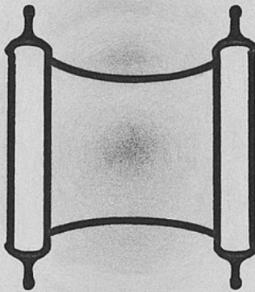


בס"ד

# Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk Parshas Bereshis



*Dedicated In Honor Of:*

לע"ג

רבי לוי יצחק בן רבי מאיר  
מברדייטשובה

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# The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

## Noam Elimelech

### Parshas Bereshis

#### מאמר א

#### Introduction

Rabbi Elimelech of Lzhensk (1717–1787), one of the foremost disciples of the Maggid of Mezritch, was a foundational figure in early Chassidus and a central link in transmitting its inner path to future generations. Known as *the Noam Elimelech*, he transformed Chassidus into a living system of *avodah*—refinement of heart, thought, and action—focusing on *deveikus* (cleaving to God) through prayer, humility, and elevating the physical world to holiness. He established in Lzhensk a center of holiness that trained many of the great tzaddikim who would shape Eastern European Chassidus. The segment before us, centered on “*Bereishis bara Elokim*,” weaves a profound vision of man’s purpose—to unite Torah, prayer, and kindness in a single continuous ascent toward God.

**In the beginning, God created, etc. See Rashi’s explanation:**

**“In the beginning” — for the sake of Israel, who are called “the beginning,” and for the sake of the Torah, which is called “the beginning.”**

And in the Midrash it is also stated: for the sake of the mitzvah of the first fruits (bikkurim), which are called “the beginning.” And it may be said that all of them intended one and the same thing, for one said one expression and another said another, but they do not differ.

For it is stated in the Mishnah (Avos 1): “On three things the world stands — on Torah, on service, and on acts of kindness.” And it is stated in another Mishnah (Avos 1): “On three things the world endures — on judgment, on truth, and on peace.”

And it may also be said that they too intended the same thing. For behold, before us are three levels in the service of the Creator, exalted be He: one, Torah study for its own sake.

And indeed our Sages permitted us even to learn not for its own sake, as they said, “A person should always engage [in Torah and mitzvos] even not for its own sake.”

If one has not yet reached the level of learning for its own sake, nonetheless do not let go of it, for a person does not quickly reach learning for its own sake except through great effort in serving the Blessed One with all good qualities.

בראשית ברא אלקים כו' עין פרוש רש"י  
בראשית בשביל ישראל הנקראים ראשית  
ובשביל התורה הנקראת ראשית

ובמזרע נמי איתא בשביל מצות בכורין שנקרו  
ראשית, וניש לומר וכלם לך אחד נתפונו, דמר  
אמר חזא ומר אמר חזא ולא פלייגי

דאיתא במשנה (אבות פ"א) על שלשה דברים  
העולם עומד, על התורה ועל העבודה ועל גמלות  
חסדים, ואיתא במשנה (שם) על שלשה דברים  
העולם קים, על סדרין ועל קנאמת ועל חשלום

ויש לומר נמי דלא ברא אחד נתפונו, דהנה לפניו ג' מקרגות העבודה הבורא יתעלה, האחד התורה  
ללמוד לשמה

ובנאמת התורה לנו חן"ל אפלו שלא לשמה,  
בנאמתם לעולם יעסוק אדם כו

אם לא הגיע למדרגת למוד לשמה, על כל פנים  
מן אל תנה זיך, כי לא במתנה גיע אדם ללמידה  
לשמה, כי אם על ידי התאמצות גדולה בעבורתו  
יתברך שמו בכל המדנות הטובות

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And the second level is service — prayer — which is the primary service of the heart, as it is written: “And to serve Him with all your heart” (Devarim 11:13). This refers to prayer, for the heart understands.

Through it one can ascend to cleave to the Creator and bind oneself to Him, for the word “tefillah” means “connection” — to bind oneself to the Blessed Creator with great attachment.

And this alludes to the knot of the hand-tefillin — to bind the thought of the heart to Him, exalted be He.

Therefore, one must exert even greater effort to pray constantly to the Blessed Name, that He should assist him so that the evil inclination not separate him from cleaving to the Creator.

For it is the nature of man that his thoughts are prone to become involved in the affairs of this world.

And this is the explanation of the verse (Bereishis 6:5): “And Hashem saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth,” meaning: so long as he is on the earth, man’s evil increases.

And through this, even one who wishes to serve Hashem and does not do evil—nonetheless, his thought draws him only toward evil all the day.

“And Hashem regretted” (Bereishis 6:6) — meaning, there was consolation for Him, blessed be He, in that man has an excuse before Him, for He made man.

Meaning, as our Sages said: “If not for three verses, the world could not endure,” and one of them is (Michah 4:6): “That I have caused evil,” i.e., the heart that I have given them — the evil inclination.

“And He grieved to His heart” — meaning, that Hashem grieved on account of man’s heart, that He gave him such a stony heart.

“And Noach found favor” (Bereishis 6:8) — meaning, that Noach was a righteous man who transformed himself from the natural tendency of being drawn away from the Creator to cleaving to Him.

ומזרעה שנייה עבזקה היא התקפה, שהיא עיקר עבזקה שבלב, כמו שכתוב ולעבדו בכלל לבבכם (דברים י"א, י"ג) זו תפלה, כי הלב מבין.

ובה יוכל לעלות לזכאות הבורא, ולהשרות עצמו בו יתברך, דתפלה הוא לשון קשור, שמרבק עצמו בבורא ברוך הוא בזכאות גודלה.

וזה מרצו לנו קשור של תפליין של יד, להשרות מהשכבה שבלב בו יתעלה.

ולזה איריך התאמצות יותר להתפלל תמיד לה' יתברך ברוך הוא שיזהה בעזרו? בלבתי יפרידו כי'ר. קרע מזכאות הבורא

כיעבע האדם שעולו הוא במחשבותיו בענייני עסקי. הרים קעה.

והוא פרוש הפסוק (בראשית ו', ה') ונרא ה' כי רעה רעה האדם הארץ, רוזה לומר כל זמן שהוא הארץ. רעה רעה האדם

ועל ידי זה גם קרוזה לעבד השם יתברך ואני עוזה רע, אף על פי כן מחשבותיו מושבתו רק רע כל היום

וניניהם ה' (בראשית ו', ו') פרוש נחמה קיתה לו יתברך בזה שיש לו לאדם התרנגולות לפניו יתברך, כי עשה את האדם

רוזה לומר כמאמר ח"ל אל מל'א שלשה מקרים כו, והאחד מהם (אי'ה ד', ו') ואשר הרועתי — אה לבעם שגמתי להם יוצר הרע.

ויניעב אל לבו — פרוש שהשם יתברך התעצב בשייל לבו של אדם שנתרן לו לב אכון בזה.

ונח מזא ח"ז (בראשית ו', ח') פרוש שנם היה צדיק והפה את עצמו מטבע העול להפרידו מזכאות כבורא יתעלה.

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He strengthened himself to cleave to the Creator, and “Noach found favor” — by reversing the letters of “chein,” meaning that he found favor in the eyes of Hashem.

The third level is acts of kindness. Behold, in the higher worlds, “compassion” means love — that the Blessed One loves the righteous according to their holy deeds which they perform on earth.

But in this world, it is called “kindness” — for even to one who is undeserving, Hashem bestows gratuitous kindness, giving him all that he lacks.

However, the righteous person who has attained the level that he can elevate all material things upward — that is, to raise from their physicality the holy sparks that are within them, meaning, in his eating and drinking and the like —

And all his thoughts, at the time when he does material things, are only to elevate the holy sparks that are in them.

Such a righteous person does not need kindnesses — meaning free kindness, as mentioned above — to provide him with the things he requires in this world out of compassion,

for the Blessed One bestows upon him all his needs according to the strict line of justice that is fitting for him, in accordance with his good deeds.

And this is the meaning of “gemilus chasadim” (acts of kindness) — from the expression (Bereishis 21:8) “And the child was weaned (וַיַּגְמַל) Yitzchak,”

meaning that he no longer needs the levels of kindness, for it comes to him through the love of the Blessed God Himself.

And through this, the righteous person binds himself ever higher in the eternal life, even while he is in this world; he has already reached the delight of the upper world’s eternal life.

And this is the meaning of the Gemara (Berachos 17a): “You shall see your world in your lifetime,” meaning that through this — that all his actions and movements are done in holiness and purity and cleaving and joy and love and awe —

ונמתן חן להזקק בבורא, ומזה חן — נט, בפה פיה  
אם רינו חן, להיות לו חן בעני השם יתברך.

מדרגה שלישית גמלות חסדים, והנה בועלמות  
העלונים שם רחמים שהו אהבה וرحمא, שעשיהם  
יתברך אהב את הצדיק לפי מעשיו הקדושים אשר  
בארץ עשה.

אבל בועלם זה נקאים חסד, קבונה אף למי שאין  
הגון — השם יתברך עוזה לו חסד חם ומהת לו די  
מקסרו.

אך הצדיק שהגיע למדרגה שיכל להעלות כל  
דברים הגשמיים למעלה, דקינו להעלות מחות  
הניצוצות הקדשות שיש בהם, דקינו במאכלו  
ושתיתו וכדומה.

וכל מהשכתיו בעת שעוזה דברים גשמיים,  
אין אלא להעלות הניצוצות קדושה שבחם

צדיק בזה אין אריך לחסדים — פרוש חסד חם  
כפ"ל — להת לו דברים הנאריכים בועלם זה מצד  
החסד.

כי השם יתברך משפיע לו כל ארכו על פי שורת  
קדינו קראיה לו על ידי מעשיו הטובים

זה פרוש גמלות חסדים, מלשון (בראשית כ"א,  
ח.) “וַיַּגְמַל הַיּוֹלֵד” — יצחק.

שאינו אריך למדרגות חסדים, כי אם מגייע לו על ידי  
אהבת קאל יתברך אותו.

ועל ידי זה הצדיק מקשר את עצמו למעלה מהמעלה  
בחיים הנצחיים, אפילו בשהוא בעולם הזה, הגיע  
למענו עולם העליון מחיה הנצחיים.

זה פרוש הימרא עולם פראה ביחס (ברכות י"ז,  
א) — פרוש שעיל ידי זה שכל מעשיו ותנוועתו  
שעוזה הכל בקדושה ובטהרה ובדקות ובשנאה  
ובאהבה וביראה —

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from this he attains the delight of the upper world even in this world.

And it may also be said that this is the intention of the verse (Bereishis 4:7)...

“And you who cleave to Hashem your God are all alive today” (Devarim 4:4) — meaning, through cleaving yourselves to the Blessed Creator, you will have eternal life even today, in this world, as mentioned above.

And this too is the meaning of the verse (Devarim 33:4): “Torah tzivah lanu Moshe, morashah kehilas Yaakov” — it also alludes to the three aforementioned levels.

