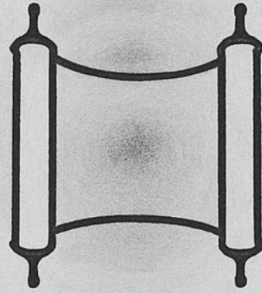


בס"ד

# The Maharal Of Prauge

תפארת ישראל

## Chapter 3



לע"נ

שׁוּרָה מְרִים בֵּת אַבְרָהָם

*Dedicated By:*

משפחת ליטשקאווסקי

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# The Maharal of Prague

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## The Splendor of Israel

### Chapter 3

#### Introduction

This discourse by the Maharal of Prague explores the unique existential and spiritual structure of the human being (*adam*), based on his creation from the *adamah* (earth). Through intricate analysis of Midrash, Talmudic sources, and metaphysical distinctions between potential and actualization, the Maharal reveals the human condition as one of perpetual striving, never fully attaining completion in this world. Man is defined not by his static qualities, but by his dynamic capacity to bring latent perfection into expression—particularly through Torah and mitzvos. This theme is developed through contrast with animals, discussion of the soul's Divine origin, and the metaphor of a princess wedded to a commoner.

The Maharal of Prague (Rabbi Yehuda Loew ben Bezalel, c. 1520–1609) was a preeminent Talmudist, philosopher, and mystic. Living in Prague, he was known for his profound works like *Gevuros Hashem*, *Tiferes Yisrael*, and *Nesivos Olam*. A leader and visionary, he synthesized philosophical rigor with Kabbalistic depth, influencing both Jewish thought and broader intellectual currents. His teachings continue to guide spiritual seekers in understanding the structure of reality and the soul's divine mission.

#### השם אדם הוא משום שנעשה מאדמה

#### The name "Adam" is because he was made from the earth.

The human being, with the virtue of his Divine soul—which we have already said is a Divine soul specifically not found in all lower souls—should not deceive himself to say that he already possesses his final level in actuality, and should think to himself, "Peace will be to me even if I sit idle without any effort at all; after all, my virtue and my level will protect me, and return me to my place and my station, for it will be given to me from what is mine, and there is no need to acquire any further virtue."

This thought is a rejected thought-offering—it will not be accepted—and he should not think this way, for it is a delusion in his soul. For his final level is not in actuality, and he is unique among all existences, higher and lower, in that his final level is not in actuality.

And should it arise in the mind of a person to think that a human being has his final level in actuality—this would be the level of the upper beings, who do have their perfection in

האדם עם מעלת נפשו האלקית, אשר כבר אמרנו כי יש לו נפש אלקית בפרט שלא נמצא בכל נפשות התחתונים, אל יקבל אונאה בעצמו לומר כי יש לו מעלתו האחרונה בפעל, ויחשב בנפשו שלום יהיה לי אף אם אני יושב בטל מבלי עמל כלל, הרי המעלה שלו ומדרגתו יגן עליו, על מקומו ושיבנו, ועל בנו ויחזירנו, כי משלו יתן לו, ואין צריכה לקנות לו שום מעלה.

דבר זה מחשבת פגול לא ירצה, ולא יחשב כך, כי הוא טעות בנפשו. כי אין מעלת נפשו האחרונה בפעל, והוא מיוחד מבין כל הנמצאים עליונים ותחתונים, שאין מעלתו האחרונה בפעל.

וכי יעלה על דעת האדם שיהיה נמצא לאדם מעלתו האחרונה בפעל, כי זהו מדרגת העליונים שהם בפעל, אבל התחתונים שהם בעלי חמר, אינם בפעל.

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actuality. But the lower beings, who are material, do not have it in actuality.

And this proves that man does not possess his final level until he is considered among the upper beings and has movement among those who stand—only he was created in potential, and not in actuality, meaning that his final level is not in actuality.

And we find from this the distinction between man and all other created beings, upper and lower: for the upper beings have their perfection in actuality and do not need to bring their perfection into actuality. And the lower beings—except for man—also do not bring anything into actuality, for the purpose for which they were created does not involve change or emergence into actuality for them. But man is in potential and brings forth into actuality.

And it appears that his name indicates something essential to him—that which is unique in him, the human, above all. And this is that he is called *Adam* because he is dust from the *adamah* (earth).

And now one may ask: are all other beings not from the earth, that man should be uniquely called *Adam* because he was created from the earth? But the matter of man is especially related to the earth.

And this is because the earth is unique in that it is in potential, and has emergence into actuality of all things that come forth from it—plants and trees and all other things—and it is in potential for all this.

And this is the concept of man: that he is in potential, and his perfection comes forth into actuality. And therefore his name is fitting to be associated with the earth, which is unique in bringing forth from potential to actuality in fruits and vegetation and all that is associated with it. And so too is man, bringing forth his potential into actuality.

