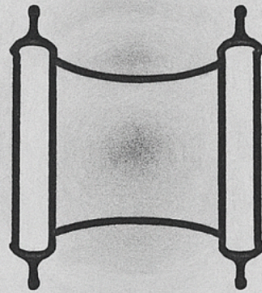


ד"ס

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel
of Horodok
Parshas Devarim**



Dedicated To:

Anonymous

May Hashem pour Shefa upon you

To find more Maamarim and to dedicate one visit:

ChassidusNow.com

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Devarim

Introduction

This discourse by **Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok** (also known as the “Horodoker” or “R. Mendel of Vitebsk”), a leading disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch and an early leader of the Chassidic movement, explores the spiritual symbolism of the verse *“Let the groom go forth from his chamber, and the bride from her canopy”* (Yoel 2:16). Delivered in the era following the Baal Shem Tov, this teaching weaves together prophetic verses from Eichah, Mishlei, Tehillim, and the Zohar to present a unified vision of divine intimacy, spiritual yearning, and inner transformation. The discourse contrasts the perspectives of Moshe, Yeshayahu, and Yirmiyahu to examine the causes of spiritual exile, the dangers of superficial religious practice, and the redemptive power of emunah and Torah lishmah.

<p>On the verse (Yoel 2:16), “Let the groom go forth from his chamber, and the bride from her canopy,” the Sages expounded: “The groom from his chamber” refers to the Ark, and “the bride from her canopy” refers to the Torah.</p>	<p>על מאמר (יואל ב, ט"ז): "יצא חתן מחדרו וכלה מחפתה", ודרשו רז"ל: "חתן מחדרו" – זה הארון, וכלה מחפתה – זו תורה.</p>
<p>To understand this, he opened and said (Eichah Rabbah 1:1), “Three prophets prophesied with the expression 'Eichah': Moshe, Yeshayah, and Yirmiyah. Moshe saw them in their tranquility and said, ‘How can I alone carry...’ Yeshayahu saw them in their recklessness and said, ‘How has the faithful city become a harlot,’ and Yirmiyahu saw them in their degradation and said, ‘How does she sit alone.’”</p>	<p>והבין זה, פתח ואמר (איכה רבה א, א): "שלישה נביאים נתנבאו בלשון איכה: משה, ישעיה, וירמיה. משה ראה בשלונותם ואמר: 'איכה אשא לבדי', ישעיהו ראה אותם בפתחותם ואמר: 'איכה היתה לזונה קריה גאמנה', וירמיה ראה אותם בניוולן ואמר: 'איכה ישבה קדד', ע"ש.</p>
<p>And the matter is, in the manner of moral instruction: it is known the Zohar’s statement on the verse (Kohelet 9:14), “A small city, and few people within it.” The Zohar interprets: “A small city” refers to the Torah. Even though (Iyov 11:9) “Its measure is longer than the earth” and it is great, it is called small because “few people are in it.”</p>	<p>והענין הוא על-דרך מוסר, ידיע מאמר הזהר על פסוק (קהלת ט, י"ד): "עיר קטנה ואנשים בה מעט", ודרש: "עיר קטנה" – היא התורה, ואם אמנם (איוב י"א, ט'): "ארפה מארץ מדה", וגדולה היא, נקראת "קטנה מפני ש'אנשים בה מעט'".</p>
<p>And the truth is that the Torah is called a city because it is a city that includes everything, and within it is seen that which no eye has seen, to provide advice for one’s soul as to how and with what to refine his body and limbs so that he may be holy—a sanctuary, called the Mishkan of Hashem.</p>	<p>והאמת הוא להיות התורה נקראת עיר מפני שהיא כרפא דכולא בה, ובה תחזי אשר עין לא ראה, לתת עצות בנפשו איה ובמה לזכך גופו ואיבריו וקדוש 'היה' – מקדש אקרי משכן ה.</p>
<p>For the Torah and mitzvos are called light and lamp, a flame of Yah, like a crucible for silver and a furnace for gold, and Hashem tests hearts. For by bringing the fear of Hashem into his heart—His unity and His love—his heart will be tested and</p>	<p>כי התורה והמצוות נקראים אור ונר שלהבת יה, כמצרף לסקף וכור לזהב ובוהן לבות ה', כי בהכניס פחד ה' בלבו – יחודו ואהבתו – יתבטן לבו ויצרף צירוף אחר צירוף, שבכל מקום קדוש – משם יתפרדו כל פצלי און.</p>