“Torah tzivah lanu” — meaning, to all of us, He commanded to study His Torah even not for its own sake, and this is “for us,” each according to his level.

The second, “morashah” (heritage), refers to the second level mentioned above — to elevate the holy sparks, which are called the inheritance of the fathers, as is known.

And the Blessed Name has given us as an inheritance and possession this power — to elevate the holy sparks upward, and this is “morashah.”

And this is as in the verse (Daniel 12:2): “And He fulfills His faith to those who sleep in the dust,” meaning the holy sparks that have fallen below — the Blessed One fulfills His faith to them, to raise them from the dust to holiness.

And the third level, “kehilas Yaakov,” refers to the complete cleaving that the righteous one has — through this he influences all of Israel with goodness, gathering together the congregations of Yaakov who take shelter under his wings to receive his influence.

And with this, the saying of the Gemara (Shabbos 89a) is explained: “The Satan said, ‘Torah — where is it?’ He [the Blessed One] said to him, ‘Go to the earth.’”

“And you who cleave to Hashem your God are all alive today” (Devarim 4:4) — meaning, through cleaving yourselves to the Blessed Creator, you will have eternal life even today, in this world, as mentioned above.

מזה יגיע לו תפעוג עולם העליון בעולם הזה.

(ויש לומר מפני פונת הפסוק (בראשית ד', ז).

ואףם הקבאים בה אליכם חיים כלכם היום — פרוש, על ידי הקבוקו שתקבוקו עצםם בבורא ברוך הוא, והוא לכם חיים נצחים גם היום בעולם הזה. הנה בג"ל

זה מפני פרוש הפסוק (בראשית ל"ג, ד') תורה צוה לנו משה מורה קהילת יעקב — רמז נמי לא מרגות הנ"ל.

תורה צוה לנו” — פרוש, לך לנו צוה למד תורה. אפלו שלא לשמה, וזה “נו” כל אחד לפ"י מרגות

שנית “מורשה” — זה מרגה שנית בג"ל, להעלוות היצוצות קדושה, שהם נקרים נחלת אבות בידוע.

ונמו לנו שם יתברך נחלת וירשה זו, להעלוות היצוצות קדושה למעלה, וזה “מורשה”

זה כאמור ומקים אמונתו לשני עפר — רוזה לומר, היצוצות קדושה שנפלו למטה, שם יתברך מקים אמונתו להם, להעלוות מעפר אל הקדושה

ומרגה שלישית “קהילת יעקב” — קינו הקבוקו גמור שיש לצדיק, על ידי זה הוא משפיע לכל ישראל כל טוב, והוא מקהל קהילות יעקב שם מסתופפים מחת צל נפיו להשפיע להם.

ובזה יתברר כאמור הגמרא (שבת פ"ט, א') — אמר השלtron: “תורה, היכן היא?” אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא: “לה אל הארץ

ואףם הקבאים בה אליכם חיים כלכם היום — פרוש, על ידי הקבוקו שתקבוקו עצםם בבורא ברוך הוא, והוא לכם חיים נצחים גם היום בעולם הזה. הנה בג"ל

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And this too is the meaning of the verse (Devarim 33:4): “Torah tzivah lanu Moshe, morashah kehilas Yaakov” — it also alludes to the three aforementioned levels.

“Torah tzivah lanu” — meaning, to all of us, He commanded to study His Torah even not for its own sake, and this is “for us,” each according to his level.

The second, “morashah” (heritage), refers to the second level mentioned above — to elevate the holy sparks, which are called the inheritance of the fathers, as is known.

And the Blessed Name has given us as an inheritance and possession this power — to elevate the holy sparks upward, and this is “morashah.”

And this is as in the verse (Daniel 12:2): “And He fulfills His faith to those who sleep in the dust,” meaning the holy sparks that have fallen below — the Blessed One fulfills His faith to them, to raise them from the dust to holiness.

And the third level, “kehilas Yaakov,” refers to the complete cleaving that the righteous one has — through this he influences all of Israel with goodness, gathering together the congregations of Yaakov who take shelter under his wings to receive his influence.

And with this, the saying of the Gemara (Shabbos 89a) is explained: “The Satan said, ‘Torah — where is it?’ He [the Blessed One] said to him, ‘Go to the earth.’”

And the earth said, “It is not with me; go to the sea.” And the sea said, “It is not with me; go to the son of Amram.”

And it must be understood: how could the Blessed One say something that is not so?

What appears to me is this: the Blessed One said to the Satan, the accuser, “Go to the earth” — meaning, that even Torah study in materiality and corporeality, that is, not for its own sake, also brings satisfaction before Me.

And you have no permission to accuse the Children of Israel.

And the earth said, “It is not with me” — meaning, that the ultimate purpose is not in materiality, as mentioned above, but “Go to the sea,”

וזה נמי פירוש הפסוק (דברים ל"ג, ד') תורה צוה לנו מורה מורה קהילת יעקב — רמז נמי לא מרגות ה"ל.

תורה צוה לנו — פירוש, ככלנו צוה למדת תורה. אפלו שלא לשמה, וזה “לנו” כל אחד לפי מרגות.

שנית “מורשה” — זה מרגה שנייה ה"ל, להעלוות. הרצאות קדושה, שהם נקראים נחלת אבות בנוין.

ונמו לנו שם יתברך נחלת וירשה זו, להעלוות. הרצאות קדושה למעלה, וזה “מורשה”

וזה כנאמר ומכיון אמונתו לישני עפר — רוזה לומר, הרצאות קדושה שנפלו למטה, שם יתברך מכיון אמונתו להם, להעלוותם מעפר אל קדושה.

ומרגה שלישית “קהילת יעקב” — הינו הקבוקות גמור שיש לצדיק, על ידי זה הוא משפט לכל ישראל כל טוב, והוא מכהיל קהילת יעקב שם מסתופים מחת אל כנפיו להשפיע להם.

ובזה יבואר מאמר הגמara (שבת פ"ט, א') — אמר השלtron: “תורה, حقן היא?” אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא: “זה אל הארץ,

ואמרה הארץ, אין כי — לך אל הים. והם אמרו, אין כי — לך אל בון עמך,

ויש להבין, כיצד יאמר שם יתברך דבר שאין?

והנראה לי, שם יתברך אמר אל השtron הקטער לך אל הארץ — אפלו לימוד תורה בארציות וחומר, לנו שלא לשמה, גם כן מקבל לפנינו מחת רוח.

אין לך להשיטין על בני ישראל.

ולארץ אמרה, אין כי — פירוש, דעקר המכליות אין בארכיות כנ"ל, רק לך אל הים.

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meaning, to the righteous one who elevates the sparks to the supernal sea, for there is their ascent.

The righteous person who attains this level — he is the very essence of the purpose.

And this is what is meant by the verse (Koheles 1:7): “All the rivers go to the sea” — meaning, “rivers” (נהלים) is from the expression “inheritance” (נְהָלָה),

that is, the elevation of holy sparks is called “inheritance,” as mentioned above — they “go to the supernal sea.”

And the sea said, “It is not with me; go to the son of Amram” — meaning, there is still above this the level of Moshe Rabbeinu, peace be upon him,

who attained the highest level of cleaving to the Blessed Creator in eternal life.

הַיּוֹנָה, הַצְדִיק שֶׁהוּא מַעַלְהָ הַנִּצְוֹת אֶל הַיּוֹם הַעֲלִיוֹן,  
שֶׁלִשִׁים הִיא עַלְמֵנוּ.

הַצְדִיק שֶׁהָגַע אֶל הַמְּרַגָּה הָאֶזְזֶל, הוּא עַלְמֵרַגְלִית.

וְזֶה אָמָרׁוּ “כָל הַנְּחָלִים הַוְלָכִים אֶל הַיּוֹם” (קְהֻלָּת א',  
ז.) — פָּרוֹשָׁה, הַנְּחָלִים לְשֹׁזְנוֹ נְחָלָה וִירָשָׁה

דְּהַיּוֹנוּ, הַעֲלָאת נִצְוֹת קְדוּשָׁה נְקֻרָאִים יְרוֹשָׁה כְּפָ"ל  
— הַוְלָכִים אֶל הַיּוֹם הַעֲלִיוֹן.

וְקַיִם אָמָרׁ, אֵין בַּי — לְךָ אַצְלָ בָּן עָמָרָם. פָּרוֹשָׁה,  
שִׁיַּשׁ עַד לְמַעַלָּה מִזּוֹ מְרַגָּה, כְּמוֹ מִדְרָגָת מֶשֶׁה רַבְּנָה  
עַלְיוֹ הַשְׁלֹוֹם.

שֶׁהָגַע אֶל מַעַלָּות קְדָבָקָות בְּבּוֹרָא יִתְבָּרַךְ בְּחַיִם  
הַנְּצָחִים.

#### [NOTE Summary

Rabbi Elimelech begins with the verse *Bereishis bara Elokim* and its Midrashic interpretations—“for the sake of Israel,” “for the sake of Torah,” and “for the sake of the mitzvah of bikkurim (first fruits).” Though these seem distinct, he shows they express one unified intent: the world’s creation is sustained by three pillars—Torah, *avodah* (service), and acts of kindness (Avos 1:2). These, he teaches, are not abstract virtues but ascending modes of divine attachment.

The first level is **Torah**, the service of study—learning *lishmah* (for its own sake). While most begin *shelo lishmah*, even that has value if pursued with persistence, since only through steady refinement of the heart and traits can one come to learn purely for the sake of Heaven. The second level is **Avodah**, prayer—the labor of the heart. In prayer, the heart becomes a vessel for understanding and connection, binding the soul to its Creator, as the word *tefillah* (from *tofel*, to bind) implies. Even the knot of the *tefillin shel yad* alludes to binding the thought of the heart to God.

Because man’s nature draws his thoughts toward worldly matters, he must continually pray for divine assistance, lest the *yetzer hara* separate him from God. The verse “*And Hashem saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth*” (Bereishis 6:5) describes this human tendency—while on earth, his mind gravitates downward. Yet even so, God finds consolation (*vayinachem Hashem*)—that man’s frailty justifies mercy, for the Creator Himself implanted the evil inclination within him. Still, like Noach who found favor, one can reverse that tendency—transforming attachment to earthliness into cleaving to God. Such a person lives with divine grace (*chein*), turning the natural pull downward into ascent.

# The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

## Noam Elimelech

### Parshas Bereshis

The third level is **Gemilus Chasadim**, loving-kindness. In the higher worlds, kindness is synonymous with love—God’s response to the righteous according to their holy deeds. But in this world, *chesed* means undeserved mercy: God grants sustenance even to the unworthy. The *tzaddik*, however, who has refined his nature and elevates the sparks within all material acts—his eating, drinking, and even his thoughts—no longer needs unearned kindness, for his blessings flow through the channel of justice itself. God provides for him according to the merit of his deeds, as it says, *Gemilus Chasadim*—from *vayigamal*, “the child was weaned” (Bereishis 21:8). He has outgrown dependence on grace, receiving instead through divine love earned by closeness.