וְדָבָר זֶה יִכְרִיחַ כִּי אִין לְאָדָם מְעֻלְתוֹ הָאֲחֻרוֹנָה עַד שְׁנִחְשֵׁב מִדְּרָגָתוֹ בֵּין הָעֲלִיוֹנִים וְיִהְיֶה לוֹ מְהֻלְכִים בֵּין הָעוֹמְדִים הָאֵלֶּה, רַק שְׁנִבְרָא בְּכַחַ, וְאִינוּ בְּפִעֵל, שְׂאִין לוֹ מְעֻלְתוֹ הָאֲחֻרוֹנָה בְּפִעֵל

וְנִמְצָא לָהּ הַהִפְרָשׁ שֶׁיֵּשׁ בֵּין הָאָדָם וּבֵין כָּל הַנִּמְצָאִים הַתַּחְתּוֹנִים וְעֲלִיוֹנִים; כִּי הָעֲלִיוֹנִים שְׁלֵמוֹתָם בְּפִעֵל, וְאִינוּ צְרִיכִים לְהוֹצִיא שְׁלֵמוֹתָם אֶל הַפִּעֵל. וְהַתַּחְתּוֹנִים – זוּלַת הָאָדָם – אִין לָהֶם גַּם-כֵּן וְצִיָּאָה אֶל הַפִּעֵל, כִּי מֵה שְׁנִבְרָאוּ עָלְיוֹ, אִין הַשְׁתַּנּוּת וְצִיָּאָה לַפִּעֵל בָּהֶם. אִף הָאָדָם הוּא בְּכַח יוֹצֵא אֶל הַפִּעֵל

וְיִרְאֶה שֶׁשְּׁמוֹ מוֹרָה עַל דְּבַר הָעֲצָמִי לוֹ, שֶׁהוּא מִיַּחַד בּוֹ הָאָדָם מְכַל. וְזֶה שֶׁהוּא נִקְרָא אָדָם עַל שֶׁהוּא עֶפְרָ מִן הָאֲדָמָה

וְעַתָּה יֵשׁ לְשַׁאֵל, וְכִי כָּל שְׂאָר הַנִּמְצָאִים אֵינָם מִן הָאֲדָמָה, שֶׁיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם בְּיַחּוּד בְּשֵׁם אָדָם עַל שֶׁם שְׁנִבְרָא מִן הָאֲדָמָה. אֲבָל עֲנִן הָאָדָם מִתְנַחֵם בְּיוֹתֵר אֶל הָאֲדָמָה

וְזֶה כִּי הָאֲדָמָה הִיא מִיַּחַדָּת בְּנֵהָ שֶׁהִיא בְּכַחַ, וְיֵשׁ בָּהּ וְצִיָּאָה לַפִּעֵל כָּל הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר יוֹצֵאִים מִמֶּנָּה; צְמָחִים וְאֵילָנוֹת וְשְׂאָר כָּל הַדְּבָרִים, וְהִיא בְּכַחַ לְכָל זֶה

וְזֶהוּ עֲנִן הָאָדָם שֶׁהוּא בְּכַחַ, וְיוֹצֵא שְׁלֵמוֹתוֹ אֶל הַפִּעֵל; וּלְפִיכֵךְ שְׁמוֹ רָאוּי לוֹ שֶׁיִּהְיֶה מְשֻׁתָּף עִם הָאֲדָמָה, שֶׁהִיא מִיַּחַדָּת לְצֵאתָ מִן הַכַּחַ אֶל הַפִּעֵל בְּפִרּוֹת וְצְמָחִים וְכָל אֲשֶׁר שִׁיָּהּ אֵלֶיהָ, וְכֵן הוּא הָאָדָם יוֹצֵא כַּחוֹ אֶל הַפִּעֵל

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And therefore the perfection of man is also called *fruit*, as it is written in the verse (Yeshayahu 3:10): "Say to the righteous that it is good, for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds." Behold, purity and perfection is called *fruit*, just as it says in the first chapter of Kiddushin (40a).

And in the chapter of Eglah Arufah (Sotah 46a): "And they shall bring the calf down to a rugged valley" (Devarim 21:4). Rabbi Yochanan ben Shaul said: Why did the Torah say to bring a calf to the valley? The Holy One, blessed be He, said: Let something that did not produce fruits be decapitated in a place that does not produce fruits, on behalf of one whom they did not allow to produce fruits.

What is *fruits*? If you say literal procreation, then for the elderly and barren, would we also not perform the decapitation? Rather, it means mitzvos—until here (the Talmudic citation).

So, for not bringing his perfection into actuality, he is like the earth that did not produce fruits and did not bring anything into actuality, and remained in potential. And therefore his name, which is called *adamah*, is fitting for him, and he is fitting for his name.

And the animal is called *behemah* based on the phrase *bah mah*—meaning that the perfection of the thing for which it was created is found in it. Even though it is not a complete perfection, nevertheless, this matter exists within it, and this is "*bah mah*"—that something is found with it. Thus, each one's name indicates upon it.

