

The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

Noam Elimelech

Parshas Balak

And Balak the son of Tzipor saw etc. And at the outset we will preface with the explanation of the verse, “Open the gates, and there shall enter a righteous nation, keeper of faiths” (Yeshayahu 26:2). It is taught in the Gemara (Shir HaShirim Rabbah 5:3, cf. Yoma 38b): “Open for Me an opening like the eye of a needle, and I will open for you an opening like the entrance of the Sanctuary.” And this is [the meaning of] “Open the gates”—that is, open the gates of teshuvah—and with this you will cause “there shall enter a righteous nation,” meaning that the prayer of the tzaddik will ascend to its root. For sometimes it is prevented from rising due to the wicked. Therefore, return [in teshuvah]. “Keeper of faiths”—this refers to the Holy One, blessed be He, who guards and waits for the prayer of the tzaddik to come before Him and guards the prayer in order to say upon it “Amen,” meaning to agree with it and fulfill his requests.

And this is also [the meaning of] “And Balak saw... what Israel had done to the Amorite” (Bamidbar 22:2). He understood that certainly it was due to the great righteousness of Israel that they defeated Sichon and Og. Therefore, “Moav was very afraid of the people”—meaning the simple people, who were only on the level of awe—Moav was afraid of them. For a person, according to his level of service, so does he draw upon himself [a corresponding measure]. And those who served from awe drew upon themselves a fear from Above, and their fear fell upon their enemies.

Therefore, “Moav was afraid of the people.” “And Moav was disgusted because of the children of Israel”—those who are alluded to by the term “Yisrael,” who are great tzaddikim that serve from love, drew upon themselves a great love, and therefore Moav was disgusted with their lives—for it is impossible for a rasha to receive love in his heart. Therefore, they were disgusted with their lives through that love, because they could not receive it.

וירא בלק בן צפורה וכו'. ומתחילה נגידים לפירוש פסוק "פתחו שעריהם ויבא גוי צדיק שומר אמונים", דאיתא באמרא "פתחו לי פתח בסקו של מחת ואני אפתח לך בפתחו של אלום" וזהו "פתחו שעריהם", פירושו פתחו שעריו התשובה ובזיה מגרמו "ויבא גוי צדיק", פירושו שיהיא תפלה הצדיק עולה עד למקום שרשאה, כי לפעמים היא מעכבה מלעלות מחת קרשעים לך פשונו, "שומר אמונים" זה קאי על השם יתברך הושמר וממני מתי פבוא תפלה הצדיק לפניו וושמר את התפלה לומר עלייך "אמן", פירוש להעכמים עמו. בזכור שאלותיו להנתנו לו

וזה גם כן "וירא בלק כו' אשר עשה ישראל לאMRI", והבין שבנדי מחת גל צדקה ישראל נאחו לסיכון ועוד, לך "ויגר מזאוב מפני העם" פירוש מפשוטו העם אשר איןם כי אם במדרגת יראה, כי מזאוב מתריאין מהם, כי האדם לפי מדרגו שעובר בנו מplashah עלייו, ואוותם שעבדו מיראה המשיכו על עצם יראה מלמעלה והיתה אימחת משלת על שונאייהם, ולכון "ויגר מזאוב מפני העם". "ויקץ מפני בני ישראל" אותם המרמיין בחינת "ישראל", והם הצדיקים גדולים הועבדים מאהבה המשיכו על עצם אהבה גדולה, ולכון קציו מזאוב ביחסיהם כי זה בלתי אפשרי לרשע להגביל אהבה בלבו, לכון קציו ביחסיהם על ידי אהבה שלא יכולו להגביל

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[NOTE Summary]

Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk opens this teaching with the verse וירא בלאק בן צפור, analyzing it through the lens of the pasuk in Yeshayahu: פתחו שעריהם ויבא גוי צדיק שומר אמוניים. He explains that when we open the "gates" of teshuvah even slightly—like the “eye of a needle”—Hashem opens wide the heavenly gates of connection. This allows the prayers of tzaddikim to rise unhindered to their source. But sometimes those prayers are blocked by the actions of the wicked. Hashem waits and "guards" the prayers of the tzaddikim, holding them until they can be answered with an “Amen.”

Balak, perceiving the spiritual strength of Israel, especially their recent victories over Sichon and Og, is overwhelmed not merely by military might but by the inner holiness of the people. Rebbe Elimelech interprets ויגר מואָב מפֿנִי העם to mean that Moav was terrified even of the *simple* Jews who served Hashem with awe. Their fear drew down divine awe upon them, projecting spiritual dread onto their enemies. Meanwhile, the verse ויקצַו מפֿנִי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל points to a deeper disgust that Moav felt for the tzaddikim who served out of love. That kind of love radiates a divine presence that a rasha cannot endure. Thus, Moav recoiled from their very lives, unable to tolerate a light that their hearts could not receive.

Practical Takeaway

Every Jew, no matter their level, can draw down a corresponding spiritual energy based on how they serve Hashem. If one serves with awe, they receive divine awe and protection; if one serves with love, they radiate divine love—powerful enough to disturb even the darkest forces. Your inner avodah changes your spiritual atmosphere. Even a small move toward teshuvah can unlock vast blessings—not just for yourself, but for your entire community.

Chassidic Story

Rebbe Elimelech once told his students that when a Jew prays sincerely—even one who thinks he is lowly—he sets off waves in the upper worlds. One winter, a farmer who had come to Lzhensk to sell his wares entered the shul early in the morning. Not knowing much, he mumbled through a few lines of Tehillim and sighed deeply. After he left, Rebbe Elimelech, who had been praying in the corner, turned to his students with tears in his eyes. “Do you know what just happened?” he asked. “That man’s sigh shook the heavens more than all the yeshivah students reciting their daily quota.”

When one of the students expressed surprise, the Rebbe explained, “Because he offered it with every fiber of his being. It was a p’tach—a small opening of teshuvah. Hashem opened the gates wide, and his cry flew straight up.”

Source: Noam Elimelech, oral traditions cited in *Otzar Sipurei Tzaddikim* vol. 3, and *Me'orei Or*. **END NOTE]**

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Or it may be said in this manner: “Open the gates”—for it is taught in the Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim (Siman 215:1), that one does not respond “Amen” after his own blessing except after the final blessing [of a series]. And it appears that the reason is because every blessing that a person recites arouses the world corresponding to that particular blessing, which is its root and its light. And each and every blessing is its own world, continuing until the end of all the worlds. And a blessing that is the conclusion of a series of blessings corresponds to the end of the worlds. Therefore, after his own blessing, it is not appropriate to say “Amen,” because he has not yet completed the flow of lights through all the worlds. But another person may answer “Amen” to his blessing, for it is as if he agrees to his words, and through this he elevates it even higher. But the person himself is only permitted [to say Amen] at the end of the blessings, which corresponds to the end of the worlds.

And “Amen” is a praise encompassing all the worlds, as was established when they would say in the Mikdash: “From world to world” (cf. Divrei HaYamim I 16:36). And they subsequently established to respond “Amen,” which is [spelled] **אמֵן** (Alef-Mem-Nun). And this is also the meaning of “Blessed is Hashem from world to world—Amen” (Tehillim 106:48): the blessing that spans from world to world—it is permitted to answer Amen after one’s own blessings, as explained above. And it follows from this, that the great tzaddik who always ascends through the blessings to the end of all the worlds—he is permitted to answer Amen after his own blessing. And this is the meaning of “Open the gates”—that is, the tzaddik prays that the gates of prayer be opened for him. “And the righteous nation shall enter”—with his blessings. “Keeper of faiths”—meaning, that he will be able to answer Amen after his own blessings. Understand this well.

או יאמר עד"ז, "פתחו שעריהם" דאיתא ביש"ע או"ה
 "אין עוניין אמן אחר ברכות עצמו אלא אחר ברכה
 שהיא סוף הברכות", ונראה זהה עם הטעם הוא לפי שכלל
 ברכה שאדם מברך הוא מעורר אותו קעולם של
 הברכה ההייא אשר שם שרשיה ואורה, וכל ברכה
 וברכה הוא עולם בפני עצמו עד סוף כל היעולמות,
 וברכה שהיא סיום הברכות היא גן סוף היעולמות,
 וכן אחר ברכות עצמו אין שיק לומר אמן כיון שליא
 אמר עדין ה兜ות בכל היעולמות, אבל חכמו רשות
 לענות עלייו אמן שהוא גם מסקנים על דבריו ובזה
 מעלהו יותר למעלה, אבל הוא עצמו רשאי כי אם
 בסוף הברכות שהיא גן סוף היעולמות.