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Devarim

<p>refined, one refinement after another, for in every sacred place, from there all doers of iniquity will be separated.</p>	
<p>And especially when the flame ascends heavenward due to the fear of Hashem and the majesty of His glory—as is known from the natural principle that all the impurities of metals fall away by themselves when melted in fire—behold, the general rule is that the main foundation and root of Torah study must be to become connected with the Shechinah, so that the Torah will guide him in the fear of Hashem, which is its treasure, and provide counsel for his soul.</p>	<p>ובכפרט בעלות הלהב השמימה מפני פחד ה' והדר גאווה, פיזוע מדדו הטבע שכל פסלת המטכות מאליהן נופלים בהתכפם באש – הנה פללא דמלתא, להיות עקר וש"ש עסק התורה – בכדי להתקשר בשכינתא, וכדי שהתורה תורהו יראת ה' היא אוצרו ועצות בנפשו.</p>
<p>And this is what is written (Tehillim 112:7): “His heart is steadfast, trusting in Hashem.” He should believe with perfect faith that after toil and engagement in Torah, he will find rest for his soul, to enter into holiness. And this will prepare him for love of holiness with affection and endearment, and his words will be as sweet as honey—like the saying that Torah is sweeter than honey.</p>	<p>וזהו (תהלים קי"ב, ז'): "נכון לבו בטח בה", ונאמין באמונה שלימה שאחר הגיעה ועסק התורה ימצא מרגוע לנפשו לבוא אל הקדש, ומכשיר אותו לחיבת הקדש באהבה וחיבה, ויהי דבריו כדבש למתוק, וכמאמר שהתורה מתוקה מדבש.</p>
<p>For behold, at first glance, there appear to be two verses that contradict one another: one verse says (Mishlei 2:4–5), “If you seek her like silver, and search for her like hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of Hashem”; and another verse says (Tehillim 19:11), that the Torah is “more desirable than gold, and than much fine gold.”</p>	<p>שהרי לכאורה הם שני כתובים דסתרון הדדי: כתוב אהד אומר (משלי ב, ד-ה): "אם תבקשנה ככסף וכמטמונים תחפשנה – אז תבין יראת ה'", וכתוב אהד אומר שהתורה (תהלים י"ט, י"א): "נחמדים מזהב וימפז רב".</p>
<p>But the explanation is as the Sages said: the primary condition of Torah study must be in the manner they stated (Avos 3:9), “Let his fear precede his wisdom.” And he should study Torah so that it will instruct him in cleaving to and loving Hashem and in clinging to His commandments.</p>	<p>אבל הענין כמאמר רז"ל, שעקר תנאי עסק התורה צריך להיות באפן שאמרו רז"ל – שתהא (אבות ג, ט'): "יראתו קודמת לחכמתו", ויעסק בתורה כדי שתורהו התקשרות ואהבת ה' והדבק במצותיו.</p>
<p>And when he believes with perfect faith that the Torah will shine upon him a light, as it says (Iyov 29:3), “When His lamp shone over my head,” then, by uniting with the occupation in Torah and entering into true unification and connection, his light will break forth like the dawn—through that faith.</p>	<p>וכשיאמין באמונה שלימה שהתורה תופיע עליו נהורא, כמו שכתוב (איוב כ"ט, ג'): "בהלו גרו עלי ראשי" – אז, בהתנהגות עם עסק התורה ובא אל יחוד והתקשרות אמיתי, ובקע פשחר אורו עלידי אותה האמונה.</p>