However, do not err in these matters to deny perfection from one who could have brought forth his perfection into actuality, but passed away before actualizing his perfection. We do not deny him the World to Come at all—if he had preparation for perfection and died, for he was prevented and could not bring forth his perfection into actuality.

As our Sages of blessed memory said (Berachos 6a): "One who thought to do a mitzvah and was prevented—he is given reward as if he did the mitzvah."

וְלִכְדּוֹ שְׁלֵמוֹת הָאָדָם נִקְרָא גַם-כֵּן בְּשֵׁם פְּרִי, וּכְדֻכְתִּיב בִּקְרָא (יִשְׁעֵיָהּ ג, י): "אָמְרוּ צְדִיק כִּי טוֹב כִּי פְרִי מֵעֲלֵיָהֶם יֹאכְלוּ". הָרִי שֶׁהִזְכּוּת וְהַשְׁלֵמוֹת נִקְרָא (פְּרִי, וּכְמוֹ שֶׁאָמְרוּ בְּפֶרֶק קַמָּא דְקִדּוּשִׁין (מ, א

וּבְפֶרֶק עֵגְלָה עֲרוּפָה (סוֹטָה מו, א): "וְהוֹרְדוּ אֶת הָעֵגְלָה אֶל נַחַל אֵיתָן" (דְּבָרִים כ, ד), אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן בֶּן שְׂאוּל: מִפְּנֵי מָה אָמְרָה תּוֹרָה הִבְאָ עֵגְלָה בְּנַחַל, אָמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ-בְּרוּךְ-הוּא: זָבֵא דְבָר שְׁלֵא עֲשֵׂה פְרוֹת, וְיַעֲרַף בְּמִקּוֹם שֶׁאֵינּוּ עוֹשֵׂה פְרוֹת, בְּשִׁבְלֵי מִי שְׁלֵא הִנְיָחוּ אוֹתוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת פְרוֹת

מֵאֵי פְרוֹת, אֵילִימָא פְרִיָּה וְרַבִּיָּהּ, אֲזִקְוֹ וְאִפְרִים הִכִּי נִמְי דְלֵא עֲרַפִּינּוּ, אֵלֵא מִצְוֹת', עַד כָּאֵן

הָרִי בְשִׁבְלֵי שְׁלֵא הוֹצִיא שְׁלֵמוֹת שְׁלוֹ אֶל הַפְּעֵל, הוּא כְמוֹ הָאָדָמָה שְׁלֵא עֲשֵׂתָהּ פְרוֹת, וְלֵא הוֹצִיאָהּ דְבָר אֶל הַפְּעֵל, וְנִשְׂאָר בְּכַח. וְלִפְיֵכָה שְׁמוֹ שֶׁנִּקְרָא בְשֵׁם אָדָמָה – נָאָה לוֹ, וְהוּא נָאָה לְשְׁמוֹ

וְהַבְּהֵמָה נִקְרָאת בְּשֵׁם בְּהֵמָה עַל שֵׁם בְּ"ה מ"ה. רַצָּה לוֹמַר כִּי שְׁלֵמוֹת דְבָר שֶׁנִּבְרָא עָלָיו – נִמְצָא בָּהּ, אִף עַל גַּב שֶׁאֵינּוּ שְׁלֵמוֹת גָּמוּר, מִכָּל מִקּוֹם דְבָר זֶה נִמְצָא עִמָּה וְזֶהוּ בָּהּ מָה, כִּי דְבָר מָה נִמְצָא עִמָּה. הָרִי שֶׁכָּל אֶחָד יוֹרָה שְׁמוֹ עָלָיו

אֲמַנָּם אֶל תְּטַעֲהָ בְּדְבָרִים אֵלּוּ לְשֵׁלֵל הַשְׁלֵמוֹת מִמֵּי שֶׁאֵי אֲפֹשֶׁר לוֹ שִׁיוּצִיא שְׁלֵמוֹתוֹ אֶל הַפְּעֵל, אֲשֶׁר הִלָּךְ לַעֲוֹלָמוֹ קָנָם שֶׁהוֹצִיא שְׁלֵמוֹת שְׁלוֹ אֶל הַפְּעֵל; אֵין אֲנוּ שׁוֹלְלִים הַעוֹלָם הִבָּא מִמֵּנוּ כָּלֵל, אִם יֵשׁ בּוֹ הַכְּנָה אֶל הַשְׁלֵמוֹת וּמַת, שֶׁאֲנוֹס הִיָּה שְׁלֵא הוֹצִיא שְׁלֵמוֹת שְׁלוֹ לַפְּעֵל

בְּאִמְרָם זְכוּרָנָם לְבִרְכָה (בְּרִכּוֹת ו, א): חֲשֵׁב לַעֲשׂוֹת מִצְוָה וְנִנְאָס, יֵשׁ לוֹ עַל זֶה שֶׁכָּר כָּאֵלּוּ עֲשֵׂה הַמִּצְוָה

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And this is because the future reward is for the soul, and since he was prevented, the obstruction was not from the soul but only from the body. Therefore, the soul is given reward as if it performed the mitzvah.