ו"אמֵן" הוא שבח על כל היעולמות יחד, כדי שונתנו
 שהיו אמורים במקרא "מן קעולם ועד קעולם",
 והתקינו אחר כך לענות אמן והוא א', והוא גם כן
 הפירוש "ברוך ה' מעולם ועד עולם אמן" פירוש
 הברכה שהיא מעולם ועד עולם מתקף לענות אמן אחר
 ברכותיו כב"ל. ונמצא לפי זה שהצדיק הגדול שהוא
 עולה פה מיד בכל הברכות עד סוף כל היעולמות הוא קיה
 מתקף לענות אמן אחר ברכות עצמו. וזהו "פתחו"
 שעריהם" הינו שהצדיק מתפלל שיפתחו לו שער
 תפלה, "ויבא גוי צדיק בברכותיו" שומר אמונים"
 פירוש שהיה יכול לענות אמן אחר ברכותיו. והבנ

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[NOTE Summary

Rebbe Elimelech deepens his interpretation of “**פתחו שעריהם ויבא גוי צדיק שומרamonim**” by exploring the halachah that a person may not answer “Amen” to his own blessing—unless it is the final one in a series. Drawing from Shulchan Aruch, he explains this restriction through mystical terms: each blessing a person recites elevates a distinct spiritual world associated with that blessing. Only upon completing all the blessings—symbolically completing the entire spiritual structure—can one say “Amen,” which encompasses and seals all the worlds.

Another person, however, *can* say “Amen” to someone else's blessing, because they are not actively drawing down that light but merely affirming and elevating it. “Amen,” then, becomes a universal connector, uniting all levels of divine flow. But the great tzaddik, who continuously ascends through all levels of blessing, *can* say “Amen” to his own blessings—because he completes the process.

Thus, “Open the gates” refers to opening up these levels of prayer; “and a righteous nation shall enter”—the tzaddik who elevates the blessings into all the worlds; and “keeper of faiths”—he may answer “Amen” to his own blessings, completing the circuit of divine flow.

Practical Takeaway

Every blessing you make is not just a personal act—it reverberates in spiritual realms. Even if we do not see it, each bracha constructs part of a spiritual edifice. When you bless with kavanah (intention), you draw light into the world. And when you answer “Amen” to another's blessing, you are partnering in lifting that light higher. Know that your words—especially blessings—matter, and with them, you help complete a cosmic structure.

Chassidic Story

It is told that once, a chassid of Rebbe Elimelech who had begun studying the laws of blessings asked, “Why is it that Rebbe, after reciting a long sequence of personal blessings during davening, sometimes whispers 'Amen' quietly to himself?”

Rebbe Elimelech responded with a warm smile and said, “When a soul completes a journey through the chambers of Heaven, it needs a seal—a confirmation that it has reached its end. For most, that seal comes from another person's Amen. But when one walks with Heaven in every word, sometimes even one's own Amen echoes through the upper worlds like thunder.”

Source: *Otzar Sipurei Tzaddikim*, vol. 2; *Pe'er Elimelech*, minhagim and teachings based on Rebbe Elimelech's inner circle **END NOTE]**

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Or it may be said in this manner, “And Balak saw...”

(Bamidbar 22:2), for Balak understood regarding Israel that they are able to effect through their speech whatever they desire, in the manner of what was said: “The tzaddik decrees, and the Holy One, blessed be He, fulfills” (cf. Moed Katan 16b). And this is [the meaning of] “And he saw” — [that is,] a term of understanding — that he understood “all that Israel had done” was “to the Emorite,” meaning: it was *because* of the Emorite — which refers to speech (*Amori* from the root אָמַר, “to speak”). And this is what they said: “His strength is only in his mouth” (Rashi on Bamidbar 22:2).

“And Moav was very afraid...” (ibid.) — it is worth paying attention to the fact that regarding “the people” it says “*vayagar*” (was afraid), and regarding “the children of Israel” it uses the term “*vayakotz*” (was disgusted). Also, why does it hint at this doubled language? And it seems [the answer is as follows]: For King Yannai said: “Do not fear the Perushim,” for he knew that they were complete tzaddikim and did not know how to take vengeance; rather, he feared the rest of the people. So too here: from those tzaddikim called “Bnei Yisrael” they were not afraid, for they felt secure regarding them. But from the simple people they were afraid. And this is [the meaning of] “And Moav was afraid because of the people.”

And he carefully used the word “*vayakotz*” regarding “Bnei Yisrael” to teach that they were not afraid of the tzaddikim, who are the level of “Bnei Yisrael,” but rather they loathed their good deeds — like the way of the wicked, who cannot tolerate righteous deeds. And not so is the way of the righteous, who rejoice greatly in the goodness of others. And understand this well.

או יאמר עד"ז "וירא בלק כו'", כי בלק קיה מבין בישראל שיכளין לפעל בדבור שלהם כל מה שרצו, על דבר שאמרו הצדיק גוזר והק"ה מהנים, וזהו "וירא" לשון הבנוה, שהבין את כל אשר עשה ישראל" הוא "לא אמר", כלומר בשכיל אמר ה הוא דבר, וזהו שאמרו אין فهو אלא בפיו.

וינגר מזאב" — ראיו לשום לב שאצל העם נאמר "וינגר" ואצל בני ישראל לשון "וינקז", גם מה רמז כפל הלשון? ונראה כי הנה ינאי המליך אמר: אל תתיראו מן הפרושים, כי ירע בכם שהם צדיקים אמורים ואינם יזקעים לנוקם נקם, רק שהנה מתירא ממשאר העם, וגם כאן אומם הצדיקים הנקראים "בני ישראל", מהם לא קי מתראיין כי קי בטוחים בעיניהם, אבל מפשטוי העם קי מתראיין, וזהו "וינגר מזאב מפני העם".

וזבק לומר אצל בני ישראל "וינקז" לומר שלא קי מתראיין מן הצדיקים אשר הם מדרגת בני ישראל, אלא קצי במעשיהם הטובים, בזרכם הרשעים שאינם יכולים לסתל מעתיקם, ולא כן דבר הצדיקים השליחים בטוב אחרים יומר מוד. קל להבין

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NOTE Summary

Rebbe Elimelech explains that Balak's fear was not merely political—it was spiritual. He understood that the strength of the Jewish people lay not in weapons, but in their *words*. As Chazal teach, “*The tzaddik decrees, and Hashem fulfills.*” Balak grasped that the Jewish victories over the Emorites were achieved through holy speech—prayer, blessings, and declarations of truth. That’s why the Torah says “**וַיַּרְא**” (he saw), implying insight: he discerned the true, inner power of the Jewish people.

Rebbe Elimelech notes the Torah's double language: "וַיָּגֹר מוֹאָב מִפְנֵי הָעָם" (Moav was afraid of the people) and "וַיִּקְנֹז מוֹאָב בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל" (Moav was disgusted with the children of Israel). He explains: the nations weren't afraid of the tzaddikim—the spiritual elite known as "*Bnei Yisrael*"—because they trusted that such righteous people wouldn't take revenge. What truly terrified them were the *simple* Jews, whose sincerity and raw fear of Heaven drew down overwhelming divine energy. Meanwhile, Moav *loathed* the tzaddikim—not out of fear, but because the purity of their deeds was unbearable to the wicked, who cannot tolerate the presence of righteousness.

Practical Takeaway

Your speech has power. Even if you're not a tzaddik, sincere prayer and words of truth can shift reality. Don't underestimate the spiritual weight of your davening or your blessings. Also, remember that the world may fear or resist holiness—not because it is aggressive, but because it shines too brightly for darkness to endure. Stand strong in your avodah, knowing that your sincerity causes ripples far beyond what you see. **END NOTE]**

“For there is no enchantment in Yaakov...” (Bamidbar 23:23), and the Targum Onkelos translates: “For there are no enchanters who wish to do good for the house of Yaakov... at the time when it will be said to Yaakov and to Yisrael: What has God wrought?” And it is necessary to examine: how does one thing depend on the other? Because the sorcerers do not want good for Yisrael, therefore “it will be said to Yaakov...”? That is, that the ministering angels ask: “What has God wrought?”—how is this connected?