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Devarim

<p>And this is the meaning of the verse, “If you seek her like silver, and search for her like hidden treasures” (Mishlei 2:4): it is like the metaphor of a person who searches for treasures and hidden valuables—he must dig holes and remove earth. And he willingly accepts upon himself the burden of the sand and the toil of excavation with joy, because of his faith that he will find the treasure in his digging.</p>	<p>וזהו מאמר הפסוק: "אם תבקשנה ככסף וכמטמונים ותחפשנה" – על דרך משל: אדם המחפש אוצרות ומטמוניות צריך לחפור חפירות ולהוציא העפר, והנה מקבל הוא על-עצמו בשמחה כבד גטל החול ומשא העפר והחפירה, מתמת אמונתו שימצא המטמון בחפירתו.</p>
<p>And once he finds the treasure, he estimates for himself the great pleasure that will come to him with all the desires he will be able to fulfill through the treasure. Similarly, the Sages said: At the beginning, one must accept upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven—which is fear and faith, as is known—and only afterward accept upon himself the yoke of mitzvos and the yoke of Torah.</p>	<p>ואחר שימצא המטמון, משער בעצמו גדל ההנאה שיגיע לו בכל חפץ אשר יתאנה לעשות מן המטמון. על דרך זה אמרו רז"ל: "בתחלה יקבל עליו עול מלכות שמים", שהוא היראה והאמונה פיזע, ואחר כך יקבל עליו עול מצות ועול תורה.</p>
<p>For then, “the righteous shall live by his faith” (Chavakuk 2:4), and the Torah and mitzvah will help him to purify his materiality and cling to G-d with true connection and unification, to provide counsel for his soul against all matters of the evil inclination. For the Torah is light and will illuminate him.</p>	<p>כי אז (חבקוק ב, ד): "וצדיק באמונתו יחיה", ותועיל לו התורה והמצוה לזכך חמרו ולידבק באלהות בהתקשרות ויחוד גמור, לתת עצות בנפשו מכל עניני הניצור הרע, כי התורה אור ותאיר לו.</p>
<p>Not so if he does not first place fear and faith in Hashem and in the Torah, which will certainly illuminate his darkness. In such a case, the Torah and mitzvos will not help him, and he will remain coarse as he was.</p>	<p>מה שאין כן אם לא יקדים היראה והאמונה בה' ובתורה – שבודאי יאיר חשכו – כל התורה והמצות לא יועילו וישאר מגושם כמו שהוא.</p>
<p>And perhaps we can say this is the meaning of what the Sages said: “I toiled and I found—believe.” The explanation is: after the toil, when he finds, he must have faith that he certainly will find. Without faith, the toil does not help.</p>	<p>ואפשר לומר שנהו מה שאמרו רז"ל: "יגעתי ומצאתי – תאמין". פירושו: כי אחר היגיעה שימצא, צריך אמונה שבודאי ימצא, ובלעדי האמונה אינו מועיל היגיעה.</p>
<p>And this is the saying of the Sages: “One should always occupy himself with Torah and mitzvos even not for their own sake, for from doing it not for its own sake he will come to do it for its own sake.” The explanation: the Sages promised that he will certainly come to the level of lishmah (for its own sake).</p>	<p>וזהו מאמר רז"ל: "לעולם יעסק אדם בתורה ובמצות שלא לשמה, שמתוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה". פירושו: שהבטיחו רז"ל שבודאי יבוא לידי לשמה.</p>