וְזֶה מֵצַד כִּי הַשְּׂכָר לְעֵתִיד הוּא לַנְּשָׁמָה, וְכֹאשֶׁר הוּא אָנוֹס, לֹא הָיָה עֲכוּב זֶה מֵצַד הַנְּשָׁמָה, רַק לַגּוּף. וְלִקְדוֹ בּוֹתְנִין לַנְּשָׁמָה שְׂכָר כְּאִלוּ עָשָׂה הַמִּצְוָה.

Only if he acted willfully, with wickedness and with understanding—and this was from the soul—then the intention is concerning one who *could* have brought forth his perfection into actuality and did not do so.

רַק אִם עָשָׂה בְּמֵזִיד בְּרַעְתּוֹ וּבִשְׂכָלוֹ, וְזֶה הָיָה מֵצַד הַנְּשָׁמָה. רַק הַפְּנוּנָה בְּמִי שְׂאֵפֶשֶׁר לוֹ יִצְיֵאת שְׁלֵמוֹתוֹ אֶל הַפֶּעַל, וְלֹא הוֹצִיא שְׁלֵמוֹת שְׁלוֹ אֶל הַפֶּעַל.

And this matter will be further explained with broad explanation and clarified words.

וְדַבֵּר זֶה יִתְבָּאֵר עוֹד בְּבִאּוּר רַחֵב וּבְדַבְרִים בְּרוּרִים.

And it has become clear to you that the virtue of man is that he is in potential—as will be explained afterward. And therefore one should not deceive himself to say that he may sit idle and still succeed with eternal success; rather, his success is through fulfillment of Torah and mitzvos.

וְהִתְבָּאֵר לָךְ כִּי מֵעֵלֵת הָאָדָם שֶׁהוּא בְּכַח, וְכִמוֹ שְׂיִתְבָּאֵר אַחֵר זֶה. וְלִפְיֻקָּד לֹא יִהְיֶה אוֹנָאָה בְּנַפְשׁוֹ לוֹמֵר שְׂיִשָּׁב בְּטֵל וְיִצְלִיחַ בְּהַצְלָחָה נְצָחִית, רַק הַצְּלָחָתוֹ בְּקִיּוּם הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוֹת.

And to indicate that man is lacking and requires completion, therefore they said in Perek Chelek (Sanhedrin 99b): “Man is born for toil” (Iyov 5:7).

וְלְהוֹרוֹת כִּי הָאָדָם חָסֵר, וְצָרִיף אֵלָיו הַשְּׁלֵמָה. לְכָף אָמְרוּ בְּפֶרֶק חֶלֶק (סַנְהֶדְרִין צט, ב): “אָדָם לְעֵמֶל (יולד) (איוב ה, ז

Rabbi Eliezer said: I do not know if man was created for toil of the mouth or for toil of labor.

אָמַר רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר: אֵינִי יוֹדֵעַ אָדָם לְעֵמֶל פֶּה, אִם לְעֵמֶל מְלָאכָה.

When it says (Mishlei 16:26): “The soul of the laborer labors for him, for his mouth has compelled him,” I say it is for toil of the mouth.

כִּשֶׁהוּא אוֹמֵר (מְשָׁלִי טז, כו): “נֶפֶשׁ עֹמֶלָה עֹמֶלָה לוֹ כִּי אֶכְפֵּף עָלָיו פִּיהוֹ”, הָרִי אוֹמֵר לְעֵמֶל פֶּה.

And still I do not know if it refers to toil of Torah or to toil of conversation.

וְעַדִּין אֵינִי יוֹדֵעַ אִם לְעֵמֶל תּוֹרָה, אִם לְעֵמֶל שִׁיחָה.

When it says (Yehoshua 1:8): “This book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth, and you shall meditate on it day and night,” I say it is only for the toil of Torah. Until here.

כִּשֶׁהוּא אוֹמֵר (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ א, ח): “לֹא יִמוּשׁ סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה מִפִּיךָ וְהִגִּיתָ בוֹ יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה”, הָרִי אוֹמֵר אִף לְעֵמֶל תּוֹרָה! עַד כָּאן.

And this explains what we have said—that man was not created in his final perfection, but was created to bring his perfection into actuality.

וּבִאֲרוּ בְּנֵה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְנוּ. כִּי הָאָדָם הַזֶּה לֹא נִבְרָא בְּשְׁלֵמוֹתוֹ הָאֲחֵרוֹן, וְהוּא נִבְרָא לְהוֹצִיא שְׁלֵמוֹתוֹ אֶל הַפֶּעַל.

And this is the meaning of “man is born for toil”—that he is born and exists for the purpose of toil, namely, to bring perfection into actuality.

וְזֶה “אָדָם לְעֵמֶל יוֹלֵד”, שֶׁהוּא נוֹלָד וְנִמְצָא אֶל תְּכֵלִית הָעֵמֶל, דְּהֵינּוּ לְהוֹצִיא שְׁלֵמוֹת אֶל הַפֶּעַל.