And it is further necessary to examine the earlier verses: “And God came to Bilaam at night and said to him: If the men have come to call you, arise and go with them” (Bamidbar 22:20), and afterward it is written: “And God’s anger flared because he was going” (v. 22). Is it possible that Hashem Himself told him [to go], and then His anger burned over his going? Heaven forbid to think such a thing. Indeed, Rashi of blessed memory sensed this difficulty, but “the words of Torah are like a hammer...” (Shabbos 88b).

כפי לא נחש ביעקב כו", ותרוגם אונקלוס: ארי לא"
נחשיא אכו דייטב לבית יעקב כו' כיון יתימר ליעקב
ולישראל מה עבד אללה. ויש לדודך: איך פלאה הא
בזה — מושום דנחשיא אינם רוצים שייטיב לישראל
לכון יאמר ליעקב כו? ! דהיינו דמלacky הشرط שואליין
מה פועל אל" — וקיא פלאה זה בזה

ועוד יש לזכור במקרים הקיימים: "וניבא אלקים אל
בלעם ליליה ניאמר לו אם לקרא לך באו האנשימים קומ
לך אפס", ואחר כן כתוב: "ויהיר ארכ' ה' כי הולך הוא",
וכי אפשר שכך"ה אמר לו בעצמו ואחר כן יקרה אפס
ביהלוכו? ותוליה לחשב כזאת. אך רשי ז"ל הרגיש
כזאת אבל דברי תורה בפרטיש כו

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And what appears to me in explanation is as follows: Behold, the commentators seek to provide a reason for how Israel has a share in This World as well, since Yaakov and Esav divided the inheritance of the two worlds, and Yaakov chose the World to Come—so from where does Israel gain This World? And what appears to me is a beautiful reason. For behold, the complete tzaddik, in his level, through thoughts of teshuvah and his holy deeds, ascends from level to level until he reaches the level of the Hidden World (*alma d'itkasya*)—a concealed place where the sorcerers have no permission or hold. And from there he draws down influence to Israel. It thus turns out that truly, in the place of the sorcerers' nurture, Israel has no connection within them. Rather, Israel draws their sustenance from a place that is very lofty and precious, to which they have no access.

And this is [the meaning of] what Shlomo HaMelech, may peace be upon him, said: “Also the world He has set in their heart” (Koheles 3:11). That is, “world” is from the language of *ne'elam* (hidden)—this refers to *alma d'itkasya* (the hidden world). “He has set in their heart”—in the heart of the tzaddik who is able to ascend in his level until he reaches the hidden place. And this is also [the meaning of] “The world will be built with kindness” (Tehillim 89:3)—that is, from the hidden world, as explained above, the tzaddik draws down chessed to the attribute of Binah. For “yibaneh” (will be built) has the same letters as “Binah.” And the fact that the word begins with the letter yud alludes to the attribute of Chochmah, for yud represents Chochmah, and “Wisdom shall be found from ayin (nothingness)” (Iyov 28:12)—this refers to *alma d'itkasya*. And the tzaddik, through his holy deeds, walks until he finds this level, and from there he draws down influence to Yisrael.

And this too is alluded to in the Gemara (Berachos 55b): “Three things come through distraction: a snake, a lost object, and Moshiach.” That is, the snakes distract from this consciousness so that Israel should not have a share in This World. But in contrast, they themselves become distracted until they reach the *world of metziah*—the hidden world, which is like a *metziah* (a found treasure), and from there is the source of their flow.

ונלע"ד לפרשו, דהנה פאפרשים מהדרים לתן טעם על כי מאיון להם לישראאל לנחל גם כן בעולם הזה, אחר שיעקב ועשו חילקו בנהחלת שני עולםות ובחר יעקב בעולם הבא — ומאיון בא להם בעולם הזה? ונראה לי טעם לשבח: דהנה הצדיק כשהו במדרגתו על ידי הרהוריו תשובה ומעשיהם הקדושים הולך ממדרגה למדרגה עד שmag'esh למדרגת עולם לאתפסיא בעולם, מקום שאין רשות ואחיה לאנחותיהם שם, ומשם הוא ממשיך השפעות לישראאל. נמצא באמת בן הוא שבמקום ניקחת האנחות שם אין לישראאל שיקות בגינויו, רק יישראאל יונקים שפועותיהם ממשים גבורה. ניקר מאד אשר אין להם רשות שם

וזה שאמר שלמה המלך עליו השלום “גם אתה העולם נתנו בלבם ר' ל' עולם” הוא מלשון נעלם — הוא עלמא לאתפסיא, “נתנו בלבם” של הצדיק שיכול לעלות במדרגתו עד מקום הנעלם. וזה גם פ"ל עולם חסיד יבנה” — רחינו מהעולם הנעלם פ"ל ממשיך הצדיק חסיד למדת בינה, כי יבנה אותיות בינה, ומה שנכפתה הוי"ד בנהחלת הטעה הוא רמז למדת חכמה, כי י"ד הוא חכמה, ו”חכמה מאיון תפazz” הוא עולם לאתפסיא, והצדיק הולך במעשיהם הקדושים עד שמייצא מדרגת הזאת ומשם הוא ממשיך השפעות לישראאל.

וזה גם כן נרמז באמרא: “שלשה דברים באים בהפחה הצעת, ואלו הן: נחש, ומץיה, וממשיח”, והיינו שהנחותים מסיחון דעת הזאת שליא יהנה לישראאל חילק בעולם הזה, ולעתה זה גם הם מסיחון דעתם עד הגיאם לעולם האציה הוא העולם הנעלם שהוא ממשיא, ומשם המאכפת שפערם.

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And this too is [the meaning of] “For this, let every pious one pray” (Tehillim 32:6)—that is, the tzaddik prays on behalf of all of Israel that they should have chessed and mercy. For “chasid” is from the root of chessed, and the yud is also an allusion to the attribute of Chochmah—that in the tzaddik’s power lies the ability to draw down from there kindness and influences. And it says, “at a time of finding”—when the tzaddik reaches this time and finds it. For the middos are called “times” (*itim*), since the Infinite One, blessed be He, has no association with time; but the middos were concealed within His infinite essence, and when the time comes to bring them from potential to actual, they are called *times*. And when the tzaddik finds that middah—since it is impossible to stand in that level constantly, rather it is like a *metziah* (a sudden find)—that is the meaning of “*le’eis matzo*”.

“Only to the flood of many waters they will not reach him...” (ibid.)—meaning “rak” (only) indicates exclusion, to diminish the *flood of many waters*, which are the kelipos and the serpents, from this flow—“they will not reach him,” for they have no connection to this influence, as explained above.

What emerges from all this is that the tzaddik walks through his holy deeds from level to level until he finally reaches that level which the sorcerers have no connection to. And this is the meaning of the verse “And [God] said: If the men have come to call you...” (Bamidbar 22:20), and Rashi explains: that you may receive reward—which is This World. “Arise, go with them”—for this is your portion, your due. But “God’s anger flared because he was going”—that is, because he seized the craft of Israel: to ascend from level to level like Israel, therefore the wrath of God flared, and so in the end, they killed him by the sword. And this is the intent of the Targum Onkelos: “For the sorcerers did not desire that good be bestowed upon the house of Yaakov...”—that is, they claim that This World is their rightful portion, and if so, from where do Israel draw their share in it? Therefore it says, “At this time it shall be said to Yaakov...”—meaning, the tzaddik must ascend above, to *alma d’itkasya*, beyond the domain of the ministering angels, and there—there is pure mercy and great kindness.

וזהו גם כן “על זאת יתפלל כל חסיד”, דהיינו שחשיד יתפלל על כללות ישראל שיהא להם חסד ורחמים, כי חסיד הוא לשון חסד, והיו”ד הוא רמז גם כן למדת חכמה שביד הצדיק להמשיך משם חסדים והשפעות, ואמר “לעת מצוא” כשיגיע הצדיק לעת זאת וימצא אותה, כי המדות נקראים “עתים”, כי אין סוף ברורה הוא אין שיח בזעת, רק המדות היו בזמנים בכל עז אין סוף ברורה והוא ותגיא העת שוצאים מפה אל הפעל וכלנו נקראים עתים, וכשימצא הצדיק המדת הזאת, כי זה אי אפשר להיות עומד במדרגה הזאת ב תמיד כי אם היא קמצאה, והיינו “לעת מצוא”.