Such a *tzaddik* lives eternal life even in this world, as in *And you who cleave to Hashem your God are alive today* (Devarim 4:4). His every act is in holiness and joy, allowing him to “see his world in his lifetime” (Berachos 17a). The verse *Torah tzivah lanu Moshe morashah kehilas Yaakov* (Devarim 33:4) thus encodes the three levels: **Torah**—study for all; **Morashah**—inheritance, the elevation of sparks; and **Kehilas Yaakov**—the ultimate unity where the *tzaddik* gathers souls beneath his wings to draw them divine blessing. In this way, the world’s creation “for Torah, for Israel, and for bikkurim” becomes one: Torah is study, Israel is prayer, and *bikkurim*—the first yield of life—is kindness and elevation.

Finally, the Midrash that the Satan sought the Torah and was told, “Go to the earth,” and then to the sea, and then to “the son of Amram,” symbolizes these levels. God tells the Satan: even Torah studied with earthliness (*shelo lishmah*) brings Me joy; yet the earth admits, “Not with me”—its end lies beyond materiality, in the *tzaddik* who raises sparks to the “supernal sea.” Still, the sea points higher—to Moshe Rabbeinu, who reached perfect *deveikus* in eternal life. Thus, the full journey of creation is an ascent—from earthly study, to purified prayer, to sublime unity—culminating in Moshe’s total cleaving to God.

### Practical Takeaway

Every person journeys through these three levels: learning Torah even imperfectly, praying with striving heart, and performing acts of kindness with intention to elevate and unite. The goal is to transform the physical world itself into holiness, so that even eating and daily labor become offerings of *deveikus*. Over time, the outer becomes inner, and one begins to live, like the *tzaddik*, the verse “You are alive today”—tasting eternal life within this world.

### Chassidic Story

Once, a disciple asked Rabbi Elimelech how a person could reach *deveikus* while eating or walking. The Rebbe replied, “When you taste the bread, know that it too desires to rise to its Maker. You are only the hand that lifts it.” He then told of his brother, the holy Reb Zusha, who once wept before eating a crust of bread. “Zusha,” he said, “feels that this bread has waited its whole life to sing *Shema Yisrael* through me.” (Noam Elimelech, *Likutei Shoshana*, and oral traditions of Lzhensk) **END NOTE]**

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## Noam Elimelech

### Parshas Bereshis

#### מאמר ב

And we shall return to the first topic — “Upon three things the world endures: upon judgment, upon truth, and upon peace.” Judgment refers to Torah, for Torah too is called “judgment,” in whatever manner it is studied, as mentioned above.

“Upon truth” refers to the level of Yaakov, who is the intermediary attribute of Rachamim (compassion), as it is written (Michah 7:20), “Give truth to Yaakov.” For through his elevating of the holy sparks, he arouses compassion and thus has no need for kindnesses, as explained above.

“Upon peace” refers to deveikus—the attachment that binds itself with the Blessed Creator, for His Name is “Peace.”

And with this we can understand the sacred verses of this parashah (Bereishis 2:16–17): “And Hashem commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may surely eat; but of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it, for on the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die.”

There are several points of difficulty: (a) the doubling of expression “achol tochel,” (b) the apparently superfluous word “mimenu,” (c) the double phrase “mot tamut,” and (d) Rashi’s explanation that by adding to the command, they came to diminish it.

This is difficult: surely she knew truly that Hashem had never commanded regarding touching at all, and if so, there is no proof from touching to eating; for concerning eating, there truly was a command and warning.

It appears that the root of the matter is as follows: the Blessed Creator said, “Of every tree of the garden you may surely eat,” alluding to the Torah, which is called “the Tree of Life.”

“Achol” (you may eat) is in the hidden form, meaning study for its own sake—this is the root and essence of the warning of the Blessed One.

ונחזר לענינו הראשו — על שלשה דברים הعلوم קים: על הדין, ועל האמת, ועל השלום. על הדין — זו תורה, כי תורה נמי אקורי דין, באזנה אף שיחיה כנ"ל.

על האמת — הינו למקרגת יעקב, שהוא הממציע שהוא רחמים, כמו שגאנטר (מיicker ז', כ') תמן אמת ליעקב. ועל ידי שפיעלה ניצוצות קדושה, מערך ברקמים, אין אריך לחסדים כנ"ל.

על השלום — הינו דבקות, שרבוק עצמו בפורה ברוך הוא, ששםו שלום.

ובזה יובנו מקראי קדש שפירושה זו (בראשית ב', ט"ז–י"ז): ויצא ה' אלקים על האם לאמר — מכל עז הגן אכל תאכל. ומצע הדעת טוב ברע לא תאכל מפנוי, כי ביום אכלך מפנוי מות פמות.

הקדושים רביהם: א) כפלוי גלעון “אכל תאכל”, ב) שהמלך “מאננו” בראית מיתרה; ג) כפל “מות פמות”; ד) מה שפרש רש"י ז"ל — על ידי שהוסיפו על האזוי באו לידי גרעון.

הקשה — הלא הניתה יודעת באמת של אזה עלייה השם בענין היגיינה מעולם, ואם כן אין ראה מגיעה לאכילה, כי על אכילה באמת היא מצוה ונזהרת.

ונראה לפירוש ששרשו של הענין כך: שהשם יתברך אמר “מכל עז הגן אכל תאכל” — רמז לתורה, שהיא עז חמיים.

אכל” — לשון נסתר, פרוש למוד לשמה, וזהו “השער והעקר שהזיהיר שם יתברך ברוך הוא.

# The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

## Noam Elimelech

### Parshas Bereshis

And nevertheless, if you have not yet reached the level of studying Torah for its own sake, still—"to 'chel'" (you shall eat)—study for your benefit, meaning *not for its own sake*, but do not turn away from the Torah.

"And of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat *mimenu*" — precisely from it.

Meaning: "From it you shall not eat" refers to the spiritual elements within physical things, wherein both good and evil are mixed. The "good" are the holy sparks present in all material entities.

"From it you shall not eat" therefore means: do not make your intention arise from materiality and physicality alone, but only from the spiritual essence within it — namely, from the holy sparks that it contains.

"For on the day you eat from it, you shall surely die" — means you will die in the World to Come, that is, in the eternal life; and the word "die" itself, written in hidden form, hints at the concealed world of everlasting life.

"You shall die" — in this world.

And behold, Chavah (Eve) heard two levels in this command — that is, two modes of Torah study: learning in any form as mentioned above, and also the elevation of sparks.

From this she understood that there must be yet a higher level — complete cleaving (*deveikus*) to the Blessed Creator.

Therefore, when she said, "You shall not eat of it nor touch it," the "touch" (*nega*) alludes to even a momentary interruption in attachment.

She meant: do not even momentarily stop your cleaving, lest you die — that is, lest your bond with the Divine be broken.

For she thought that this third level — *deveikus* — too had been commanded; but in truth, *deveikus* arises naturally from the two earlier levels, Torah and elevation of sparks.

And the serpent pressed her until she touched it and said, "Just as there is no death through this touching," meaning: you are not separated from *deveikus* through this — "so too there is no death in eating."

ועל כל פנים, אם לא הגעת עזין לטעם תורה  
לשמה, על כל פנים "תאכל" — רוזה לומר,  
להנאהה תלמד, זהינו שלא לשמה, והוא "תאכל"  
לובכה, ולא פמוש מתרתיה

ומעת הדעת טוב ורע לא תאכל — "מפני" זיקא

רוזה לומר, דברי הנשימות אשר בתוכם מערב גם  
בן טוב — זהם הניתנות הקדושות אשר בכל דבר  
בגשימות

לא תאכל מפני" — פרוש, שלא יהה בונח  
מחמירות ומגשימות בלבד, רק מרווחת שבו, הינו  
הניתנות קדושה שבו — מזה תאכל

כ"י ביום אכלך מפני מות פמות" — פרוש, "מות"  
בעולם הבא, בחיי הנצחים; ולשון "מות" היא גם  
בגסטר — רמז לעולם הבא, חיים הנצחים

תמות" — בעולם הנה  
והנה מוה שמה שמי מדרגות — זהינו למוד  
הتورה באיזה אופן שלומד פנ"ל, וגם העלאת  
הניתנות

ממיילא היבנה שיש עוד מדרגה אחת, והיא הדרגות  
הגמרה בפואר יתברך שמו.

ולכן שאמרה "לא תאכלו מפני ולא תגע בו" —  
פרוש, "גנעה" בצלם, הינו הפקה בצלם  
הדרגות.

שגם כן לא תפסק, פן תמתו — זהינו הפסיקת  
הדרגות.

שהיא סבירה שגם על מדרגה שלישית, והיא  
הדרגות, גם פן נצotta; ובאמת, הדרגות ממיילא  
באה על ידי שמי הדרגות הנ"ל

והנחש דחפה עד שנגעה בו, ואמר: כשם שאין מיתה  
בגיעה זו — פרוש, שאין אתה נפסקת על ידי זה מון  
הדרגות — כד אין מיתה באכילה

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## Noam Elimelech

### Parshas Bereshis

Meaning: even if you do not eat with the proper intention to elevate the spiritual within, you will not truly die — “you shall not surely die.”

And this is the meaning of “In the beginning, God created — for the sake of Torah... for the sake of Israel... for the sake of the first fruits.” As mentioned above.

“For the sake of Israel” alludes to cleaving to the Creator through song and praise — for *Yisrael* (ישראל) hints to *Yashar-El* (ישר א"ל), “direct to God.”

“For the sake of the first fruits,” which are called “reishis,” alludes to the elevation of holy sparks, as it is written (Shemos 23:19, 34:26), “The first of the first fruits of your land you shall bring to the house of Hashem.”

Meaning: the sparks that have fallen below, you shall bring to the house of Hashem — to elevate them from the dust, as explained above.

May Hashem teach us the path of truth, to serve Him with perfection, in truth and with wholeness. Amen — so may it be His will.

פרוש, גם אם לא תאכל בפניהם ה' ללהעלוות  
הרווחניות, לא “מוות פְּמַתּוֹן”

והוא פרוש “בראשית ברא” — בשכיל תורה כו’,  
ובשכיל יישרָאֵל כו’, כפ”ל

ובשכיל ישראל — רמז על דבקות בבורא יתברך  
ויתעללה, שדבוק בו יתברך על ידי שירות ותשבחות;  
”זזה רמז יישרָאֵל” — “ישר א”ל

ובשכיל בכורים הנקראים “ראשית” — רמז על  
דרגת העלוות ניצוצות קדושה, כמו שנאמר (שモ' 2:7, י"ט; ל"ד, כ"ו): “ראשית בכורי אדמתך פְּבִיא  
בֵּית הַ

דְּהַנִּינָה, הַנִּיצּוֹצָה שְׁגָפְלָה לְמַטָּה, פְּבִיא בֵּית הַ —  
להעלוותם מעתך כפ"ל

השם יוננו זרף קאמת, לעבדו בשלמות, באמת  
ובתמים. אמו, כו יחי רצון.