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Devarim

<p>Therefore, a person should not be discouraged by the fact that at first it is not for its own sake, for this is like the burden of dirt when digging for hidden treasures. For it is true and faithful that from this, he will come to the level of “for its own sake.” But indeed, the entire point of not-for-its-own-sake must be for the sake of eventually reaching the for-its-own-sake—and he must believe that he will certainly find it; then it will be good for him.</p>	<p>לְכֹן אֵל יִכְבַּד לְאָדָם הַשְּׁלֵא לְשִׁמָּה, שֶׁהוּא כְּמִשָּׂא הָעֶפְרָ בְּחִפְיֵית הַמְטָמוֹנִים, שֶׁהָרִי אָמַת וְאָמוֹנָה שְׁמָזָה יְבוֹא לְיָדֵי לְשִׁמָּה. אָבָל בְּאָמַת כָּל עֶקֶר הַשְּׁלֵא לְשִׁמָּה צָרִיךְ לְהִיֹּת בְּשִׁבִיל שְׁיִמְצָא אַחַר כֹּף הַלְשִׁמָּה, וְיֵאֱמִין שֶׁיִּבְרָאֵי יִמְצָא – אִז טוֹב לוֹ.</p>
<p>Now Yirmiyahu the prophet, who saw them in their degradation and destruction—having cast off the yoke of Torah and mitzvos, and with faith cut off and lost from their mouths, and having distanced themselves from Hashem—he said (Eichah 1:1), “How does she sit in solitude, the city,” which is a reference to the Torah, as mentioned earlier.</p>	<p>וְהִנֵּה יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא שֶׁרָאָה אוֹתָן בְּנִיּוּלָן וְחִרְבָּנָם – שֶׁפָּרְקוּ מֵעַל עַצְמָם עוֹל תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת, וְנִכְרְתָה וְאֶבְדָּה הָאָמוֹנָה מִפִּיהֶם, וְרַחֲקוּ מֵעַל ה' – אָמַר (אֵיכָה א, א): "אֵיכָה יִשְׁבֶּה בְּדָד הָעִיר", שֶׁהוּא כִּינּוּי לַתּוֹרָה כַּנִּזְכָּר.</p>
<p>And the meaning of “badad” is “isolated,” as it says regarding the metzora (leper): “He shall sit alone—badad,” meaning alone, for they had separated entirely from the Torah. They were by themselves, and the Torah was by itself, with no connection between them.</p>	<p>וּפִירוּשׁ "בְּדָד" הוּא גְלוּמוֹד, כַּמָּה דָּאֵת אָמַר בְּמִצְרָע: "בְּדָד יִשֵּׁב" – יְחִידִי, כִּי הֵם פָּרְשׁוּ מִן הַתּוֹרָה כָּל עֶקֶר, וְהֵם לְבָדָם וְהַתּוֹרָה לְבָדָה, שְׁלֵא הָיָה לָהֶם שׂוּם הַתְּקַשְׁרוּת.</p>
<p>And the prophet stated the reason and cause for this: “Because she became a <i>mas</i> (tributary),” as the Zohar says regarding prayer: One who does not set his heart on the essential exile of the Shechinah, but only on his own lack, is compared to a dog, and it says that they bark like dogs, “Hav, hav (Give, give!)—Give us life, give us sustenance,” etc.</p>	<p>וְאָמַר הַנְּבִיא הַסִּבֵּה מָה זֶה וְעַל מָה זֶה – מִפְּנֵי שֶׁ"הִיָּתָה לְמַס", כַּמֵּאֲמַר הַזֹּהַר בְּעֵנֵן הַתִּפְלָה: "מִי שְׁלֵא שָׂם לְבוֹ אֶל עֵיקָר גְּלוּת הַשְּׂכִינָה כִּי אֵם עַל חֶסְרוֹנוֹ – דְּמָה אוֹתוֹ לְכָלֵב, וְאָמַר דְּצוֹחֲחִין כְּכִלְבִּין: הֵב הֵב – הֵב לָן חַיִּי, הֵב "לָן מְזוּנֵי כו', חֶסֶד דְּעֶבְדִּין לְגַרְמִיָּהוּ עֶבְדִּין.</p>
<p>And so it was with the destruction of the Temple. And the Sages said about the verse (Iyov 6:14), “To the one melting away from his fellow is chesed (kindness),” that this refers to one who raises a bad dog in his house, for he prevents guests from entering. And the Greek word for dog is <i>mas</i>. That is what Yirmiyahu lamented—“she became <i>lamas</i>.”</p>	<p>וְכֹן הָיָה שֶׁם בְּחִרְבוֹ הַבַּיִת. וְהִנֵּה אָמְרוּ רַז"ל עַל פְּסוּק (אֵיּוֹב ו, י"ד): "לְמַס מִרְעֵהוּ חֶסֶד" – "שֶׁהוּא הַמְגַדֵּל כָּלֵב רַע בְּתוֹךְ בֵּיתוֹ שְׁמוֹנֵעַ רַעִים מִבֵּיתוֹ, שֶׁכֵּן בְּלִשׁוֹן יְנִי קוֹרִין לְכָלֵב – מַס", וְזֶהוּ שְׁמֻקוֹנָן יִרְמְיָהוּ: "הִיָּתָה לְמַס".</p>
<p>And Yeshayahu, who saw them in their recklessness—that they still held on to the Torah, but not with truth and faith, as mentioned—therefore said (Yeshayahu 1:21), “How has the faithful city become a harlot,” referring to the Torah that is not studied for its own sake.</p>	<p>וַיִּשְׁעִיָּהוּ שֶׁרָאָה אוֹתָן בְּפִחְזוֹתָן – שֶׁהָיוּ מְחַזְּקִין עֲדוֹן בַּתּוֹרָה אָבָל לֹא בְּאָמַת וְאָמוֹנָה כַּנִּזְכָּר – לְכֹן אָמַר: "אֵיכָה הִיָּתָה לְזוֹנָה קַרְיָה נְאֻמָּנָה", שֶׁהִיא הַתּוֹרָה (שְׁלֵא לְשִׁמָּה).</p>