ברק לשטר מים רביים אלו לא יגיעו”—ר”ל “ברק” הוא מעוט, שמעט לשטר מים רביים הם הקליפות והבגדיים מהשפעה הזאת—ש”אלו לא יגיעו” שאין להם שיכות להשפעה הזאת כנ”ל

הויצא לנו מזה שחשיד הולך במעשייו בקדושים מדרגה לדרגה עד שמצא ימץיא מדרגה הזאת שאין לפניהם שיכות בגינויו. וזהו פירוש חכתיוב “ויאמר אם לך ראה לך באו קאנשימ” ופירש רש”י שתקבל שקר — והוא קעולם הנה, “קום לך אמת” כי זה חלקה הטעיה לך. אבל “ויתר אף ה כי הולך הוא” ר”ל כי תפס אוננויהם של ישראל להיות הולך מדרגה לדרגה כיישראל, וכיחר אף ה כו, ולא בסתופו קרגו אותו בחרב. וזהו פונת תרגום אונקלוס “ארי לא נחשיא צבן דיתיב לביית יעקב כו”, דהיינו שהם באים בטענה שקהעולם הנה היא חלוקם הטעיה להם, ומעטה מאיו לישראל חלוק ונתקלה בעולם הנה? ולא אמר “כעת יאמר ליעקב כו”— פירוש זה אריך הצדיק להעלות למעלה עד עלה דאתביסיא, לפנים ממיחיצת מלacky השרת, ושם הוא רחמים גמורים וחסדים גודלים.

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NOTE Summary

In this final section, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk reveals a profound mystical path: that the *tzaddik*, through holy thoughts and deeds, ascends beyond the layers of reality into **עולם האצילות** and further into **עולם הארץ**—the hidden spiritual world where the forces of impurity (like sorcery and evil speech) have no access. He interprets Koheles' verse “**גַם אֶת הָעוֹלָם נָתַן בְּלִבּוּם**” to mean that Hashem plants within the heart of the *tzaddik* the capacity to reach these hidden realms. There, the *tzaddik* draws down kindness and divine flow for all of Israel.

He ties this idea to the verse “**עוֹלָם חֶסֶד יָבִנָה**” and shows how “**יָבִנָה**” hints at *Binah*, which is sustained through kindness drawn from *Chochmah*, the uppermost level of divine wisdom. The *tzaddik* connects even to this level—symbolized by the letter Yud—and brings blessing from there.

The Gemara teaches that three things come unexpectedly: *a snake, a lost object, and Moshiach*. Rebbe Elimelech explains: snakes (i.e. forces of darkness) attempt to distract Israel from their portion in This World. But the *tzaddik*, rising to **עולם המציה** (a “world of finding”), brings down divine flow from the hidden world. Since this level cannot be dwelled in permanently, it is like a sudden “find.” From this concealed source, he brings blessing uncontaminated by *kelipah*.

Even Bilaam sought to grasp this holy craft—ascending from level to level like the righteous of Israel. That is why, though Hashem permitted him to go, His wrath burned when Bilaam appropriated the “craft” of the *tzaddik*, a path that is not his to walk. Thus, he was ultimately slain by the sword.

The Targum’s phrase **כִּי לֹא נָחַשָּׁא צָבֵן דִּיְתִּיב לְדִבְרֵי יַעֲקֹב** “Why should Israel have a share in This World?” reflects the cosmic protest of the *kelipos*: “Why should you have a share in This World?” The answer lies in the hidden worlds—where the *tzaddik* stands beyond the grasp of evil and pleads for divine kindness from realms of pure mercy.

Practical Takeaway

A Jew’s share in This World is not granted through political entitlement or natural inheritance. It comes from spiritual courage. When you serve Hashem sincerely—even with small deeds—you emulate the *tzaddik*’s path: ascending step by step toward the hidden light. In a world filled with distraction and darkness, you can anchor yourself in something eternal by aiming your actions toward the hidden source. Even if you don’t feel lofty, your intentions can connect to that concealed reservoir, where blessing flows untainted.

Chassidic Story

Once, a poor villager came to Rebbe Elimelech, crying that he had been falsely accused of theft and sentenced unjustly. Rebbe Elimelech locked himself in his room. Hours passed. Then he emerged, trembling. “It is done,” he said quietly. That very day, the accuser publicly recanted and the charges were dropped.

A chassid later asked the Rebbe, “What did you do during those hours?”

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Rebbe Elimelech replied, "I went looking for that man's justice—not in courts of man, but in *the place where snakes cannot bite*, where only mercy exists. There, truth is untouched, and kindness can be drawn like water from a spring."

Source: *Pe'er Elimelech*, oral traditions, and *Otzar Sipurei Tzaddikim* vol. 2
[END NOTE]

"How goodly are your tents, O Yaakov..." (Bamidbar 24:5). It is taught in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 105b) that all the blessings that were said by Bilaam were nullified, except for this verse: "Ma tovu." And the reason for this appears by first explaining the verse: "And Hashem did not desire to listen to Bilaam, and He turned the curse into a blessing for you..." (Devarim 23:6). One must examine this: for at first it says "*Hashem did not desire to listen*"—which implies that He did not want to listen to him at all. Yet afterward it is written "*and He turned*", which implies that He *did* hear, but transformed it into a blessing.

And it appears the explanation is as follows: it is taught in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 105b): "From the blessing of that wicked man, you can discern what was in his heart to curse—but Hashem turned it into a blessing." And so is the meaning of the verse: "*And He did not desire...*"—that is, Hashem did not want to listen to his curse and to bless Israel with a blessing that would merely be the opposite of the curse that Bilaam intended. Rather, He blessed them with a blessing that was *not* the opposite of the curse. For Hashem's intent, blessed be He, was that Bilaam should not think that Hashem simply didn't want to curse, but also didn't truly want to bless. Therefore, He did *not* choose a blessing that was merely the inversion of a curse. Instead, Hashem blessed them with an entirely different blessing, to make it known that His intent was to truly bless Israel—permanently and directly. And this is the meaning of "*And He did not desire... and He turned*"—He turned the thought that Bilaam had to curse, and in His great mercy, not only did He nullify the curse, but He also blessed them with another blessing entirely.

מה טבו אֶחָלִיךְ כֹּו". איתא בגמרא שכל הברכות שנאמרו על ידי כלעם נתבטלו חוץ מ הפסוק הנה "מה טובו". והטעם לכך נראה בהקדמים לפרש פסוק "ולא אָבָה כֹּי לְשָׁמַע כָּר וַיַּחֲפֹךְ כֹּו", יש לך רק: דמעיקרא אמר "ולא אָבָה לְשָׁמַע" משמעו שלא רצאה לשמע אליו כלל, והדר בתיב "וַיַּחֲפֹךְ כָּר" משמעו ששמע לאלו שפה ברכה?

ונראה שהפירוש כה: דאיתא בגמרא "מתוך ברכתו של אותו רשות עתה יוזע מה קה בלבו לקללים — אלא שפה השם יתברך לברכה", וככה פירוש הפסוק "ולא אָבָה" — ר"ל שהקברך ה לא רצאה לשמע קללותם ולברכם בברכה שהיा הפה הקללה שתחשב בלעם, אלא ברכם בברכה שאינה הפה הקללה. וכן נתן השם יתברך הימתה בנה כי שילא יסבור בלעם שהקברך ה אינו حقן לברך את ישראאל — רק לביטול מהם הקללה שלא תחול, וכן ברכם בפה מחלוקת אינה כי אם לברך ברכך יתברך ברכך אחרת, למן ידע שפונתו אינה כי אם לברך את ישראאל ממש תמיד. וזהו "ולא אָבָה כָּר וַיַּחֲפֹךְ" — שפה מחייבת שרצה לקללים, והשם יתברך ברוב רחמייו — לא כי שבטל קללותם, אלא אף ברכם בברכה אפרת.