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And he will never reach to be fully in actuality forever, but he will always be toiling to bring his perfection into actuality, and this is his final perfection.

ולא יגיע להיות נמצא בפעל לגמרי לעולם, אבל תמיד יהיה עמל להוציא שלמותו אל הפעל, וזה שלמותו האחרון.

And therefore it says: “Man is born for toil,” and that toil is the emergence into actuality. And he is always still in potential to come out into actuality; for this man is in potential and emerges into actuality.

ולפיכך אומר: "אדם לעמל יולד", והעמל הוא הוציאה אל הפעל. ותמיד הוא בכח עוד לצאת אל הפעל; כי זה האדם הוא בכח, ויוצא אל הפעל.

And the more he emerges into actuality, the more he remains in potential to further emerge into actuality.

וכמה שהוא יוצא אל הפעל, נשארו בכח לצאת עוד אל הפעל תמיד.

And he said: and still I do not know if it is for toil of the mouth or for toil of labor.

ואמר: ועדין איני יודע אם לעמל פה או לעמל מלאכה.

For even if man was created in potential and not in actuality, perhaps this potential refers to physical potential, which is certainly potential and has emergence into actuality, and in it is toil.

כי אף אם נברא האדם בכח ולא בפעל, אולי הכח הזה הוא שיוד לפתח הגופני, שאין ספק שהוא בכח, ויש בו יציאה אל הפעל, ובו שיוד עמל.

But the potential of speech, which is more distinct in that it is not found in any other living being except in man—therefore this potential is more distinguished.

אבל כח הדבורי, שהוא יותר נבדל במה שלא נמצא בשאר בעלי חיים, כי אם באדם; לכה הכח הזה הוא יותר נבדל.

And perhaps it is enough to bring into actuality only the physical potential, and there is no need to bring the potential of speech into actuality, for man was not created for that.

ואפשר כי די הוא שיוציא מן הכח אל הפעל הכח הגופני, ואין צורך להוציא כח הדבורי אל הפעל, שאין האדם נברא על זה.

And on this he said: since it is written (Mishlei 16:26): “The soul of the laborer labors for him, for his mouth has compelled him,” behold this toil is toil of the mouth, which is the power of speech—that this power must be brought into actuality, and for this man was created.

ועל זה אומר: כיון דכתיב (משלי טז, כו): "נפש עמלה עמלה לו כי אכף עליו פיהו", הרי כי עמל הזה הוא עמל פה, שהוא כח הדבורי, שפח זה צריך שיוציא אל הפעל, ועל זה נברא האדם.

And he said further: and still I do not know if it is toil of conversation or toil of Torah.

ואמר עוד: ועדין איני יודע אם עמל שיחה או עמל תורה.

For perhaps only the power of speech needs to be brought from potential to actuality, which is not complete intellect, but not the intellectual power, which is speech of Torah—and that is complete intellect.

כי אולי לא צריך שיוציא מן הכח אל הפעל רק כח הדבורי, שאינו שכל גמור. אבל לא כח השכלי, שהוא דבור של תורה, וזהו שכל גמור.

When it says (Yehoshua 1:8): “This book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth,” from this we learn that man was

כשהוא אומר (יהושע א, ח): "לא ימוש ספר התורה הזה מפיה", מזה נלמד כי האדם על זה נברא,

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created to bring into actuality the intellectual speech power, which is the intellect of Torah.

שְׂוִיָּצִיא אֶל הַפֶּעַל כַּח הַדְּבָרִי הַשְּׂכֵלִי, שֶׁהוּא שְׂכָל הַתּוֹרָה.

And therefore it says: “This book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth,” for since man’s perfection is in potential, all his toil and effort must be in the thing which is his final perfection, for which he was created.

וּלְפִיכֹה אָמַר: "לֹא יִמוּשׁ סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה מִפִּיךָ", כִּי אַחַר שֶׁהָאָדָם שְׁלֵמוֹתוֹ בְּכַח, צָרִיךְ שְׂיִהְיֶה כָּל עֲמָלוֹ וּפְעָלוֹ בְּדָבָר שֶׁהוּא שְׁלֵמוֹתוֹ הָאֲחֵרוֹן אֲשֶׁר נִבְרָא בְּשִׁבְלֵוֹ.

As the verse says: “Man is born for toil”—meaning the ultimate purpose of his stature is for toil, which is emergence into actuality. And this is “It shall not depart...” etc.

כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמַר הַפֶּתוּב: "אָדָם לְעֵמֶל יוֹלֵד". שְׂרוּצָה לוֹמַר כִּי תְּכַלִּית מַעֲלָתוֹ הוּא אֶל הָעֵמֶל, שֶׁהוּא וְצִיָּאָה 'אֶל הַפֶּעַל, וְזֶהוּ "לֹא יִמוּשׁ" וְגו'.