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Devarim

<p>For he engages in it and uses it like one with a harlot—for his desire—and does not take her for proper marital union, as is fitting.</p>	<p>שְׁעוֹסֵק בָּהּ וּמְשַׁתְּמֵשׁ בָּהּ כְּמוֹ עִם הַזֹּנֶה – שֶׁהוּא לְתַאֲנוֹתוֹ, וְאֵינּוּ לוֹקֵחָהּ לְשׁוּם אִישׁוֹת כְּרְאוּי.</p>
<p>And it is proper to accept upon oneself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven first, even if he does not yet taste anything or has never seen spiritual light in his life. But through his faith that he will later come to complete connection and true unification, this is what is meant by “the faithful city”—she must be in faith.</p>	<p>וְנִכְוֵן לְקַבֵּל עָלָיו עוֹל מַלְכוּת שָׁמַיִם תְּחִלָּה, אֶפְלוּ שֶׁעַד יוֹם אֵינּוּ טוֹעֵם כְּלוּם וְלֹא רָאָה מְאֻרוֹת מִיָּמָיו, אָבָל בְּאֵמוּנָתוֹ שֶׁאַחַר כֵּךְ יָבוֹא לְהִתְקַשְׁרוֹת גָּמוּר וַיַּחֲוֶה אֱמִיתִי, וְזֶהוּ: "קִרְיָה נְאֻמָּנָה" – שֶׁצָּרִיכָה לִהְיוֹת בְּאֵמוּנָה.</p>
<p>And Moshe Rabbeinu, peace be upon him, who saw them in their tranquility, and nevertheless sensed that they had already begun to turn backward, said (Devarim 1:12): “How can I alone bear your trouble,” for it is known that the Sages said that Israel are burdensome and stubborn—if one is liable in judgment, he says: I have witnesses to bring, I have evidence, and so forth.</p>	<p>וּמִלֹּשֶׁה רַבֵּינוּ עָלָיו הַשְּׁלוֹם, שֶׁרָאָה אוֹתָם בְּשִׁלוֹתָם, וְאָרַךְ עַל פִּי כֵן הִרְגִישׁ שֶׁכִּבֵּר הִתְחִילוּ לְחַזֵּר וּלְסוּג אַחֹר – אָמַר (דְּבָרִים א, י"ב): "אֵיכָה אֶשָּׂא לְבַדִּי טְרַחְכֵם", בְּיָדוֹעַ אֲמָרוּ רַז"ל שֶׁיִּשְׂרָאֵל טְרַחְנִים וּסְרַבְנִים הֵם: אִם נִתְחַיֵּב אֶחָד בְּדִין – אוֹמֵר: יֵשׁ לִי עֵדִים לְהֵבִיא, יֵשׁ לִי רְאִיָּה וְכו'.</p>
<p>And if they had truly clung to Hashem, the living G-d, all their actions should have been in faith, and no person would encroach upon what is designated for his fellow. On the contrary, one should distance himself by a bowshot from even doubtful monetary ownership of another, like the story of Rav Gidel, who overturned the earth—and afterwards, neither of them wanted to take it. And it became known as “the land of the Rabbis,” because they feared even questionable theft.