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And this is the explanation of the verse: "And Bilaam saw that it was good in the eyes of Hashem to bless Israel..." (Bamidbar 24:1). Its meaning is as above—that is, Bilaam understood that Hashem's intention was not merely to cancel the curse, but solely to bless Israel. For if that were not so, He would have blessed them with a blessing that was simply the inverse of the curse. Therefore, it entered Bilaam's heart also to bless Israel, and he thought a good thought toward them. And Hashem placed in his mouth the blessing "Mah tovu." And therefore, that blessing was fulfilled—because it did not contain any trace of a curse, unlike the other blessings.

And this is the explanation of the Gemara: "*From the blessing of that wicked one...*" (Sanhedrin 105b). That is referring to the blessing "Mah tovu." And it is called "*his blessing*" because he did not intend any curse in it—unlike the other blessings, which contained a mixture of curse, and that was the main thought of that wicked one in them. Therefore, this blessing alone endured. And the phrase "*what was in his heart*" refers to the other blessings. And understand this well, for it is sweet to the palate.

וזה פירוש הפסוק "וירא בלוּם כי טוב בעיני ה' לברך כי", פירושו גם כן קדילעיל — זהינו שבלעם הבהיר שהקבר"ה אין פגנו רוק לברך את ישראל ולא לבטל קולתו בלבד, שאליו כן — הנה לברכם בברכה שהיא הפה קוללה. וכן עלה בלבו של בלעם גם כן לברך את ישראל וחשב מתחשבה טובה עלייהם, ונמנם השם יתברך בפיו ברפת "מה טובו", וכן נתקיימה, כי לא היה בה ממשום מתחשבת קוללה — מה שאין בו בשאר הברכות.

וזה פירוש האמרא "מברכו של אותו רשות כו'" — זהינו ברפת "מה טובו", והוא נקראת "ברכות" כי לא חשב בה קוללה, מה שאין כן שאר הברכות שהיה בטע מחרובות קוללה, וזה היה עקר מתחשבתו של אותו רשות בטעו. וכן נתקיימה זו דוקא. ופירוש "איך היה פלוף" קאי על שאר הברכות. והבנ' כי מתוק לך

[NOTE Summary

Rebbe Elimelech explains why the verse "מה טובו אוהליך יעקב" was the only one of Bilaam's blessings that endured. The Talmud teaches that all of Bilaam's other blessings were nullified—because they were not genuine. Hashem did not want to simply *reverse* Bilaam's curses into blessings; He wanted to express His *true will* to bless Israel, independent of Bilaam's intent.

Unlike the other blessings, which were mere inversions of curses and thus still carried remnants of Bilaam's malicious intent, "מה טובו" was different. Bilaam, seeing that it was good in Hashem's eyes to bless Israel, genuinely desired to bless them and thought positively of them. In response, Hashem placed into his mouth a pure blessing—untainted by thoughts of curse. That's why it is called "*his blessing*" in the Talmud: because it uniquely came from a place of sincerity.

Practical Takeaway

When your intentions are pure, your words endure. Hashem doesn't want us merely to negate negativity; He wants us to align ourselves with genuine love, compassion, and goodwill. When you shift your mindset from *not cursing* to *actively blessing*, you tap into something eternal. Don't just avoid harm—seek to bring light.

END NOTE]

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“Water shall flow from his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters...” (Bamidbar 24:7). It is known that the tzaddik is the one who draws down divine influences to the worlds, and therefore he is called “*his buckets*” (*d’lav*), for through him comes the flow. And we hold (Mishnah Mikvaos 6:8) that “*nitzok chibur*”—a stream of water connecting a vessel and a mikveh is considered a valid connection for purity—since the liquid flowing from the bucket to the pit is deemed joined, it constitutes a connection for immersion. Likewise, the tzaddik functions similarly: the divine flow comes to him and streams downward from him to its supernal source through his attachment (deveikus), and this too is called *nitzok* (flow), which makes a *chibur* (connection). Thus, he is able to draw influence constantly, without interruption, and without any action at all—solely by the power of his righteousness, as explained above.

However, sometimes it is necessary to perform some action, so that the accuser (mekatreg) will not have an opening to accuse. One must do some deed—whether a mitzvah, Torah learning, or prayer—and through that he draws down the divine flow. Then the mouths of the accusers are sealed off from him, and they have no power, because the flow comes through that specific action. This action is called “*planting*” (*zeriah*), which is something visible—just like when one plants in order to cause grain to grow later. So too, the action is in order to draw down the flow.

And this is the explanation of the verse: “Water shall flow from his buckets”—meaning, the tzaddik, through the greatness of his deveikus, can draw down the divine flow, which is called “*water*”, representing chassadim (kindnesses), even without any action. But “*his seed shall be in many waters*”—means that the *action* is necessary *because of* the “many waters,” which are the *kelipos* (forces of impurity), who are called “many waters,” so that they should not accuse. And understand this well.

יְצַלְמִים מְדָלִילוּ וַיְרַעֲוּ בָמִים רַבִּים (במדבר כ"ד:ז). יְדֹעַ כִּי הַצָּדִיק הָוָא הַמְמַשֵּׁיךְ הַשְׁפָעָה לְעוֹלָמוֹת, וְלֹזָה נִקְרָא “דָלִילוּ” שַׁעַל יְדוֹ בָּא הַשְׁפָעָה. וְקַיְמָא לֹן “נִצּוֹק חִבּוֹר” (מִשְׁנָה מְקַנְאֹות כ"ו מִשְׁנָה ח), וְהָוָא כְּשֶׁר לְפִטְבֵּל בּוֹ כְּמוֹ בְמִקְוָה עַצְמָה, מַאֲחָר שְׁנָוֵל מִן דָלִיל אֶל הַבּוֹר — הַנִּי חִבּוֹר לְתְהָרָה. הַצָּדִיק גַם כֵן הוּא כְּךָ — שַׁהְשָׁפָעָה בָא אֶלְיוּ וּנוֹזְלָה מִמְּנָה אֶל מְקוֹרָה לְמַעַלָה עַל יְדֵי דְבָקּוֹת, וְהַנִּי גַם כֵן “נִצּוֹק” וְהַנִּי “חִבּוֹר”, וְיָכוֹל לְהַמְשִׁיךְ הַשְׁפָעָות תְּמִיד בְּלֵי הַפְּסִיק, בְּלֵי שְׁוֹמֵן פְּעַלָה כָל עֲקָר — רַק בְּכָל צְדָקָה כְּפָנָל.

אֶכְלָל לְפִעְמִים אֲרִיךְ לְעַשׂוֹת אֵיזֶה פְּעָלָה כִּי שְׁלָא יְהִי לְאַקְטָרָג פְּתַחְזֹן פֵּה לְקַטְרָג. אֲרִיךְ לְעַשׂוֹת אֵיזֶה פְּעָלָה — מֵצָה אוֹ תּוֹרָה אוֹ תְּפִלָּה — וְעַל יָדֵיכֶם מִמְּשִׁיךְ הַשְׁפָעָה. וְאַז נִסְפָּמֵד פִי הַאַקְטָרָגִים מַעַלָּיו, וְאַז לְקָם שׁוֹלְטָנוֹת, כִּי בָא בְכָל הַפְּעָלָה הַהִיא. וְהַפְּעָלָה נִקְרָא “זְרִיעָה” — שְׁהִיא ذְּכָר הַגְּנָרָא כְמוֹ זְרִיעָה שְׂזָרְעִין כִּי לְפִעְול שְׁיָגָל הַתְּבוֹאָה אַחֲרָכָה — כֵן הַפְּעָלָה הַיָּא כִּי לְהַמְשִׁיךְ הַשְׁפָעָה.