However, do not say that with the emergence of man’s perfection into actuality, it is possible that he can fully bring his perfection into actuality.

אֲמַנָּם אֵל תֹּאמַר, כִּי עִם וְצִיָּאת שְׁלֵמוֹת הָאָדָם אֶל הַפֶּעַל, אֲפֹשֶׁר שִׂי שְׂיִהְיֶה יוֹצֵא שְׁלֵמוֹתוֹ לְגַמְרֵי אֶל הַפֶּעַל.

For this is not so at all, because this is his creation—that even when he brings his perfection into actuality, he still remains in potential.

שְׂנָה אֵינּוּ כָּלֵל, כִּי זֶהוּ בְּרִיאָתוֹ, שְׁעַם שֶׁהוּצִיא, שְׁלֵמוֹתוֹ אֶל הַפֶּעַל, נִשְׁאָר עוֹד בְּכַח

As explained earlier, as it says: “Man is born for toil.”

כְּמוֹ שֶׁהִתְבָּאָר לְפָנֵי זֶה, כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמַר: "אָדָם לְעֵמֶל יוֹלֵד".

For man was created for toil, which has no rest or completion at all.

כִּי הָאָדָם נִבְרָא לְעֵמֶל, שְׂאִין לוֹ שְׁבִיטָה וְהַשְּׁלָמָה כָּלֵל.

And even when he brings into actuality, he still always remains in potential.

וְעַם שֶׁהוּא יוֹצֵא אֶל הַפֶּעַל, נִשְׁאָר עוֹד תָּמִיד בְּכַח

For if his perfection were truly found in actuality, it would not be called toil.

שְׂאֵם הִיָּה נִמְצָא שְׁלֵמוֹתוֹ בְּפֶעַל, לֹא הִיָּה נִקְרָא זֶה 'עֵמֶל'.

For the term “toil” applies to something that has no rest, and does not reach a final state of rest.

כִּי לְשׁוֹן עֵמֶל' בָּא עַל דְּבָר שְׂאִין לוֹ הַנְּחָה, וְלֹא יָבֵא אֶל תְּכַלִּית הַנְּחָה

And so it is with man—as long as he is attached to matter, he is not in complete actuality, until he separates from matter, and then he is truly in actuality.

וְכֵן הָאָדָם כָּל זְמַן הֵיוֹתוֹ מְחַבֵּר עִם הַחֲמֶר, אֵינּוּ בְּשְׁלֵמוֹת בְּפֶעַל, עַד אֲשֶׁר הוּא נִפְרָד מִן הַחֲמֶר, וְאֵז נִמְצָא בְּפֶעַל

And in the Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 5:2): “Also the soul is never filled” (Koheles 6:7), because the soul knows that whatever it gains, it gains for itself; therefore it is not satisfied with mitzvos and good deeds.

וּבִמְדָרָשׁ (וַיִּקְרָא רַבָּה ה, ב): "גַּם הַנֶּפֶשׁ לֹא תִמְלֵא" (קֹהֵלֶת ו, ז), לְפִי שֶׁהַנֶּפֶשׁ יוֹדַעַת שֶׁכָּל אֲשֶׁר תִּיגַע לְעֲצָמָהּ תִּיגַע, לְפִיכֹה אֵינָה שׁוֹבְעָה מִצְוֹת וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים.

Rabbi Levi said: a parable to a city-dweller who married a princess—even if he feeds her all royal delicacies, he has not fulfilled his duty, for she is a king’s daughter.

אָמַר רַבִּי לֵוִי: מְשַׁל לְעִירוֹנֵי שֶׁהִיָּה נָשׁוּי בֵּת מְלָכִים, אַף־עַל־פִּי שֶׁמֵּאֲכִילָהּ כָּל מַעֲדָנֵי מֶלֶךְ, אֵינּוּ יוֹצֵא חוֹבָתוֹ, לָמָּה — שֶׁהִיא בֵּת מְלָכִים

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So too, all that a man does with his soul does not fulfill his obligation—why? Because she is from above. Until here.

And the explanation of this matter: that this soul, which is from above, and dwells in the lower realms, always yearns for Torah and mitzvos while it is in the lower world.

And this is considered a deficiency in her level—that she, the essential Divine soul from above, is dwelling in the lower world.

And anything that is lacking yearns for completion. And Torah and mitzvah are the completion of the soul.

And because of this, the soul yearns for Torah and mitzvos, to come into actuality and to become complete.

However, it will not be satisfied with mitzvos and good deeds, so long as it dwells in the lower realms—in the body of man.

For this is from the level of the essence of the soul which is from above, and therefore it does not become completed in the lower realms, in the material body.

And since it is not completed, it is not satisfied with mitzvos and good deeds; rather, it constantly yearns to be fully completed, and it is not completed until it reaches the ultimate goal—in that which is the Divine essence from above.

And this is that he compares her to a princess who was married to a commoner. And even though he gives her all the delicacies of the world, he does not fulfill his obligation with her, because she is a king's daughter, and she is connected to this commoner, and if so, she is always lacking when she is with this commoner.