</p>	<p>וְאֵלוּ הָיוּ בְּאֵמֶת דְּבוּקִים בֵּה' אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים, צָרִיכִין לִהְיוֹת כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם בְּאֵמוּנָה, וְאִין אָדָם נּוֹגֵעַ בְּמָה שֶׁמוֹכֵן לְחֵבְרוֹ. וְאִתְרַבָּא – לְהִתְרַחֵק כְּמִטְחֹנֵי קִשְׁת׃ בְּסִפְקָא מְמוֹן חֵבְרוֹ, וְכִמְעַשָּׂה דְרַב גִּידֵל שֶׁהָיָה מְהַפֵּךְ בְּאַרְעָא – עַד שֶׁאַחַר כֵּךְ לֹא רָצוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם לְקַח אוֹתָהּ, וַיִּמְתְּקֵי אֶרְעָא דְרַבְנָן מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהָיוּ יִרְאִים מִסִּפְקָא גְזֵל.</p>
<p>And just as the Sages said: a single person is trusted regarding prohibitions, how much more so should it be that in monetary matters each person asks questions to a sage—perhaps the money belongs to his fellow—and he should distance himself from it.</p>	<p>וְכֵמוֹ שֶׁאֲמָרוּ רַז"ל: "אָדָם אֶחָד נְאֻמָּן בְּאִיסוּרֵינִי" כּו', מִן הִרְאוּי לִהְיוֹת בְּדִינֵי מְמוֹנוֹת – שֶׁיְהֵא כָל אֶחָד שׁוֹאֵל דְרָךְ שֶׁאֵלֶּה לְחַכְמֵם: אוֹלֵי הַמְמוֹן שֶׁל חֵבְרוֹ, וַיִּרְחַק מִמֶּנָּה.</p>
<p>And Moshe Rabbeinu, peace be upon him, who was connected in daas—knowing Hashem in all His attributes, for daas encompasses all the middos—could not tolerate any gross materiality. Therefore he said, “Provide for yourselves men” (Devarim 1:13)—meaning: for your sake, according to your level.</p>	<p>וְהֵנָּה מִלֹּשֶׁה רַבֵּינוּ ע"ה שֶׁהָיָה מְקַשֵּׁר בְּדַעַת – שֶׁהוּא דַעַת אֶת ה' בְּכָל מִדּוֹתָיו, כִּי הַדַּעַת הוּא כְּלָלוֹת כָּל הַמִּדּוֹת – וְלֹא הָיָה יְכוֹל לְסַבּוֹל לְשׁוּם גֶּשֶׁם. לְכֵן אָמַר: "הֵבּוּ לָכֶם אֲנָשִׁים" – פִּירוּשׁ: בְּשִׁבְלֵכֶם, לְפִי מִדְרַגְתְּכֶם.</p>
<p>But if a person behaves with Torah in faith, then from the engagement in Torah and mitzvos he will come to complete deveikus, for the Torah is the remedy, as the Sages said: “I created the evil inclination, I created the Torah as its remedy.” And he will distance himself from all forms of material orientation.</p>	<p>אָבָל אִם הָאָדָם מִתְנַהֵג עִם הַתּוֹרָה בְּאֵמוּנָה – שֶׁמִּתְעַסֵּק בְּתוֹרָה וּבְמִצְוֹת יָבוֹא לְדְבֻקוֹת גָּמוּר, כִּי הַתּוֹרָה הִיא תְּבִלִּין, כְּאֲמָרָם רַז"ל: "כְּרָאתִי יָצָר הָרַע, כְּרָאתִי לוֹ תְּבִלִּין" – וַיִּרְחַק עֲצָמוֹ מִכָּל עַנְיָנֵי אוֹפֵן גֶּשֶׁם.</p>