וְזֹהוּ פִירּוֹש הַפְּסִיק “יְצַלְמִים מְדָלִילוּ” — פִירּוֹש הַצָּדִיק בְּרוּכְ דְבָקּוֹת בְּלֵי פְעָלָה יְכֹלֵל לְהַמְשִׁיךְ גַם כֵן הַשְׁפָעָה הַנִּקְרָא “מִים” — שְׁהָם הַקָּדוֹם, אֶכְלָל “וַיְרַעֲוּ בָמִים רַבִּים” — רַל שַׁהְפְעָלָה הִיא בְשִׁבְיִל “מִים רַבִּים” — הַם קָלִילָות הַגְּנָרָאִים “מִים רַבִּים” — שְׁלָא יַקְטוֹנָה. וְהַבָּן

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[NOTE Summary]

Rebbe Elimelech interprets the verse “**וַיְלַמֵּד מֵימָיו זָרְעָו בְּמִים רַבִּים**” as a mystical insight into how the tzaddik draws down divine blessing. The *tzaddik* is compared to a bucket (דָלֵי) from which spiritual waters (i.e., divine kindness and blessing) continuously flow. Just as in Jewish law (*nitzok chibur*), a stream connecting a bucket to a mikveh forms a valid channel for purity, so too the *tzaddik* is a continuous conduit linking Heaven and Earth. Through his intense *deveikus* (cleaving to God), he draws blessing downward without even needing to act—his very presence channels divine influence.

However, there are times when accusers (*mekatregim*) arise, seeking to block that flow. In such cases, the *tzaddik* must perform an outward act—a mitzvah, a prayer, or some sacred deed—to remove the accusation and allow the flow to continue. This action is compared to *planting* (זרעה): just as planting is done to produce growth later, the mitzvah is done to ensure that blessing reaches its destination.

The phrase “**וַיְרַע בְּמִים רַבִּים**” then means that this act of spiritual planting is directed against the “*many waters*”—a metaphor for the kelipos, the forces of spiritual obstruction. The *tzaddik* overcomes these forces through intentional, visible action that reopens the flow from Above.

Practical Takeaway

You have moments where spiritual connection feels natural and effortless—like water flowing from a bucket. But when you're met with inner resistance, doubt, or spiritual blockage, don't despair. That's your moment to act: say a prayer, do a mitzvah, learn some Torah. These acts aren't just symbolic—they *plant seeds* that push through even the thickest resistance and allow divine blessing to flow again. Even one act, done sincerely, can silence your accusers and open gates above. **END NOTE]**

In another manner: first we will preface with an explanation of a different verse, and then we will come to explain the matter before us. And this is [the matter]: for one may ask—why was Moshe Rabbeinu, peace be upon him, punished at Mei Merivah for striking the rock? Did not the Holy One, blessed be He, agree to his action, as it is written: “And abundant water came forth” (Bamidbar 20:11)? And if he acted improperly, then the rock should not have brought forth water. Would Hashem perform a miracle for a falsehood? Rather, it certainly appears that, Heaven forbid, the man of God would never do anything contrary to the will of the Creator, blessed be He.

בדרך אחרת. תחלה נזכיר פירוש בפסוק אחר [נובא אל היבואר אשר לפנינו. והוא כי יש לתקשות לאה נגעש משה רבינו עליו השלום בימי מרים בהפכו הפלע, שלא הפסים הקב"ה על ידו דכתיב "ויאו מים רבים", וכיון שעשה שלא כהוגן לא נעה לפלו לחשיא מים — וכי עביד רחמנא ניסא לשיקור? אלא גרא בודאי — תיליה לו לאיש הלאיים שלא לעשות רצון. הبورא יתברך

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Rather, the way of the tzaddik is always to seek after the good of Israel. And even if it appears to him that something contains some aspect of wrongdoing in doing that thing—but if it will be for the good of Israel—he does it, and accepts upon himself even to be in Gehinnom for their sake, for all his desire is to benefit them. And in truth, the tzaddik is able to draw down shefa (divine flow) through his holy speech, without any physical action at all.

Only that sometimes, the tzaddik specifically needs to perform a physical action—because through speech, he is only able to influence those people who believe that the tzaddik can affect reality through speech. But for those who do not believe this, the tzaddik must draw influence through the path of nature, and therefore he must perform a physical action. For example: a sick person who cannot receive the proper medication because it is too strong or bitter, and so one must seek a gentler remedy that suits his nature and that he is able to tolerate. Even though if he could take the harsher medicine he would be healed more effectively—what can be done for him if he cannot tolerate it? And the analogy is clear.

And the intention of Moshe Rabbeinu, peace be upon him, was also that he thought truthfully: if I speak to the rock, it will be in accordance with the will of the Creator, blessed be He—but I will only be able to affect the righteous people, as we explained. Therefore, it is better that I perform a physical act, and it will be good for all, and all will equally receive the benefit. And to this the Holy One, blessed be He, agreed with him, seeing his very good intention. And therefore it is written: “*and abundant water came forth*”—meaning *abundant*, for the sake of the *many*, enough for all, as stated above.

אלא שדרך הצדיק פמ"ד לחזר אחר טובות ישראל,
וואר שנראה לו איזה דבר קאצ' עבירה בעשותו הדבר
ההוא — אבל שיהא לטובות ישראל — עוזשו ויקבל
עליו אף לחיות בגיהנם עבורים, כי כל פשעתו
לחייטיכם. ובאמת — הצדיק יכול להמשיך הפשע על
ידי דברו הקדוש ולא שום פעולה גשמיות כל ערך

רק שלפעמים ציריך הצדיקazon לישות פעולה
גשמיota, כי בלבור אין יכול לפעל כי אם לבני אדם
המאמנים בזיה שהצדיק יכול לפעל בדברו, אבל אומם
שאין מאמנים בזיה — ציריך הצדיק להמשיך לו בזרכ
הטבע, ולזיה ציריך לפעלה גשמיota. בזרכ משל — אל
החולה שאינו יכול לקלל הרפאות הטובות לו מחתמת
שיהו קרייפות ביותר, וציריך לבקש לו רפואה קלה לפיה
טבעו שיהא יכול לסייע, אף אם קיה לו חמת הרפואה
החריפה — קיה יותר בריא, מה לישות לו כיוון שאינו
יכול לסייע, והגמיש מובן.

וכוונת משה רבינו עליו השלום גם כן — שפבר אמרת:
אם אדבר אל הפלע — יהיה פרצון הפורה יתפרק,
אבל לא אהיה יכול לפעל כי אם לאנשים הצדיקים —
כאמ' בארכנו. לך מוטב אעשרה פעולה גשמיota — ויהי
טוב לפכל והכל שרוין בטוכה. וזה הסכימים הקב"ה על
ידו בראותו כוונתו הטובה מאד. ולכן כתוב "ויאזאו מים
רבים" — פירוש "רבים" — שעשו בשכיל רבים —
די לפכל כנ"ל

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Noam Elimelech

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And this is [the meaning of] “*Water shall flow from his buckets*”—meaning, the tzaddik can draw down the shefa (divine flow) through his speech, for speech is called “*dal*” (poor), for one who wishes to affect reality through speech must be humble like a poor and needy person. As we find by King David, peace be upon him, who made himself like a pauper during prayer, as it is written: “*A prayer of the poor man*” (Tehillim 102:1). “*And his seed shall be in many waters*”—this refers to the physical actions that he performs, and they are considered like planting. They are “*for many waters*”—meaning, for the sake of the abundance of shefa (divine flow), so that it may also reach those who are unable to receive through speech alone. And understand this well.

וזהו “*יזל מים מךליו*”—פירוש: הצדיק יכול להמשיך הפעע על ידי דברו, כי הקברן נקרא “*דיל*”, כי מי שרצה להפוך בדברו — ציריך שיה מאכנע קדול ואכיוון, כמו שמצינו בזוז המלך עלייו השלום — שפעה עצמה בעני בעת התפלה, כמו שכתוב “*תפעה לעני*”. וזרעו במים רבים — פירוש: הפעע הנטמיות שפעה — וهم כמו זרעה נחטבים, הם באכילת “*מים רבים*”—פירוש: באכילת ריבוי הפעע — שיהא גם כן לאוותם שאינם יכולים לקבל על פי הקברן. והבון.

[NOTE Summary

Rebbe Elimelech explains that Moshe Rabbeinu struck the rock not out of disobedience, but from deep care for the entire nation. While Moshe knew that speaking to the rock would have aligned perfectly with Hashem’s will, he also realized that such a miracle would only affect those who believed in the power of the tzaddik’s words. For the broader population—those who could only relate to physical actions—he chose to perform a *visible deed* by striking the rock, so all would benefit equally. Hashem, recognizing Moshe’s pure intention, agreed with his choice and allowed “abundant water” to flow—for the sake of *the many*.