And whatever he gives her—after all, she is still with the commoner, who is not her match. Therefore, he cannot treat her as is fitting for her, for she is a king's daughter, and in any case she is joined to a commoner, and not [to a king, and therefore he does not fulfill his obligation with her.

And so too, when the soul is from above, even though the mitzvos and the Torah are for her emergence into perfection, nonetheless, as long as she stands in the lower world in the body of man, and she is an essence distinct from the higher realms—she does not receive completion.

כָּדָּ כָּל מַה שְׂיַפְעֵל הָאָדָם עִם נַפְשׁוֹ אֵינּוּ יוֹצֵא יָדָי  
חֻבְתּוֹ, לְמַה – לְפִי שֶׁהִיא מְלַמְעָלָה, עַד כָּאֵן

וּבְאוּר עֲנִיָּן זֶה, כִּי הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַזֹּאת שֶׁהִיא מְלַמְעָלָה,  
וְעוֹמֶרֶת בְּתַחְתּוֹנִים, תָּמִיד הִיא מְשִׁתַּקְקֶת אֶל הַתּוֹרָה  
וְאֶל הַמִּצְוֹת, בְּמַה שֶׁהִיא בְּתַחְתּוֹנִים

וְדָבָר זֶה לֵה לְהִסְרוֹן מִדְּרָגָה נְחָשֵׁב לָהּ, שֶׁהִיא – עֵצָם  
נֶפֶשׁ אֱלֹקֵי מְלַמְעָלָה – עוֹמֶדֶת בְּתַחְתּוֹנִים

וְכָל דָּבָר שֶׁהוּא חֹסֵר, מְשִׁתַּקְק אֶל הַשְּׁלֵמָה. וְהַתּוֹרָה  
וְהַמִּצְוָה הֵם הַשְּׁלֵמָה אֶל הַנֶּפֶשׁ

וּבִשְׂבִיל כֶּךָ מְשִׁתַּקְקֶת הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֶל הַתּוֹרָה וְאֶל  
הַמִּצְוֹת, לְצִיאַת אֶל הַפְּעֵל וְלִהְיוֹת מְשֻׁלָּם

אֲמָנָם לֹא תִשָּׁבַע מִצְוֹת וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים, בְּמַה שֶׁהִיא  
עוֹמֶדֶת בְּתַחְתּוֹנִים – בְּגוּף הָאָדָם

שֶׁדָּבָר זֶה מִמְדְּרַגַת עֵצָם הַנֶּפֶשׁ שֶׁהִיא מְלַמְעָלָה, וְלִכְדָּ  
אֵינָה מְשֻׁלָּמָה בְּתַחְתּוֹנִים בְּגוּף הַחֲמָרִי

וְכִיּוֹן שֶׁאֵינָה מְשֻׁלָּמָה, אֵינָה שׁוֹבְעָה מִצְוֹת וּמַעֲשִׂים  
טוֹבִים, רַק הִיא מְשִׁתַּקְקֶת תָּמִיד לְהִיוֹתָהּ מְשֻׁלָּמָה  
לְגַמְרִי, וְאֵינָה מְשֻׁלָּמָה עַד שֶׁתִּבְאֵר אֶל הַתְּכֵלִית, בְּמַה  
שֶׁהִיא עֵצָם אֱלֹקֵי מְלַמְעָלָה

וְזֶה שֶׁהוּא מְדַמֶּה אוֹתָהּ אֶל בֵּת מְלָךְ שֶׁנִּשְׁאָת  
לְעִירוֹנִי. וְעַם שֶׁהוּא נוֹתֵן לָהּ כָּל מַעֲדָנֵי עוֹלָם, אֵינּוּ  
יוֹצֵא יָדָי חֻבְתּוֹ עִמָּה, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהִיא בֵּת מְלָךְ, וְהִיא  
מִתְחַבְּרֶת אֶל עִירוֹנִי הַזֶּה, וְאִם־כֵּן תָּמִיד הִיא חֹסְרָה  
כְּאֲשֶׁר הִיא עִם הָעִירוֹנִי הַזֶּה

וְכָל אֲשֶׁר נוֹתֵן לָהּ – סוּף סוּף הִיא עִם הָעִירוֹנִי,  
שֶׁאֵינּוּ זוּג שְׁלֵה. וְלִכְדָּ לֹא יְכוּל לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּפִי הָרְאוּי  
לָהּ, שֶׁהִיא בֵּת מְלָךְ, שֶׁעַל כָּל פְּנִים הִיא מִתְחַבְּרֶת  
לְעִירוֹנִי, וְלֹא [לְמְלָךְ, וְלִכְדָּ אֵינּוּ יוֹצֵא יָדָי חֻבְתּוֹ  
עִמָּה

וְכֵן כְּאֲשֶׁר הַנֶּפֶשׁ הִיא מְלַמְעָלָה, וְאִם כִּי הַמִּצְוֹת  
וְהַתּוֹרָה הֵם יְצִיאָהּ לָהּ אֶל הַשְּׁלֵמוֹת, מִכָּל מְקוֹם בְּמַה  
שֶׁהִיא עוֹמֶדֶת בְּתַחְתּוֹנִים בְּגוּף הָאָדָם, וְהִיא עֵצָם  
נִבְדָּל מִן הָעֲלִיוֹנִים, לֹא תִקְבַּל הַשְּׁלֵמָה



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Therefore, she is not satisfied with the mitzvos, and she is considered to be in potential all the days of her existence with the body.