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Devarim

And this is the meaning of the verse: “Let the groom go forth from his chamber and the bride from her canopy” (Yoel 2:16)—meaning, the garments and canopy that cover and conceal the essential truth should be removed, and there will be complete unification.

וְהָיוּ מֵאֲמַר הַפְּסוּק: "יֵצֵא חָתָן מִחֻדְרוֹ וְכַלָּה מִחֻפְתָּהּ" – פִּירוּשׁ: הַלְבוּשֵׁי וְהַחֻפָּה שְׁחֹפְתִים וּמַעֲלִים אֲמִיתָהּ. הַעֲצָמִית – וְיָהִי יְחִוּד גָּמוּר.

[NOTE Summary

The discourse opens with the verse from Yoel describing the emergence of a groom and bride—symbolizing the Ark and the Torah—interpreted by Chazal as a metaphor for divine unification. From here, Rabbi Menachem Mendel explores three prophetic utterances of “Eichah” (How?)—by Moshe, Yeshayahu, and Yirmiyahu—each reflecting a different stage of Israel’s spiritual decline.

Moshe sees the people in tranquility, yet already turning away from divine truth, expressing the burden of their materialism and lack of faith. Yeshayahu sees them still engaged in Torah but superficially, equating it to a transactional relationship like one with a harlot—done for self-serving reasons, without true commitment. Yirmiyahu, seeing their complete separation from Torah and Shechinah, laments their spiritual desolation, likening them to dogs calling “Give! Give!” only for their own needs.

The core message is that Torah without *emunah* and *yirah* is disconnected and ultimately untransformative. But when one seeks Torah “like silver and hidden treasures”—with labor and *emunah*—the engagement itself becomes purifying and leads to *deveikus*. Even learning Torah *shelo lishmah* (not for its own sake) becomes meaningful when it is a path toward *lishmah* (for its own sake), grounded in trust that the light of Torah will eventually illuminate the soul.

The ideal, as symbolized by the groom and bride leaving their coverings, is for Torah and the soul to unite in complete oneness—without the concealment of ulterior motives or material distractions. Just as the Shechinah is in exile when people pursue only their own needs, so too is divine unification achieved when Torah study becomes a vessel for awe, love, and total surrender to Hashem.

Practical Takeaway

To make Torah transformative, one must approach it with faith, humility, and inner commitment. Even if one's motivations aren't yet pure, the process of learning with *emunah*—believing that divine clarity will emerge—is itself redemptive. One should consciously strive for sincerity in learning and mitzvah observance, recognizing that Torah is not merely information but illumination, and its purpose is to refine the self, connect with Hashem, and uplift the world.

Chassidic Story

Once, in the late 1700s, while Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok was living in Tiberias, he

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Devarim

was approached by a wealthy man from the Galilee who had recently become interested in Chassidism. The man expressed frustration—he had given charity, studied Torah daily, and even begun reciting Tikkun Chatzos, yet felt no inner spiritual warmth.

The Horodoker listened quietly. Then he said, “You are like a man who digs for treasure but throws the dirt in every direction, believing he is building a palace with the dust. The treasure is only uncovered when the digging is for the sake of truth.”