#### [NOTE Summary]

In this segment, Reb Elimelech of Lzhensk expounds on the verse concerning the Tree of Knowledge, revealing it as a metaphor for the pathways of divine service — Torah, elevation of sparks, and deveikus (cleaving to Hashem). The prohibition “of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat” teaches that a person must not engage in worldly or spiritual pursuits with self-centered motives, but only with pure intention to elevate the holy sparks embedded within physical reality. Eating “for oneself” — that is, indulging in Torah or material life for personal pleasure or pride — distances one from divine life.

Yet Hashem, in His kindness, gave man two modes of growth: first, “achol” — study *lismah* (for its own sake), and second, “tochal” — study *she'lo lishmah* (not for its own sake), for even such learning will ultimately lead to purity. However, when man turns Torah into a pursuit of ego, or takes the physical without connecting to its inner Divine root, he experiences spiritual “death” — separation from eternal life.

Chavah (Eve) misunderstood the balance between these levels. She added “nor shall you touch it,” mistaking the level of **deveikus** for an independent command rather than the natural outgrowth of Torah and avodah. The serpent exploited this error: since touching did not bring death, he argued that eating too would not harm her — persuading her to confuse spiritual connection with self-directed experience.

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The tzaddik, however, integrates all three pillars — Torah, truth, and peace — embodying judgment, compassion, and attachment to Hashem. He refines the world by studying Torah with pure intent, elevating sparks through his deeds, and binding himself completely with the Infinite. Thus, Reb Elimelech concludes: the purpose of creation — “for the sake of Torah, for the sake of Israel, and for the sake of the first fruits” — corresponds to these three levels. “Torah” is the wisdom of Divine judgment, “Israel” is deveikus through song and praise (*Yashar-El* — direct to God), and “first fruits” symbolizes the elevation of fallen sparks. Through these three, the tzaddik transforms the physical world into a sanctuary for Divine presence.

#### Practical Takeaway

Every act, even mundane, can become an act of holiness when performed with the right kavannah. The challenge is not to reject the physical but to infuse it with spiritual awareness. Learning Torah, praying, eating, or working — all can become vehicles of elevation when the purpose is to bring holiness from “dust to heaven.” This is the task of every Jew: to eat only “from the spiritual within,” to draw life from the Divine spark in all things, and to remain connected through Torah, compassion, and peace — the three sustaining forces of the world.

#### Chassidic Story

Once, **Reb Elimelech of Lzhensk** was asked why he would pause in the middle of eating and close his eyes in deep focus. He explained: “When I eat bread, I imagine the farmer sowing the seed, the rain sent by Heaven, and the sun ripening it. I see Hashem giving life to every crumb. When I chew, I elevate those sparks back to their Source.” A student asked, “And what if a person cannot reach such thoughts?” Reb Elimelech smiled and answered, “Then let him simply remember Whose world he eats in — and that itself brings life to the sparks.”

#### END NOTE]

#### מאמר ג

**“In the beginning, God created”** — Rashi explains: “For the sake of the Torah, which is called *reishis*, and for the sake of Israel...” It seems that Rashi’s intention in these words was to reveal the Oneness of the Creator, blessed be His Name — that He alone is the singular source of all wonders and the true Creator.

The evidence of His Oneness is found within His people, Israel — the righteous, whose intellect and hearts are exceedingly broad, shining with infinite spiritual qualities and refined virtues. Our eyes themselves behold their greatness — far above all other nations — and the holy Torah which the good God, in His mercy, gave to them.

בראשית ברא — פרוש רשות זיל: “בשביל התורה שנקראת ראשית, ובשביל ישראלי כו.” נראה לפرش שפנות רשות זיל בדברים האלה היא להראות אחדות יתברך שמו — שהוא ייחיד. בוגפלאותיו ובזרא אמת

זזה האות והראיה מעמו ישראלי — הצדיקים, אשר אויר שכלם ולפם רוחב מואד, במעלות ומדות טובות עד אין קץ.

אשר עינינו רואות מעלהם האגדולה מכל האמות, וההתורה הקדושה אשר נמנן להם האל הטוב ברוחמי.

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These two — Israel and the Torah — testify and affirm His greatness, justifying His awe-inspiring and wondrous deeds, for He created His world alone, without helper or partner.

As our Sages taught: “Three bear witness to one another — the Holy One, blessed be He, the Torah, and Israel.”

This is the meaning of the verse: “*Shema Yisrael Hashem Eloheinu Hashem Echad*” — “Shema” (hear) alludes to the Torah, for “hearing” refers to the Torah we heard directly from His mouth, blessed be He.

“Yisrael” refers to the people themselves, who are the testimony to the Divine — bearing witness that He is the Former and the Creator.

Thus, Rashi’s words “for the sake of the Torah and for the sake of Israel” mean that both of these are witnesses to creation itself, confirming the truth of His Oneness.

And with this, the matter is clear.

שְׁנִי אָלוֹ — יִשְׂרָאֵל וְתֹרָה — יִתְגַּנּוּ עֲדֹתָם וַיַּצְדְּקֻוּ  
עַל רַב נָרָא אֹתָיו וּנְפָלָא אֹתָיו, אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא עַוְלָמוֹ לְבָדוֹ  
בְּלִי עֹזֶר וְסִיעַ בְּלִיעַדוֹ  
עַל ذָרָה שָׁאָמְרוּ: “שֶׁלְשָׁה מְעִידִין זֶה עַל זֶה —  
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא, וְתֹרָה, וִיִּשְׂרָאֵל”

וְזֶה “שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל הִי” — רַקָּז “שָׁמַע” עַל הַתֹּרָה,  
כִּי “שָׁמַע” הִיא הַתֹּרָה שְׁשִׁמְעָנוּ מִפְּיו יִתְבְּרַךְ

וְ“יִשְׂרָאֵל” הִם הַעֲדָות עַל הַשֵּׁם, שֶׁהוּא הַיּוֹצֵר, הוּא  
הַבָּרוּךְ.

וְלֹזֶה כְּוֹן רַשְׁיָּו גַּם כֵּן בָּאָמָרוּ “בְּשִׁבְיל הַתֹּרָה  
וּבְשִׁבְיל יִשְׂרָאֵל”, לֹזֶר שְׁנִי אָלוֹ הִם רָאֵיה עַל  
“בְּרָאשִׁית”.  
וְכל קָעֵבָנוּ

#### [NOTE Summary:

In this segment, Reb Elimelech of Lzhensk teaches that Rashi’s commentary on “Bereishis bara Elokim” — “for the sake of the Torah and for the sake of Israel” — is not only an explanation of purpose but a revelation of the absolute Oneness of Hashem. The Torah and the Jewish people are not external to creation; they are the *living testimony* of the Divine unity that animates all existence.

The Torah, called *reishis*, embodies Divine wisdom — the blueprint of creation through which Hashem’s will becomes manifest. Israel, the people who live by that Torah, reveal this unity in action: their spiritual sensitivity, refinement of character, and endless capacity for holiness are living evidence that Hashem alone governs all worlds. The tzaddikim, whose minds and hearts are expansive and radiant, bear witness to the infinite greatness of their Creator, demonstrating how His light flows through them in wisdom, kindness, and awe.

This is the meaning of the verse “**Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad**.” The word *Shema* alludes to Torah — “the hearing” of Divine truth at Sinai; *Yisrael* refers to the people who bear witness; and *Hashem Echad* proclaims the Creator who unites them both. Thus, the Torah, Israel, and Hashem form a triad of mutual testimony — three who “bear witness to one another.” In every generation, their unity affirms that the world was created by the One G-d alone, without partner or assistant.

#### Practical Takeaway

To study Torah or to live as a Jew is not simply to obey — it is to **testify** to Divine unity. Every act of learning,

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kindness, or prayer declares: "There is nothing besides Him." The Torah refines our minds, while living its truths refines our hearts. When we live with integrity, holiness, and compassion, we become living evidence that the Creator dwells within His creation. The more one unites Torah and life — intellect and action — the more one reveals that the world's true foundation is not chaos, but **oneness**.

#### Chassidic Story

Once, a non-Jewish scholar came to **Reb Elimelech of Lzhensk** and said, "You Jews speak of one G-d, yet your customs and laws are countless! How can there be unity in such multiplicity?" Reb Elimelech smiled and pointed to a candle on the table. "See its flame — it has many colors: white, yellow, and blue. Yet it is one light. So too the Torah — many paths, one fire." The scholar nodded slowly and said, "Then your mitzvos are not divisions, but rays." Reb Elimelech replied, "Exactly. Every Jew who lives with Torah becomes another flame revealing the One who burns in all." **END NOTE]**

#### מאמר ז

**"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth..." — this can be explained through the verse (Tehillim 11:7): "For Hashem is righteous; He loves acts of righteousness."**  
**The meaning is as follows:**

We see among people that what they already possess no longer remains dear to them; they constantly yearn for something beyond themselves.

But the Creator, blessed be He, is not so. Even though "Hashem is righteous in all His ways," giving life and kindness to all flesh, He still desires and delights in the righteousness of man.

And even though our righteousness adds nothing to Him — "if we are righteous, what do we give Him?" — still He desires it, only to bestow good upon us in the end.

Therefore the verse says: "For Hashem is righteous, He loves righteousness" — though He is complete in His own righteousness, lacking nothing in His attributes, yet He loves and takes pleasure in man's righteous acts.

And this is a great praise of the Creator — that He receives pleasure from our deeds, though He needs nothing from us.

The Creator, blessed be He, is unique in His attributes — for all His attributes are completely one with Him.

But we, His people Israel, are each different in our traits, serving Him according to our individual qualities.

ברא אלוקים את השמים ואת הארץ כי" — יבואר על דרכו זה, ונקיים לפרש הפסוק (תהלים י"א, ז): "כִּי צָדִיק הִיא אֲזֹקָת אָהָב." הפרשן בז —

הנה עינינו רואות, דרכו בני אדם — רקבר שיש להם כבר, אין הם חביב בעיניהם, אלא משותוקים פמ"ז לזכר שחויז להם.

אבל הבורא ברוך הוא איןנו לנו. אף על פי שצדיק ה' בכל רציו, ונותנו צדקה לכלבשר — אף על פון מתחאה וממשותוק בצדקות אדם.

ונא אם צדקהנו, מה נתנו לו? — רק להיטיב לנו באחריתנו.

לזה אמר הכתוב: "כִּי צָדִיק הִיא אֲזֹקָת אָהָב" — אף על פי שצדיק ה' בעצמו, ואיןו חסר במדותיו כלום, אף על פוןצדקות אהב.

ולזה שבח גדול לבורא יתברך שם ויתעלה, שמקabel תענוג ואינו צריך לנו.

והנה, הבורא ברוך הוא — יחיד במדותיו, שכל מדותיו הון אצלו יתברך אחדות גמורה.