לְכֹהֵל אֵינָהּ שׁוֹבְעָה מִן הַמִּצְוֹת, וְהִיא נֹחֶשֶׁת בְּכֹחַ כָּל יְמֵי הַיּוֹתֵה עִם הַגּוּף.

And this is what we wanted to explain—and this matter demands Torah from Heaven for one who knows the matter of the soul and its level: that it is from Heaven, and it is an essence that is not complete.

וְזֶה מֵה שֶׁרָצִינוּ לְבַאֵר וְדַבֵּר זֶה מִחֵיב תּוֹרָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם לְמִי שֶׁיּוֹדֵעַ עַנְיַן הַנֶּפֶשׁ וּמְדַרְגֶתָּהּ, שֶׁהִיא מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם, וְהִיא עֹצָם בְּלִתי מִשְׁלֵם

And therefore, her completion is through the Torah and mitzvos, as will be explained with the help of Hashem, may He be blessed.

וְלְכֹהֵל הַשְּׁלֵמָתָה עַל-יְדֵי הַתּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת, כְּמוֹ שֶׁיִּתְבָּאֵר בְּעֵצוֹת הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ.

For He gave her the greatest quality of all—that is, the Torah—to complete her lack, because the soul always yearns for completion, since she dwells in the lower realms, and she is from Heaven.

כִּי נָתַן לָהּ הַמַּעֲלָה הַיּוֹתֵר עַל כָּל – הִיא הַתּוֹרָה – לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסְרוֹנָהּ, בְּעֵבוֹר שֶׁהַנֶּפֶשׁ מִשְׁתַּקְקֶת תָּמִיד אֶל הַשְּׁלֵמָה, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁעוֹמְדָת בַּתְּחִתּוֹנִים, וְהִיא מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם,

And what can complete her—becomes complete.

וּמֵה שֶׁאֶפְשֵׁר לְהַשְׁלִימָהּ – נִשְׁלָמָה

#### [NOTE Summary

The Maharal opens with the assertion that man is called *adam* because he was formed from the *adamah* (earth). But this is not merely about physical origin—it hints at man’s defining quality: he, like the earth, possesses potential. The earth brings forth fruit and vegetation only through cultivation, and likewise, man exists in a state of *koach* (potential) until he actualizes his divine purpose.

While other beings, both higher and lower, exist either in static perfection (*b’poel*) or with fixed limitations, man is uniquely situated: he is never complete. Even when he seems to have achieved greatness, he remains in potential, always striving. This infinite striving is the essence of his soul.

The Maharal contrasts man with the animal (*behemah*) whose name reflects “*bah mah*”—“it has what it needs.” An animal is born with its function complete. Man, on the other hand, is never finished—his soul is from the heavens and yearns for completion, which it cannot find in this world.

Drawing from *Sanhedrin* and *Yehoshua*, the Maharal teaches that “man is born for toil”—specifically for the toil of Torah. Not simply physical or verbal labor, but spiritual exertion—the bringing forth of the soul’s divine essence through learning and mitzvos. Even so, the soul remains unsatisfied. Like a princess married to a commoner, no matter how much he gives her, she remains unfulfilled because her inner essence belongs to a higher realm.

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Thus, Torah is given to man from Heaven precisely to bridge this gap. It is the only thing capable of channeling divine perfection into human imperfection. The soul, ever yearning, finds its only relief in Torah—not as an endpoint, but as a lifelong process of becoming.

#### Practical Takeaway

Never settle spiritually. Even if you've achieved knowledge or mitzvah observance, your soul still yearns for more. This yearning is not failure—it is your highest quality. Channel it through learning Torah and fulfilling mitzvos, knowing that each act draws divine perfection into your being.

#### Chassidic Story

The Maharal once met a brilliant young man who lamented that no matter how much Torah he learned, he still felt distant from God.

The Maharal answered:

“Does the earth feel shame that it must be tilled again each year? Should it despair when one crop is harvested, knowing another must be planted? On the contrary, its greatness lies in its capacity to give again and again. So too with the soul—it is not meant to be full, but to remain fertile.”

He paused and added:

“Even the angels do not long like your soul longs. That longing is your crown.”

(\*Source: based on oral traditions about the Maharal's students, collected in *Sipurim Nifla'im Mibeis Maharal*)

**END NOT]**