The man asked, “So should I stop doing these things if my heart isn’t in them?”

The Rebbe replied, “No—keep digging. But dig with faith. Know that the light is there, even if you haven’t seen it yet. Do not abandon the toil. Torah and mitzvos are like the bride and groom beneath the canopy—hidden at first, but destined to emerge in perfect union.”

This encounter changed the man’s life. He shifted from mechanical performance to sincere service, and in time became one of the Horodoker’s most devoted followers.

(Source: *Shivchei HaHorodoker*, early manuscripts housed in the Jerusalem National Library)

TPX (Therapeutic-Psychological Integration)

This profound discourse by Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok offers a layered psychological model for spiritual healing and personal transformation. Through the imagery of a bride and groom emerging from concealment, and the contrasting cries of “Eichah” by the prophets, it reveals the inner process of disconnection, resistance, and reconnection that mirrors human emotional and spiritual experience.

The discourse identifies three psychological states through the voices of the prophets:

1. **Moshe** sees the people in *external peace* but already turning inwardly away from G-d. This reflects a person who appears spiritually stable but begins emotionally withdrawing—perhaps due to complacency, intellectual pride, or lack of inner honesty. The inner voice of “Eichah”—*How can I bear this alone?*—is the overwhelmed cry of a soul that senses misalignment before it fully manifests.
2. **Yeshayahu** sees superficial religiosity—Torah without emotional intimacy. Psychologically, this is the individual who goes through the motions of spirituality or morality but uses it transactionally: for self-esteem, approval, or control. Like someone in a relationship with a “zonalike” dynamic, their spiritual life lacks mutuality and devotion. The solution, as the discourse says, is to enter with *emunah*—even when there is no light yet—trusting that intimacy and wholeness will come.
3. **Yirmiyahu** witnesses total alienation. Faith is lost, Torah is abandoned, and the soul seeks only to satisfy its needs—“Give me life! Give me sustenance!” This is the trauma state, where the self no longer believes in connection, only in survival. The Shechinah is

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Devarim

in exile within such a soul. The healing begins not through confrontation but by rebuilding faith that “Torah will illuminate the darkness”—a deep therapeutic reparenting through trust, consistency, and spiritual reorientation.

At the heart of the discourse is the metaphor of **digging for treasure**: emotional healing and spiritual clarity are buried beneath layers of defense, pain, or ego. The person must willingly lift the weight of “dirt”—the discomfort, confusion, and resistance—out of belief that something precious lies beneath. Even when the effort is not yet pure (*shelo lishmah*), if it is animated by the faith that connection is possible, it becomes holy.

Therapeutically, this maps onto trauma-informed growth. A person may begin therapy or teshuvah out of fear, guilt, or compulsion, but if the process is honest and accompanied by faith in transformation, it leads to authentic integration (*lishmah*). The “groom and bride” leaving their canopy is the emergence of the true self—no longer cloaked in protective garments or false motivations—ready to unite with the divine in full vulnerability and joy.

Story

In the early 2000s, a woman named Rivka, raised in a rigid and emotionally distant home, began therapy in her thirties. She described davening and Torah as “performances,” hollow acts done to avoid shame. For years, she kept mitzvos, but felt no joy or meaning.

Her therapist once asked her to imagine a version of herself who believed that Hashem wanted her—not just her deeds. She cried. “I don’t believe I’m lovable,” she said.

Week by week, they explored her religious habits through the lens of emotional avoidance. Over time, Rivka began davening less from fear and more from longing. She started speaking to Hashem in her own words. One night, she journaled: “*I don’t know if I love You yet, but I want to. I think You want me back.*”

That line was her *turning point*—the moment she “dug” not just to perform, but to find. Slowly, the canopy lifted. Her tears in Shema were no longer fear-driven but intimate.

She later described the process using a line from the discourse: “*Even if I don’t yet taste light, I trust it’s coming.*”

(Source: composite adapted from trauma therapy case notes and faith-based clinical practice; identity disguised) **END NOTE]**