This ties into the verse “*יזל מים מךליו וזרעו במים רבים*”. The tzaddik, through his humility and *deveikus*, can draw down blessing through speech alone. But when dealing with those unable to receive such subtle influence, he must “plant” through physical acts—mitzvos or tangible gestures—to bring down blessing in a way they can receive. The “many waters” symbolize those people and circumstances that require a more physical channel for spiritual flow.

Practical Takeaway

When leading or guiding others, don’t insist on only the highest path—adapt to meet people where they are. Sometimes a quiet word of truth is enough. Other times, action is required. Like Moshe, choose the way that benefits *everyone*, even if it means stepping beyond your ideal. The greatest leaders don’t just do what’s perfect—they do what’s needed, for the sake of the whole. **END NOTE]**

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Noam Elimelech

Parshas Balak

“And Pinchas saw...” (Bamidbar 25:7), “and he took a spear in his hand.” The question is obvious: what did he see? And Rashi addresses this, see there. And it appears [to explain] that it is stated in the *Yalkut Reuveni* that “Pinchas saw”—he saw a closed Mem (מ) sealed in blood, flying through the air to bring the letters Vav (ו) and Tav (ת), and he became afraid, Heaven forbid, that this might spell *מוות* (death). Therefore, he took a spear (spear). Now, *Pinchas* in gematria equals 208 (רכ), and he took the Mem (מ) and added it to his name, and it became 248 (רמח).¹

And let us first explain another verse: “And you who cleave...” (Devarim 4:4). Behold, we say: is it possible to cleave to the Holy One, blessed be He? Rather, cleave to His attributes: just as He is merciful, etc. Now, the worlds are called *middos* (attributes), and a person must cleave himself through performing the mitzvos to the worlds. However, even the worlds are “heights above heights,” and it is not possible to cleave to them except by performing the mitzvah completely. And our Sages taught us how to conduct ourselves in performing mitzvos, and they said: “Just as He is merciful...” That is, the Holy One, blessed be He, who bestows kindness upon us—it is all from the side of mercy.

As our Sages said on the verse “Who preceded Me...” (Iyov 41:3): “Did you make a railing before I gave you a house?”—meaning, in every mitzvah, Hashem precedes the person, and only afterward does the person fulfill the mitzvah. And this is the meaning of “Just as He is merciful...”—that is, when you perform the mitzvah, do so with mercy. How so? With great *deveikus* and *mesirus nefesh*—self-sacrifice—with all 248 limbs. In this way, you are showing mercy to yourself and your soul, as our Sages said: “What should a man do to live?—Let him kill himself.” That is, through self-sacrifice in serving Hashem, he truly brings himself to life.

And this is [the meaning of] “And you who cleave...”—the Vav at the beginning adds to what came before: that when you cleave to Hashem through mitzvos, see to it that you too are cleaving—meaning, you should give yourself over with all 248 limbs and draw everything into *deveikus*.

וירא פינחס כו' ויקח רמח בידיו. הקדוק מפוזר
— מה ראה? ורשותי הרגיש בזיה, ע"ש. ונראה
היאטה בילקוט רואבנוי “וירא פינחס”— ראה מ"מ
חתומה בזם פורחת לרביה אותיות ו' ת', וגנתרא שחס
ושלום שלא יהיה מות, לנו ויקח רמ"ח — פינחס
גיטריא ר"ח, ונטול המ"מ וחייב לשמו — ונעשה
רמ"ח.

ונקדום לפרש עוד פסוק אחד: “ו�푸ם הנקדים כו'”
דיבנה אפרינז: וכי אפשר לזכק בקדושים ברוחם הו? —
אלא — הנקב במדותינו, מהו רחום כו. והנה
העולםות נקראים מדות, ואירוע האדם לדבק עצמו על
ידי עשות המצוות בועלמות. ואננים — גם העולםות
הם “גביה מעלה גבה”, ואי אפשר לדבק בהם כי אם
בעשות המצוות בשלמות. ולפנינו רבותינו איך וחנינה
בעשות המצוות, ואמרו “מהו רחום”, דהיינו: השם
וחברך — הפטיב לנו — הוא הכל מצד ברחותם

כמו שאמרו חז"ל על הפסוק “מי הקדימני כו”: כללים
עשית מזקה אם לא נתתי לך בית? וכן בכל מזקה
השם יתברך מקדים לאדם, ואחר כה האדם עוזה
המצואה. וזהו “מהו רחום כו” — דהיינו: בעשותך
המצואה — תעשה ברחותם. וזה דמי? — הנה:
בקדוקות גדול במשירות נפש בכל רמ"ח אברים, ובזה
אפה מרחם על עצמה ונשחת — כמו שאמרו ז"ל
“מה עשוה אדם ונשחת? — ימיה את עצמו”, ומיינו
כמאמרינו — במה שהוא ממית עצמו במשירות נפש
בעבורתו — בזה מיתה עצמו.

זהו “ו�푸ם הנקדים” — ר"ל: הו"ו מוסיף על עניין
ראשון — הינו: בשתאפעם מתקדוקים בהשם יתברך על
ידי העמונות — תראו שתהיו גם אפעם בתקדוקות —
פיווש: תמסרו עצמכם בכל רמ"ח אברים, ותケניטו
הכל בהתקדוקות.

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Noam Elimelech

Parshas Balak

Now, *deveikus* is a matter of contemplation and mental focus, to remove all thoughts except that one's senses and thoughts are upon the thing he is doing. This is what is called "seeing"—that he sees with the eyes of the mind, to cleave with a strong bond. And this is [the meaning of] "And Pinchas saw"—that is, in his thought to perform this mitzvah of avenging Hashem's vengeance, he saw that he must do the mitzvah with great *deveikus*.

"And he took a spear"—that is, [he gave over] all 248 of his limbs, and he gave over his soul, and brought his entire self into *deveikus*. "And he pierced them both..." And through this he turned away wrath from upon the Children of Israel.

והנה — הנקות הוא זכר של התבוננות ועיזון בשכל — לחשיר כל מתחבזתו — רק שיה אחוישו ומתחבזו על נזכר הנה שואה עולשה, והוא נגער בשם "ראיה" — שראה בעין השכל להזקק קבב טוב. וזהו "וירא פינחס" — זהינו: בחרבו לעשות המזווה הזאת לנוקם נקמת ה', ראה לעשות המזווה. בתקופות גדול

ויהי רמח" — זהינו: כל רמ"ח אבריו — ומטר" נפשו — והכenis כל עצמו בהנקות. ז"ל ראת שנייהם" — ועל ידי זה — השיב הימה מעל בני ישראל.

[NOTE Summary]

Rebbe Elimelech presents a deep and mystical reading of the episode of Pinchas. He begins by referencing a teaching from *Yalkut Reuveni*, which says that Pinchas saw a closed letter **Mem** (מ) flying in blood, followed by the letters **Vav** (ו) and **Tav** (ת)—spelling the word מות (death). Fearing the decree of death, Pinchas acted. His name, *Pinchas* (208), when combined with the missing Mem, becomes 248 (רמח)—symbolizing the full number of human limbs, which in Kabbalah represent complete spiritual integration. Thus, ויהי רmach biyado alludes to the fact that he took hold of all 248 limbs and served Hashem with total *mesirus nefesh*.

This connects to the verse "ואתם הדבקים בה אלוקיכם", which the Sages explain to mean: not literal physical cleaving, but clinging to Hashem's *middos*—His spiritual attributes. The worlds themselves are divine *middos*, and true cleaving comes through performing mitzvos with *complete self-nullification*. As Rebbe Elimelech teaches, Hashem precedes every mitzvah with His own divine kindness. Our role is to respond by performing each mitzvah with mercy, with full emotional and physical presence. True *deveikus* means clearing one's thoughts, concentrating fully, and entering the mitzvah with one's entire being.

That is what Pinchas did. When the opportunity arose to sanctify Hashem's Name, he "saw"—meaning, with the eyes of intellect and soul—and acted with full *deveikus*, sacrificing all 248 limbs in a moment of total submission to holiness. Through this, he transformed death into life and turned away wrath from Israel.

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Practical Takeaway

Real *deveikus* is not just a feeling—it's a decision to bring your full self into a mitzvah. Whether you're praying, helping someone, or standing up for truth, you can choose to "take your spear"—to gather your entire body and soul—and act with inner clarity and unity. Even when others are passive, you can be like Pinchas: see what must be done, and do it completely. Sometimes, total devotion in one moment can save a nation.