ואנחנו עמו ישראל, כל אחד חילוק במדותיו, ועוזב שמו יתברך לפי בחינתו.

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This explains the verse: “For Hashem is righteous.” Although His righteousness is perfect and unified, still “He loves acts of righteousness” — He accepts all forms of righteousness from us.

Even though each person gives tzedakah or performs a mitzvah in his own way — some with pure intent “for the sake of Heaven,” others for personal benefit — Hashem accepts them all.

Therefore it says “righteousnesses” (אִצְקּוֹת) in plural — for He loves and receives from us all kinds of righteousness.

This explains “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” — those who serve for the sake of Heaven are called “heavens,” while those who serve not for its own sake are “earth.”

Both — heaven and earth — “God created,” for He desires and includes them all in His will.

This also explains the verse, “And the earth was chaos and void...” — meaning that even those whose service is imperfect, not *lismah*, He still desires.

The reason is explained by the verse: “And the Spirit of God hovered upon the face of the waters” — as the Midrash teaches, “this is the spirit of Mashiach.” When Mashiach comes, all will be rectified and unified.

#### [NOTE Summary]

In this Maamer, Rabbi Elimelech of Lzhensk opens with the verse, “*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*” He connects it with “*For Hashem is righteous, He loves acts of righteousness.*” The Rebbe explains that while human beings lose appreciation for what they already possess, always desiring what they do not have, the Creator is utterly different. Although Hashem is perfect and lacks nothing, He still desires the *tzedakos*—the righteous deeds—of His creations. This desire does not stem from any deficiency, but rather from His will to bestow goodness upon His people.

The Rebbe reveals a deeper praise of the Divine: Hashem takes delight in our actions even though He gains nothing from them. His attributes are all unified within Him, yet He cherishes the diversity of human service—each Jew serving according to his own nature and understanding. Thus, the verse “*For Hashem is*

וזה פרוש הפסוק: “כִּי צָדִיק הִי”— לומר, אף על פי שהוא ייחד בצדקהו והכל אחדות גמור — אף על פי כן, “אִצְקּוֹת אֶחָד,” רוץ לה לומר כל מיני אִצְקּוֹת אֶחָד ומקביל מאותו.

אָף עַל פִּי שֶׁכֶל אֶחָד נוֹתֵן אִצְקָה בְּבִיחוּנָה — ייש שְׁכַנְנָה לְשָׁמִים לְבַד, וַיְשׁ מְכוּנוּם לְטוּבָתָם — אָף על פי כן מקבל מיהם, כי מותך שליא לשמה בא לשמה.

והוא “אִצְקּוֹת אֶחָד”— לשון רבים, שאחָד מאננו הכל, כל מיני אִצְקּוֹת.

וְהוּא “בְּרָאשִׁית... אֵת הַשְׁמִים וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ”— שָׁמָה הָעֹבֵד לשֶׁם שְׁמִים הוּא בְּבִיחוּנָה “שְׁמִים,” וְהָעֹבֵד שליא לשמה הוא בְּבִיחוּנָה “הָאָרֶץ.”

אֵת הָכָל בָּרָא” יתפרק שמו, ובכָל רצונו יתפרק “

וְזֶה מְפָרֵש הַכְתוּב: “וְהָאָרֶץ קִיַתָה תָהו וּבָהו” — פרוש, אף על פי שהעובד שליא לשמה היא מזינה שפלה, אף על פי כן חפץ בו יתפרק גם פָנִים.

וְהַטָּעַם אָמֵר הַכְתוּב: “רוּת אֶלְקָיִם מְרַקְבָת עַל פְנֵי הָאָמִים”— על דרכ שנאמר במקרא: “רווחו של מישית,” ורוץ לה לומר: כשיבוא מישית — יהי הכל מתקן.

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*righteous, He loves righteousnesses*” uses the plural form, signifying that He loves every type of righteousness, whether pure and *lishmah* (for its own sake) or imperfect and *shelo lishmah* (for personal motives).

This is the secret of “*God created the heavens and the earth.*” “Heavens” represent those who serve for the sake of Heaven, while “earth” represents those whose motives are mixed or self-serving. Yet Hashem created and values both—He accepts every form of service, for even imperfect deeds are steps on the path to sincerity. The phrase “*And the earth was chaos and void*” refers to such lower forms of service, and still “*the Spirit of God hovered over the waters*”—the spirit of Mashiach, who will ultimately perfect and unite all levels of Divine service.

#### Practical Takeaway

Serve Hashem with sincerity to the best of your ability, but never despair if your motives are not fully pure. Even service *shelo lishmah* is beloved by Hashem, for He treasures every movement of the soul toward Him. Over time, these acts refine the heart and bring one to serve *lishmah*. Every honest effort, even when imperfect, draws Divine pleasure and is counted in the great tapestry of righteousness that will one day be perfected with the coming of Mashiach.

#### Chassidic Story

Once, a poor villager came to **Rabbi Elimelech of Lzhensk** with tears, confessing that he often gave charity not out of compassion, but because he feared being judged by others. “Rebbe,” he wept, “is such charity worth anything?” Rabbi Elimelech smiled and replied, “My dear Yid, when a child first learns to walk, he stumbles often—but the father’s joy is beyond measure at each step. So too does Hashem rejoice when His children take even small steps toward righteousness, even if they are not yet perfect.”

#### END NOTE]

#### מאמרא ה

**“And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” On the surface, what is the novelty here? Why does it emphasize that God said “Let there be light,” and then “there was light”? What is added by the phrase “and there was”?**

Furthermore, what do our Sages mean when they said that *at first it arose in thought to create the world with the attribute of justice*, but He saw that the world could not endure, so He combined it with mercy? How can we possibly attribute any change of will or thought to the simple, absolute Creator?

ויאמר אלקים יהי אור ויהי אור. ” לבאורה, מה רובעת שאמר השם יתברך שיקינה אור ויהי אור? מה חדש הוא שאמר “ויהי

ונם יש לדקק, מה שאמרו ח"ל: מתקלה עלה במקשכה לברוא העולם במדות הדין וראיה שאין העולם מתקיים ושתף עמה מדת קרחמים. וכי חיללה לחשב ולומר על הבורא הפשטת האמת שהתחלת עלמה במקשכטו כה ואחר כה שנגה דעתו חיללה.

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Rather, the matter may be understood as follows. It is written that “*the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters.*” The letters of *merachefes* (מְרַחֶפֶת) allude to *Rafach Meis* (רָפָח מֵה), referring to the 288 sparks that fell during the breaking of the vessels (*sheviras hakeilim*). Our task is to elevate and rectify those fallen sparks.

Therefore, the verse “And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light” alludes to this rectification. When it says, “And God saw the light, that it was good,” we must ask — does it mean that only after He saw the light He knew it was good? God forbid! The Creator does not discover or realize things as man does.

The true meaning is that the speech of the Creator, blessed be He, which goes forth from His mouth, is itself perfect and complete. In His utterance everything is rectified instantly, needing no further repair or completion.

Thus, had He said “Let there be light” in the context of the 288 sparks that fell, the light would have immediately returned to its original radiance, just as it was before the shattering.

But the Holy One, blessed be He, desired that the righteous themselves should perform this labor — that they should elevate and refine the sparks through their own service.

For if He had completed the repair through His word, there would have been no need or possibility for human elevation and merit.

On the other hand, were He not to create any action or opening at all, the righteous would have no ability to accomplish anything. As our Sages said: “*Were it not that the Holy One helps him, he could not overcome the evil inclination.*”

Therefore, in His great mercy and exalted wisdom, Hashem looked upon that light — meaning, upon those sparks of holiness — and through His seeing and shining upon them, He granted power and assistance to the righteous, enabling them to elevate those sparks.

ונראה לפרש, קאיות בכתבים: “וּרֹום אֱלֹקִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל פְּנֵי הָאָמִים.” אָותִיות “מְרַחֶפֶת” הַנִּרְפָּא מַתָּרֶם עַל קְרָפָח נִצְוָצִין שְׁגַפְלוּ בְּשִׁבְרַת הַכְּלִים, וְהִיא עֲבוֹדָתֵנוּ לְמַקֵּן וּלְהַעֲלוֹת אָוֹתָן הַנִּצְוֹצָות.

ונזהו “וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים... וַיַּרְא אֱלֹקִים אֶת הָאָרֶץ טוֹב.” וְלֹא כֹּוֹרֶה גַּם כֵּן אִינוֹ — וְכֵן שִׁיק אֲצָלָה יִתְבְּרַךְ שָׁאָמֵר שְׁגַרְאָה הַבִּין שֶׁהָוָא טוֹב, וְלֹא קָרְם? חַלִּילָה לוֹמֶר וְלֹקַשׁ בַּךְ עַל הַבּוֹרָא יִתְבְּרַךְ.

אֵךְ הַעֲנוֹנוּ, וְהַשְׁרֵשׁ הוּא כֵּךְ — שְׁהַדְבּוּר שֶׁל הַבּוֹרָא יִתְבְּרַךְ, הַיֹּצֵא מִפְיוֹ יִתְבְּרַךְ, גַּנְשַׁלְמָן הַכָּל בָּו, וְאֵין אָרֵיךְ עוֹד לְשֹׁום מָקוֹן קָלָל, כִּי נִתְהַקֵּן הַכָּל בְּמַאֲמָר פִּי יִתְבְּרַךְ.

גַּמְצָא, בָּעֵת נִפְלַת הַרְפָּחָה נִצְוָצִין, אֲםִין הִיא אָמֵר כִּי כָּל בְּרוּךְ פִּיו דְּבָרִים אַלְוִי יְהִי אָרֶךְ, ”הִיא מִיד חֹזֵר הָאָרֶךְ לְקָדְמוֹתָו, כְּמוֹ שְׁהִיא בָּעֵת שְׁהָאָצֵל קָדָם הַשְׁבִּירָה.

וְהַשְּׁם יִתְבְּרַךְ בָּרוּךְ הוּא, חַפֵּץ דּוֹקָא בְּעַבּוֹדָה הַצְדִּיקִים, שְׁהֵם יַעֲלִוּ אֶתְכָם הַנִּצְוֹצָות.

וְאִם הִיא אָמֵר בְּדָבָרוֹ פָּנֶ"ל, לֹא הִיא צָרָה לְעַלְיָה הַצְדִּיקִים.

וְאִם לֹא הִיא עֹשֶׂה הַשְּׁם יִתְבְּרַךְ שָׁוֹם פָּעַלָה כִּי כָּל לֹא הִיא בִּיכְלַת הַצְדִּיקִים לְפָעַל כָּל זֹאת, כְּמוֹ שָׁאָמֵר ז"ל: ”לֹא לְזֹרֶן בָּרוּךְ הוּא עֹזֶר — אַיִן יִכְלֶל.”

