divine service.</p>	<p>.וּלְמַדְרַגָּה גְבוּהָהּ בְּעִבּוּדָהּ</p>
<p>For such service is not desirable before Him, blessed be His Name.</p>	<p>.כִּי אֵין עִבּוּדָהּ כְּזוֹ רְצוּיָהּ לְפָנָיו וְתִכְרַךְ נְשָׁמוֹ</p>

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir

Parshas Ki Tisa

Until here are his holy words, and the words of the mouth of a wise man are grace.

עַד כְּאֵן דְּבַרֵּי קִדְשׁוֹ וְדְבַרֵּי פִי חָכָם חַן.

[NOTE Summary:

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan interprets the verse “Molten gods you shall not make for yourself” (Exodus 34:17) in a deeper, ethical sense. The word “מִסְכָּה” (masecha) can also relate to the phrase “מִסְכָּה יַיִן” (“she mixed her wine,” Proverbs 9:2). Based on this connection, he explains that the verse warns against intoxication that leads a person into false spiritual feelings.

A person may drink to excess and then cry out emotionally to Hashem, imagining that he has reached a high level of Divine awareness or spiritual attainment. However, such experiences are not genuine spiritual elevation. Rabbi Meir teaches that this kind of service, driven by intoxication or artificial excitement, is not pleasing before Hashem.

True connection to Hashem must come from clarity, sincerity, and genuine inner work rather than from altered states or illusions of spirituality. The verse therefore warns a person not to create a “false god” within himself by mistaking intoxicated emotion for authentic Divine service.

Practical Takeaway:

Spiritual growth should be grounded in honesty, clarity, and self-discipline. Emotional intensity alone does not mean a person has reached a higher spiritual level. Genuine service of Hashem comes from sincere effort, humility, and a clear mind.

END NOTE]