וְלֹכְנוּ עֲשָׂה הַשְּׁם יִתְבְּרַךְ בָּרוּךְ רְחַמְיוֹן גָּדוֹלִים וְבִכְמַתּוֹן הַרְמָה, וְרָאָה וְהִבְּאִט בְּאָוֹר הַהִיא, פָּרוֹשׁ בְּאָוֹתָן הַנִּצְוֹצָות, בְּרָאֵיתָו וְהַשְׁנָחָתוֹ פָּעַל עֹזֶר לְצִדְקָה שִׁיחָא יִכְלֶל לְהַעֲלֹתָם.

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This is the meaning of the verse “And God said.” That is to say, if Hashem had actually uttered the words “Let there be light,” the light would have immediately returned to its original pristine state, leaving no work for the righteous to accomplish.

But Hashem, blessed be He, desired specifically the labor of the righteous — that through their effort and avodah they should accomplish the rectification and elevation of the sparks.

Therefore, “And God saw the light” — meaning, He looked into and gazed upon that light so that His seeing would serve as an aid and empowerment for the righteous to elevate the sparks.

This is the meaning of “that it was good” — as our Sages said, “This refers to the righteous, who are called ‘good.’” The verse ‘*He stored it away for the righteous for the time to come*’ means that those lights were hidden for the righteous of future generations who will elevate them.

“And God called the light Day” — this refers simply to those who are already perfected, and “the darkness” refers to that which still requires refinement. As long as the sparks are not fully elevated, that state is called “darkness,” and He called it “Night.”

And may it be the will of Hashem that with the coming of our righteous Mashiach, the entire world will be rectified and reach perfect unity. This is the meaning of “*And it was evening*” — when Mashiach will flourish, the night will become sweetened, as “evening” (עֶרֶב) implies sweetness and harmony.

It also alludes to the Divine Presence (*Shechinah*), which dwells in the West (*Ma’arav*), as in the verse “And it shall come to pass that at evening time there shall be light” (Zechariah 14:7). Then everything will be rectified and restored to perfect unity, as it was before the breaking of the vessels.

“And it was morning — one day” means that all will become unified; even the night will transform into day, and everything will become one.

This is the meaning of the statement “At first it arose in thought to create the world with the attribute of judgment.” Before the fall of the sparks, in the “world of thought,” everything existed in pure justice and perfection, without any need for mercy.

והוא פרוש הפתוח “ויאמר אלקם” — רוץ'ה לוּמָר,  
אם קָהָה אָמָר קְשָׁם יַתְּפַרְקֵךְ “יְהִי אָרֶר,” מִזְׁדִּיקִי  
אָרֶר, פָּרוֹשׁ קָהָה חֹזֵר הָאָרֶר? לְקָדוּמוֹתָה כְּנָלָל, וְלֹא קָהָה  
לְצָדִיקִים שָׁם עַבְדָּה.

וְקְשָׁם יַתְּפַרְקֵךְ בְּרוֹךְ הִיא רָצָח קָנוֹקָא בְּעַבּוּדָת  
לְצָדִיקִים שָׁם יַפְעַלְוּ כָּל זֹאת.

לְכָךְ “וַיָּרַא אֱלֹקִים אֶת הָאָרֶר” — פָּרוֹשׁ, שְׁהַבִּיט  
וְנָרָא בְּאָרֶר הַהָאָרֶר, לְמַעַן יְהִי עֲזָרָה וּסְיִיעַלְתִּים  
לְהַעֲלֹתָה הַגִּנְצֹצָה כְּנָלָל.

וְזֹהֵה “כִּי טוֹב” — כְּמוֹ שְׁאָמְרוּ חָזָן: “זֶה צְדִיקָה,  
הַגְּנָעָרָה טוֹב.” וְהַוָּשָׁאָמְרוּ: “גַּנְזָן לְצָדִיקִים לְעַתִּיד  
לְבָוֹא,” פָּרוֹשׁ, גַּנְזָנוּ אָוֹתָם אָוֹתָם לְצָדִיקִים הַעֲתִידִים  
לְבָוֹא, שְׁעַיְלָוּ אָוֹתָם.

וַיָּקָרָא אֱלֹקִים לְאָוֹר יּוֹם... וְלַחֲשָׁךְ קָרָא לִילָה” —  
רוֹצָח לוּמָר, כְּפָשִׁיטָו, שְׁהַצִּדְיקָה הַמְתַקֵּנוּ נָקָרָא “יּוֹם,”  
וְהַצִּדְיקָה שְׁאַדְיוֹן אָרִיךְ? לְחָגָן, כָּל זָמָן שָׁאַיָּנוּ בְּתַקְוֹנוּ,  
”נָקָרָא “חַשָּׁךְ,” נָקָרָא אָוֹתָה “לִילָה”

וְאִם יְרַצֵּחַ ה' בְּבִיאַת מִשְׁיחָנוּ, שָׁאָן יַמְּהַעַן הַכָּלָל, יְהִי  
אֲחַדּוֹת גָּמוֹר, וְזֹהֵה שְׁרָמָז הַפְּתֻוחָה “וַיָּהִי עָרֵב” —  
רוֹצָח לוּמָר, כְּשִׁיאָמָה מִשְׁיחָה צְדָקָנוּ בְּמִהְרָה, וַיְהִי  
הַלְּלָה לְעָרֵב, פָּרוֹשׁ “עָרֵב?” ?שְׁוּן מִתְּקוּתָה.

גַּם לְרָמָז עַל הַשְּׁכִינָה הַקְדוֹשָׁה, שְׁהִיא בְּמִעֵרֶב,  
וְנוֹאָמָר: “וַיְהִי לְעֵת עָרֵב יְהִי אָרֶר” (זְכָרִיה י' 7, ז'),  
— וַיַּמְּהַעַן הַכָּלָל, וַיְבָא לְאֲחַדּוֹת גָּמוֹר, כְּמוֹ שָׁנָה קָדָם  
שְׁבִירַת הַכָּלָל.

וַיְהִי בְּקָרָר — יּוֹם אַחֲרָיו, “שְׁבִירַת הַכָּלָל אֶל הַאֲחַדּוֹת,”  
שְׁגָם הַלְּלָה יְהִי לְיּוֹם, וַיְהִי הַכָּלָל אֶחָד.

וְזֹהֵה “מִתְּחַלָּה עַלְהָ בְּמַחְשָׁבָה לְבָרוֹא בְּמַדֵּת הַדָּין” —  
פָּרוֹשׁ, קָדָם הַגְּנִיפְתָּה, הַגְּנָעָרָה עַוְלָם הַמַּחְשָׁבָה, הִיא  
בְּמַדֵּת הַדָּין, כִּי שָׁם אֵין אָרִיךְ לַרְחָמִים.

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## Noam Elimelech

### Parshas Bereshis

But afterward, following the fall, it was necessary for Him to “see” — meaning to shine and gaze in mercy — for the world cannot endure without the righteous who raise up the sparks, and they themselves require the inclusion of mercy to succeed.

וראה — פרוש, אמר הנטילה, שהיה צריך לראותה כב"ל, לפי שאין קעולם מתקיים כלל אציקים כב"ל, שהם אציקים להצלות אותם הניצוצות, ושתורף מכך ברקדים, שהצדיקים אציקים לרבקים, ובקבון היבט

#### [NOTE Summary

In this Maamer, Rabbi Elimelech of Lzhensk reveals the deep mystery behind the verse “*Let there be light.*” At first glance, it seems simple — God commanded light to exist, and it did. But the Tzaddik explains that this “light” refers to the *holy sparks* (*nitzotzos*) that fell during the *Sheviras HaKeilim* — the breaking of the primordial vessels. When God “saw the light that it was good,” this did not mean He discovered something new, for He is unchanging. Rather, His “seeing” represents His radiating assistance to the Tzaddikim, empowering them to elevate these fallen sparks through their own Avodah.

If God Himself had fully restored the light to its original perfection, there would have been no need for the righteous to serve, no purpose for human elevation or free choice. Instead, He willed that through toil, prayer, and Torah, the Tzaddikim should gather these sparks from darkness and return them to their Source. That is the meaning of “He saw the light that it was good” — “good” being a name for the righteous, as our Sages said: “*This refers to the Tzaddik who is called good.*”

When the verse says “*He stored it for the righteous for the future,*” it refers to these hidden lights — spiritual radiances reserved for the Tzaddikim who will ultimately complete the world’s rectification. The “day” symbolizes those who are already refined, while the “night” represents the aspects of reality and the soul still undergoing correction. Yet even night, says the Rebbe, will ultimately be transformed into sweetness (*erev*, meaning mixture or pleasant blending).

When Mashiach comes, the world will reach *achdus gamur* — complete unity — where light and darkness, mercy and judgment, perfection and striving will all harmonize as one. This, says Rabbi Elimelech, is the ultimate purpose of creation: that man becomes a partner in rectification, transforming separation into unity, darkness into dawn, until “*it will be evening and it will be morning — one day.*”

#### Practical Takeaway

Every moment of life contains divine sparks waiting to be lifted. When we act with holiness — learning Torah, performing mitzvos, or even refining a mundane act with sacred intent — we participate in God’s own creation, helping to transform darkness into light. Do not despair of your small deeds; each act of sincerity draws another spark back to its Source and hastens the world’s redemption. **END NOTE]**

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#### מאמר ו

**“And Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain.”** At first glance, the term “knew” is puzzling — the verse could have simply said “And Adam came to Eve.”

The explanation is found in the verse regarding Avraham Avinu: “Now I know that you are a woman of beautiful appearance” (Bereishis 12:11). I have heard it explained that when Avraham came to Egypt — a land steeped in lust and immorality — the environment caused even him to experience a fleeting physical awareness of his wife. Hence he said, “Now I know.”

From this we learn the path of the true Tzaddik: he has no thought or desire even toward his own wife. Even at the moment of intimacy, his consciousness is completely bound to the upper worlds, unaware that he is with her physically.

This, then, is the meaning of “And Adam knew Eve his wife” — he was aware of her as his wife even during their union, meaning he placed his mind and knowledge upon her in that moment, unlike the way of the Tzaddikim who transcend awareness.

Therefore it says, “And she conceived and bore Cain” — as the Zohar calls him “the impurity of jealousy” (קנאה דמְסָא בּוֹתָא).

This parallels the Gemara’s statement, “Two ascended and seven descended.” The “bed” (*mitah*) alludes to the upper levels, as in ‘Behold the bed of Shlomo’.

For by rising to a spiritual state through two thoughts — one directed above and one below — Adam caused a descent of seven higher levels.

But the person who conducts himself in purity elevates these seven upper levels instead of causing their fall.

Understand this well.

וְהָאָדָם יָדַע אֶת תֹּוֹהַ אֲשֶׁרְוּ, וְתַהַר וְתַלְדָּ אֶת קַוָּן.  
לְכֹאָרָה, מֵלֶת “יָדַע” אֵינָה מִוּבָנָה; קַיִם יְכֹל  
”לוֹמֵר “וְהָאָדָם בָּא אֶל תֹּוֹהַ”

אֵך הָעֲנוֹן, קְדַמְתִּיב בְּאַבְרָהָם אֲבִינוּ עַלְיוֹ הַשְׁלָוּם:  
”הָנֶה נָא יְדַעַתִּי אֲשֶׁר יִפְתַּח מִרְאַת אַתָּה” (בראשית י”ב, י”א). וּשְׁמַעַתִּי שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בְּסֶפֶר, שֶׁמְפַנִּי שֶׁבָּא  
אַבְרָהָם לְמִזְרָחִים, שֶׁשָּׁם הָיו שְׁטוֹפִים בְּזֹהָה, וּמַקְמַת  
מִקְשָׁבָתִם הַמְלִיכָּלֶכֶת, נִתְעוֹרֶר גַּם בְּהַרְרוֹת קָל  
”בְּלַבְפּוֹ עַל אֲשֶׁרְוּ. לְכָן אָמַר: “הָנֶה נָא יְדַעַתִּי”

וּמְזָה גַּלְמָד זְרָה הַצְדִּיק הַאֲמָתִי, שְׁאַיִן לוֹ שָׁוָם  
מִקְשָׁבָה אוֹ תָּאָהָה, אֲפִילּוּ לְאֲשֶׁרְוּ. וְאֲפִילּוּ בְּעֵת  
הַתְּקִשְׁרוֹת עַם אֲשֶׁרְוּ, דַעַתּו מִדְוַקָּה בְּעוֹלָמוֹת  
הַעֲלִיוֹנִים, וְאַיִן יוֹדֵעַ בְּלַל שָׁהָוָא עַמָּה

וְזֶה “וְהָאָדָם יָדַע אֶת תֹּוֹהַ אֲשֶׁרְוּ”, רֹזֶחֶת לְוֹמֵר שָׁהָיו  
נוֹמֵן דַעַתּו וּיְדַעַתּו שֶׁהָיָה אֲשֶׁרְוּ בְּעֵת הַמְשִׁמְישׁ, לְהַפְּקָה  
מִקְרָךְ הַצְדִּיקִים.

וְלֹכְנוּ אָמַר: “וְתַהַר וְתַלְדָּ אֶת קַוָּן”, כְּזַא יְמִתָּא בְּזַהָר:  
”קָנָה דָמָסָא בּוֹתָא

וְהָאָכָם שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בְּגִמְرָא: “עַלְוֹ לְמַעַלָּה שְׁנִים וַיַּרְדוּ  
שְׁבָעָה.” הַמְפַתָּה הִיא רַמְזָה לְמִקְרָנָה עַלְיוֹנָה, עַל דָרָה  
”הָנֶה מַטְהוֹ שְׁלַלְלָמוֹת

וּמַקְמַת שְׁעַלָּה לְמִקְרָנָה עַלְיוֹנָה בְּשָׁנִים, דְהַנִּנוּ בְּשָׁפִי  
מִקְשָׁבָות — אַחַת לְמַעַלָּה וְאַחַת לְמַטָּה — עַל יְדֵי זֶה  
קָרָם יְרִידָה לְשָׁבָע מִקְרָגּוֹת עַלְיוֹנוֹת

וְהָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר מַתְנָגֶג עַצְמוֹ בְּקָרְבָּה — הוּא מַעַלָּה אֶת  
שָׁבָע המִקְרָגּוֹת הַעֲלִיוֹנוֹת  
וְהַכְּבוֹן הַיְטָב

# The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

## Noam Elimelech

### Parshas Bereshis

#### [NOTE Summary

In this Maamer, Rabbi Elimelech of Lzhensk explores the verse “*And Adam knew Eve his wife.*” Why does the Torah use the word “*knew*” instead of simply “*came to*”? He explains that “*knowing*” here refers not to physical knowledge but to *conscious awareness*. A true Tzaddik, says the Rebbe, can perform even the most physical acts while his mind and heart remain attached to the upper worlds. His soul is so bound to holiness that even during marital intimacy, his consciousness never departs from cleaving to the Divine.

Adam, however, at this early stage of human history, had not yet reached this level. When the verse says “*Adam knew Eve his wife,*” it means he was aware that she was his wife — his thought turned toward the physical relationship itself. This moment of awareness introduced an element of self-consciousness, separating him slightly from pure Divine attachment. Consequently, the result of this union was Cain, whom the Zohar calls “*the impurity of jealousy*” — a soul born from a mixture of spiritual and physical intent.

The Maamer further explains the saying of the Sages that “*Two ascended and seven descended.*” The two represent dual focus — thinking of both heaven and earth — which causes the seven higher levels of holiness to descend. In contrast, one who serves in absolute purity, detached from physical awareness, elevates those same seven levels rather than causing their fall.

#### Practical Takeaway

Holiness is not about escaping the world but about refining awareness within it. Every action, even mundane or bodily, can either lift or lower the soul depending on one’s consciousness. When a person fills the mind with Divine thought, the act itself becomes a vessel for elevation. The key to holiness, teaches Rabbi Elimelech, lies not in abstaining from the physical but in sanctifying it — transforming awareness into connection, and passion into purity. **END NOTE]**

#### מאמר ז

**“And a river went out from Eden to water the garden.” The higher spiritual realms are called *Eden*.**

The true and complete Tzaddik, who separates himself entirely from worldly matters and purifies every part of his being, is himself called *Eden* — from the term “*עֲרָנָה*” (delicacy), as in the verse “After I have withered, shall I again have delight?” (Bereishis 18:12), which Rashi explains as “the freshness of the flesh.”

Such a Tzaddik is constantly bound to the higher worlds, as though he were not at all within this material realm.

This explains the verse “*How great is Your goodness which You have hidden for those who fear You*” (Tehillim 31:20). The

ונקר יוצא מעידן להשקיות את הגן. דהינה הועלומות. **העליזונים נקראים עידן.**

והצדיק האמתי הגמור, המפרקיש עצמו מכל עניין הועלם הנה ומצחצח בכל גופו ואבריו — נקרא עידן, מלשון “*עֲרָנָה*”, כמו שנאמר (בראשית י"ח, י"ב) “*אָפָרִי בְּלֹתִי קַיְמָה לִי עֲרָנָה*”, ופירש רש"י: לשון צחצחים בשר.

והוא מקשר תפמייד עצמו בועלומות עליזונים, כאלו איןו בכלל בועלם הנה.

וזהו “*מָה רַב טוֹךְ אֲשֶׁר אָפָנָת לִירָאֵיךְ*” (תהלים ל"א, כ'). דהיינו בספרים שלרוויח אפון אין מחייב, רק אויר.

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writings teach that the north wind (*ruach tzafon*) has no wall, only open air.

The reason is that if a person should dare to consider himself Divine — Heaven forbid — the angels command him to make a fourth wall to the north, to limit his arrogance.

All of this applies only in this world, where the evil inclination has sway. For that reason, God created the world without a northern wall — to leave room for human striving and humility. But the perfect Tzaddik, constantly bound to higher worlds where no trace of evil exists, has no need for this separation. In his realm, even the “north wind” is pure and unified with holiness.

Thus, “How great is Your goodness which You have hidden for those who fear You” means that the true G-d-fearing have access to the hidden north — to that sublime realm of Eden itself.

The word “*נָהָר*” (river) connotes *light*, as in “*amiy sharei nehora*” (“streams of light”). Thus, “*A river goes out from Eden*” means that from the Tzaddik — who is called Eden — there flows a great light to water the *garden*, i.e., to bestow Divine influence upon the lower world, called “the son.”

“And from there it was divided and became four heads” — alluding to the manifold outpouring of blessing that flows from the Tzaddik into all corners of creation.

Not all Tzaddikim share the same level, for there are four distinct grades among them. Each serves to repair and elevate one of the four worlds — Asiyah, Yetzirah, Beriah, and Atzilus — raising them toward the fifth, hidden world of Divine unity.

The first is called *Pishon*, which can be read as an acronym for “*Pi Shoneh Halachos*” — “a mouth that studies laws.” This means the Tzaddik who learns and teaches halachah, fulfilling the statement that God has nothing in His world but the four cubits of halachah.

“*It encompasses the land of Chavilah*” — meaning that this Tzaddik refines the world in which there remain *bundles* (חבילות) of confusion and mixture, for the letters of “Chavilah” interchange with those of “Bav” (confusion).

ונאמרו הטעם: *שָׁם יָבוֹא אֶחָד וַיַּחֲזִיק עָצָמוֹ לְאֶלְקָוֶת חַס וְשַׁלּוּם, אֲזָמִים לוֹ שִׁיעַשָּׂה מְחִיצָה רְבִיעִית לְאַפְּנוֹן.*

*וְכֹל זה בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה, שִׁישׁ בּוֹ שִׁיכוֹת לִיאָר הַרְעָע; לְכֹן בְּרָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא הַעוֹלָם בְּלִי מְחִיצָה לְרוּם אַפְּנוֹן.*

*אָבֶל הַצָּדִיק הַגָּמָור, שְׁפָמִיד מַקְשֵׁר עָצָמוֹ בְּעוֹלָמֹות עַלְוֹנִים, שָׁאַיִן בָּהֶם שִׁיכוֹת לְפָטָר אָחָרָה — שֶׁם רֹוח אַפְּנוֹן כְּשֶׁאָרֶר קָרוּחוֹת, כִּי שֶׁם אַיִן שִׁיכוֹת לְטַעַם הַגָּל.*

*וְזַהוּ “מָה רַב טוֹב אָשֶׁר צָפַנְתָּ לִירָאִיךְ” — רֹזֶחֶת לְוֹמֶר, שְׁלִירָאִים הַאֲמָתִים יִשְׁחַט בְּאַמֶּת, כִּי הֵם בְּעוֹלָמֹות הַעַלְיוֹנִים.*

*וְהֵוֹ “גָּנָהָר” לְשֻׁוֹן אָוֹר, כְּמוֹ “עַמִּי שְׁרֵי גָּהָרָא.” “יָצָא מַעַזְן” — רֹזֶחֶת לְוֹמֶר, מִהַצָּדִיק הַאֲמָתִי יוֹצָא אָוֹר גָּדוֹל לְקַשְׁקֹות אֶת הַגּוֹן, פִּירֹושׁ לְהַשְׁפֵּיעַ לְעוֹלָם הַגָּתָן, הַגָּתָן “בָּנוֹ.*

*וּמְשִׁם יִפְרֹד וְהֵיה לְאַרְבָּעָה רָאשִׁים.*

*פִּירֹושׁ וְלֹא כָּל הַצָּדִיקִים שָׁוִים, אֲלֹא יִשְׁבַּח מְחִילָה לְאַרְבַּע מִזְרָgoת. שָׁהֵם עַזְבָּדִים גָּלִים לִמְקוֹן הַאַרְבָּעָה עַולָּמוֹת וְלֹהֲעַלְוָתָם לְעוֹלָם הַחַמִּישִׁי.*

*שֶׁם הַאָחָד פִּישּׁוֹן, פִּירֹושׁ פִּישּׁוֹן לְשֻׁוֹן גּוֹטְרִיקָוּן “פִּי שְׁוֹגָה קָלְכֹות,” רֹזֶחֶת לְוֹמֶר שְׁשׁוֹגָה קָלְכֹות, זָאיִן לְזַהְקָדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הֵיא בְּעוֹלָמוֹ אֲלֹא ד' אַמְוֹת שֶׁל קָלְכָה.*

*הֵוֹ הַסּוֹבֵב אֶת אֶרְץ הַקּוֹלָה, פִּירֹושׁ הַצָּדִיק הַזֶּה מַתְקָנוֹ אֶת הַעוֹלָם שִׁישׁ בּוֹ קָצַת חֲבִילֹת — קְבִּי”הַן וְזַהוּ מַתְחַלְפּוֹת בְּאֹתִיות בּוּמְרַפְּאָה.*

# The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

## Noam Elimelech

### Parshas Bereshis

The verse adds “*where there is gold*” — for due to the attraction of gold, the world is drawn toward greed and harm; people fail to conduct business with full honesty.

Therefore, this Tzaddik must repair and transform that world, influencing its people with *pure gold* — the radiance of uprightness and faith in their dealings.

“And the gold of that land is good.” This means that the *gold* — the illumination that the Tzaddik bestows — is good and holy.

“There is the bdellium and the shoham stone.” This indicates a lofty state of holiness, as the *manna* is described (Bamidbar 11:7): “its appearance was like bdellium.” The shoham stone likewise alludes to sanctity.

“And the name of the second river is Gichon.” This alludes to the second type of Tzaddik, whose essence is humility — constantly entering and exiting himself (*shif ayl v'shif nafik*), in a state of continual self-nullification.

“It encompasses the land of Cush.” The Sages explained the phrase “*Divrei Cush*” regarding King Saul (Tehillim 7:1): just as Cush differs in color, Saul differed in his deeds — some for good, others otherwise.

It is written (I Shmuel 13:1), “Saul was one year old when he reigned.” The Sages interpreted this to mean he was as innocent as a one-year-old without sin — yet others read it as “like a soiled child,” implying spiritual impurity.

From here we learn that *Cush* can be interpreted in both ways — for good or for ill: the one who changes his deeds for righteousness, or the one who changes them toward corruption.

Thus, “He encompasses all the land of Cush” means that this Tzaddik surrounds and subdues the power of the evil one who perverts his ways — his righteousness shields the world from the accuser’s power.

“And the name of the third river is Chidekel,” which Rashi explains as “*chad kal*” — sharp and swift. This refers to the Tzaddik who serves the Creator with sharpness, zeal, and fiery passion; through this, his service becomes easy and joyous.

דָקִין “אֲשֶׁר שָׁם כְּנָבָב,” כִּי מִקְמַת כְּנָבָב שְׁבָעוֹלָם  
אָרָיךְ לוֹ, יֵשׁ בָּו קָצָת כְּבָלָה וְנוֹזָק, שָׁאַזְן הַעוֹלָם  
מְתַנְּגִים בְּמִשְׁאָ וּמְפַנֵּן בְּאַמְוֹנָה חַס וְשַׁלּוּם.

וְאַרְיךְ הַצָּדִיק הַזֶּה לְמִקְוֹן וּלְסֶבֶב לְהַשְׁפִּיעַ לְקָם זָהָב  
לְזָהָב.

וְהַזָּהָב הַהוּא טָוב — פִּירּוֹשׁ, הַזָּהָב הַזֶּה שְׁהַצָּדִיק  
מְשְׁפִּיעַ לְקָם הַזָּהָב טָוב.  
שְׁמַם הַבְּדָלָח וְאַבְנָן הַשְׁמָמָם” — רֹזֶחֶת לוֹמֶר שְׁהָוָא  
בְּהַקְרָשָׁה גָּדוֹלָה, כְּמוֹ שְׁנָאָמֵר בְּמִזְבֵּחַ (בְּמִזְבֵּחַ י"א, ז')  
וְעַזְוֹן הַוְּכִי בְּעַזְוֹן הַבְּדָלָח, ”וְאַבְנָן הַשְׁמָמָם גָּם בְּזָרְזָע  
לְקָדְשָׁה.

וְשֵׁם הַנְּהָר הַשְׁנִי גִּיחָזָן — רָמֶז לְצִדְיק הַשְׁנִי, שְׁהָוָא  
בְּהַכְּנָעָה גָּדוֹלָה, ”שִׁיר עַיל וְשִׁיר גְּפִיק,” עַל דָּרָך  
שְׁאָמֵר הַכְּתוּב “כָּל הַזָּלָג עַל בְּחָזָן.”

הַוְּא הַסּוֹבֵב אֶת אֶרְץ כּוֹשׁ. ”וְאַיִתָּא “שְׁגַיְוָן לְזֹד עַל  
דְּבָרֵי כּוֹשׁ.” וְדָרְשׁוּ חֹזֶק לֵב: ”מָה כּוֹשׁ מְשֻׁנָּה בְּעֹרוֹן,  
אָף שָׁאוֹל מְשֻׁנָּה בְּמַעַשָּׁיו.”

וְאַיִתָּא “כָּנָן שְׁנָה שְׁאַיִל בְּמַלְכֵנוּ,” וְדָרְשׁוּ חֹזֶק לֵב: ”כָּנָן  
שְׁנָה בְּלָא חַטָּא.” וּמִקְשָׁה הַגְּמָרָא: ”וְאַיִמָּא כְּתִינּוֹק בָּנָן  
שְׁנָה שְׁהָוָא מְלָכֶלֶךְ.”

נִמְצָא שִׁישׁ לְפֶרֶשׁ “כּוֹשׁ” לְטוּבָה — שְׁהָיָה מְשֻׁנָּה  
מַעַשָּׁיו לְטוֹב, וְכֵן לְהַכְּפֵד — לְרַעָה, כְּמוֹ שְׁהָגָמָרָא  
הַקְרָשָׁה.

וְהַוְּא הַסּוֹבֵב אֶת כָּל אֶרְץ כּוֹשׁ — רֹזֶחֶת לוֹמֶר, הַצָּדִיק  
הַזֶּה מְסֻבֵּב וּמְשַׁבֵּר כַּפָּעַל הַאִישׁ הַרְעָע, שְׁמֻשָּׁה מַעַשָּׁיו  
לְרַעָה, וְצִדְקַת הַצָּדִיק מְגַנוּ מִפְנֵי הַמְּקַטְּרָג.

וְשֵׁם הַנְּהָר הַשְׁלִישִׁי חַזְקָל, כִּפִּירּוֹשׁ רֶשֶׁב, ”חַד קָלִי”  
— רֹזֶחֶת לוֹמֶר, מֵשְׁתּוֹפֵס וּמִתּוֹזֵק בְּעַבּוּדַת הַבּוֹרָא  
בְּחַדּוֹד גָּדוֹל וּבְזָרִיזָה וּבְחַמְּמוֹת, אָזִי בְּאָה לוֹ עַבּוּדַת  
הַבּוֹרָא בְּקָלָות.

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“It goes east of Ashur” — meaning that this Tzaddik opposes the one who walks in self-righteousness, who feels “straight” (*ashur*) in his own eyes. Like the verse “For women have called me fortunate” (Bereishis 30:13) — self-praise and pride. The Tzaddik breaks that arrogance.

“And the fourth river is Peras.”

#### [NOTE Summary]

In this Maamer, Rabbi Elimelech of Lzhensk interprets the verse “*And a river went out from Eden to water the garden*” as a deep allegory of the Tzaddik and his spiritual influence upon the world. *Eden* represents the upper, hidden worlds of pure holiness, while the *garden* represents the physical realm. The true and complete Tzaddik, who has purified himself entirely from worldly attachment and constantly cleaves to the Divine, becomes himself a channel — a living *Eden* — from which a river of light and blessing flows into the garden of creation.

The Maamer continues to expound that not all Tzaddikim are equal. They correspond to the four rivers that branch out from *Eden*, each representing a different type of Divine service and rectification. The *Pishon* symbolizes the Tzaddik who studies and teaches halachah — illuminating the world through Torah law and truth, repairing a realm clouded by material desire (“the land of Chavilah, where there is gold”). The *Gichon* represents the Tzaddik of humility, who embodies self-effacement and purity, transforming those who twist their deeds into righteousness. The *Chidekel* signifies the Tzaddik who serves God with sharpness, zeal, and warmth, turning even challenging service into lightness and joy. And the *Peras* alludes to the Tzaddik whose flow of influence multiplies (*parah*) endlessly, extending to all corners of creation.

Together, these four rivers symbolize the various ways the Tzaddikim draw the light of *Eden* — Divine delight — into the world, each repairing a particular spiritual dimension. Through their service, the Tzaddikim sustain creation and direct its flow back toward its Divine Source.

#### Practical Takeaway

Every Jew has within themselves a spark of the Tzaddik — a potential to draw holiness into the world. When one refines their thoughts, words, and actions, they too become a “river from *Eden*,” channeling divine vitality into their surroundings. Study Torah with sincerity (*Pishon*), serve with humility (*Gichon*), act with passion (*Chidekel*), and bring goodness into the world (*Peras*). In doing so, you transform your life into a stream of living water nourishing the Divine garden around you.

#### Chassidic Story

Once, a young man came to Rabbi Elimelech of Lzhensk, troubled that despite his learning and devotion, he felt no inner light. The Rebbe looked at him kindly and said, “When you learn Torah, do you hear the river flowing?” The man was puzzled. Rabbi Elimelech explained, “When a Jew studies with humility, joy, and love, his soul becomes a river — carrying the light of *Eden* into this world. But when one learns for honor or fear, the stream dries up. Fill your heart with kindness, and you’ll hear it again.”

הוּא הַחֹלֵךְ קָמָת אֲשָׁר — פִּירּוֹשׁ, הַצָּדִיק הַהָּא  
הַוּלֶךְ בְּנֶגֶד זוֹ שֶׁשָׁהּוּא יָשַׁר בְּעֵינֵי עָצָמוֹ, עַל דָּרָךְ “כִּי  
אֲשֶׁר-וּנִי בְּנוֹת,” שֶׁהָוָא מִתְפָּאֵר עַל שְׁלָמוֹתָו, וְהַצָּדִיק  
הַפְּנֵל מִשְׁבֵּר פָּחוֹ.

וְהַנֶּהָר קָרְבִּיעִי הַיָּא פָּרָת.

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The man followed the Rebbe's words and returned months later radiant, saying, "Rebbe, now I hear the water." Rabbi Elimelech smiled, "That is the sound of Torah flowing through a purified heart."

(Source: *Noam Elimelech*, Parshas Bereishis; traditional oral accounts from Lzhensk Chassidim.)

**END NOTE]**