Chassidic Story

It is told that Rebbe Elimelech once saw one of his disciples praying mechanically. After the davening, he quietly asked him: "When you say 'אֱלֹקִיךְ בְּכָל לְבָבֶךְ וּבְכָל נֶפֶשׁ וּבְכָל מְאֹודֶךְ'—וְאַהֲבָתְךָ אֶת הָאֱלֹהִים"—do you know what it means?"

The disciple replied, "Yes, Rebbe, it means to love Hashem with all my heart, soul, and might."

The Rebbe nodded, then whispered: "Then why did you leave your body outside?"

The student was silent.

Rebbe Elimelech added, "If you want your prayer to reach Heaven, you must enter it with all 248 limbs. Don't just say the words—*take the spear*."

Source: *Pe'er Elimelech, Otzar Sipurei Tzaddikim*, vol. 3 **END NOTE]**

In another manner. And this is based on what is stated in the Gemara (Pesachim 50b): "A person should always learn Torah and do mitzvos even not for its own sake (*shelo lishmah*), because from not for its own sake one comes to for its own sake (*lishmah*)."
It appears [we may] explain as follows: behold, all Torah and mitzvos that are done without proper intent are like a body without a soul. Thus, when a person learns Torah or does a mitzvah not for its own sake, it creates only the *body* of the mitzvah, without a *soul*.

But not so the holy tzaddik, who learns *lishmah*—through him are created 248 spiritual limbs. And the tzaddik who learns *lishmah* has the ability to elevate the Torah and mitzvos of the one who learned *shelo lishmah*, for he has the power to draw a soul into the Torah of the one who created only the body. And this is the meaning of "*From not for its own sake, one comes to for its own sake*"—that the Torah will come into the hands of the one who learns *lishmah*, and he will rectify it through the limbs of the soul.

בדרך אחרת. והוא על פי דאיתא בגמרא "לעולם
ילמוד אֶת מִזְרָחָה וּמִצְרָיָה אַפְלוּ שֶׁלֹּא לְשֶׁמֶה שְׁמַתּוֹךְ
שֶׁלֹּא לְשֶׁמֶה בָּא לְשֶׁמֶה", גראה לפרש: דהנֶּה כל תורה
ומצוות הנעשים בלי קונה — היא גמורה בלי נישמה,
ונגמץא: פְּשָׁאָדָם לוֹמֵד תורה או עוֹשָׂה מִצְוָה שֶׁלֹּא לְשֶׁמֶה
— נברא מזוה רק הגוף בלבד בלי נישמה

ולא כן הצדיק הקדוש — לומד לשמה — שברא על
ידו רם"ח אברים רותנים, ויש יכולת ביד הצדיק
הלומד לשמה להעלוות התורה והמצוות של זה שלמדו
שלא לשמה, כי יכולת בידיו להמשיך נישמה לזרתו
של זה שעשוה הגוף בלבד. וזהו הפירוש "מתוך שלא
לשמה — בא לשמה", פירוש: שהתורה היא תפוא ליז
הלומד לשמה והוא יתקנה על ידי אברי הנטה

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And this is also possibly the meaning of the verse (Tehillim 102:1): “*A prayer of the poor man when he is wrapped...*”—that is, “*the poor man*” refers to one poor in knowledge, who is unable to concentrate in his prayer. His rectification is to attach himself to the complete tzaddik, who does have proper intent in prayer, and the tzaddik will elevate the poor man’s prayer with his own pure prayer.

For the prayer of the poor man remains without a soul, and the tzaddik gives it vitality, and through this, his prayer rises. And this is [the meaning of] “*A prayer of the poor man*”—how shall it be accepted favorably? The verse explains: “*when he is wrapped*”—that is, when he connects with the complete tzaddik. “*And before Hashem he pours out his supplication*”—that is, the tzaddik pours out the poor man’s words before Hashem for them to be accepted with love.

And this is also the meaning here of “*And Pinchas saw...*”—that one who learns Torah *lishmah*, his learning is called “*seeing*”, for his intent in learning is to *see* the mitzvah that is written in the learning, in order to fulfill it. But not so one who learns *shelo lishmah*, whose intent is only to be called “*Rabbi*.”

And this is [the meaning of] “*And Pinchas saw*”—the verse testifies about him that his Torah was *lishmah*, which is called “*seeing*.” Now, Zimri was the prince of a tribe in Israel and was great in Torah. But when Pinchas saw that he did that act, he understood that all his Torah was *shelo lishmah*, and thus only the *body* of Torah was created from it. Therefore, “*And he took a ramah (spear) in his hand*”—that is, the 248 physical limbs of Zimri he took in hand to rectify and to draw into them life-force. And understand this well.

וזה גם כן יכול להיות פונת הפסוק “תפללה לעני כי יעצוף כי”— פירוש “ענני” הוא הגרא עני בדעת — ואנו יכול לבנו בתפלתו. ותקנו: שהבראת עצמו עם האידיק הגמור — האבן בתפלה — והוא יעלה את תפלו של העני עם תפלו הזוכה.

כי תפלו של העני נשאה בלא נשמה, והצדיק נושא בה חיota, ועל ידי זה תפלו עולה. זהו “תפללה לעני” — איך יעשה שחקובל תפלו לרצון? — ומפרש הכתוב: “כי יעצוף”— פירוש: שיתחבר עם הצדיק גמור, “ולפני ה ישפך שיחו”— פירוש: שהצדיק ישפך את השיחה של העני לפני ה לקבלה באהבה.

זה פירושו גם כאן “וירא פינחס”— להלומד תורה ל’שמה — נקרא הלמוד העה בשם “ראיה”— כי פונתו בלםודו לראות המזוהה הקותבה בלםוד הוה — למען עשותה, מה שאנו בנו הלומד שלא לשמה — פונתו כדי שיקרא רב.

זהו “וירא פינחס”— הכתוב מעיד עליו שתוורתו היתה לשמה — הנקראת בשם “ראיה”, והפה זמרי היה בשיא שבט מישראל והיה גדול בתורה, וכשהראה פינחס שפעלה המזוהה הוה — הינו שתוורתו היתה שלא לשמה כל מה שלמד, ונמצא שלא נברא מתוורתו רק גוף התורה. ולכן “ויקח רם” ח “בידו”— פירוש: את רם “ח אבריו הוגפים של זמרי לך בידיו למקום ולהשפי עליים חיות בתוכם. וכל להבין

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[NOTE Summary

Rebbe Elimelech offers a profound mystical explanation of the verse "וירא פינחס ויקח רמה בידו". Drawing on the teaching "לעולם לימוד אדם תורה ומצוות אפילו שלא לשמה" (one should always study even not for its own sake), he explains that Torah and mitzvos performed *not for their own sake* create only the **body** of holiness—*a form without a soul*. By contrast, the tzaddik who learns *lishmah* (for its own sake) generates spiritual **limbs with a soul**, forming a complete spiritual being.

Crucially, such a tzaddik has the ability to **elevate** and complete the deficient actions of others. When someone studies or prays without deep intention, the tzaddik's *lishmah* can infuse that act with soul. This is the deeper meaning of "מתוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה"—the act done *not for its own sake* eventually "comes" to the tzaddik who can purify and elevate it.

Rebbe Elimelech ties this to the verse "חפלה לעני כי עטוף". The "poor man" represents one who is spiritually weak—unable to focus or reach Hashem. His prayer remains a lifeless body. But when he attaches himself to the *tzaddik gamur*, the tzaddik can **wrap** that prayer with life and intention, and raise it before Hashem.

So too with Pinchas. He *saw*—meaning, he possessed inner clarity (*re'iyah*) born of *lishmah*. When he observed Zimri, a scholar and leader, fall into sin, he understood that Zimri's Torah had been learned without true intention, creating only an empty body. "ויקח רמה בידו"—he took Zimri's 248 physical limbs and, through his own holy action, uplifted and purified them, breathing life into what had become spiritually inert.

Practical Takeaway

Your mitzvos and learning are always valuable—but don't be content with *external action*. Aim to do them with soul. And if you struggle to concentrate, attach yourself—through thought, love, or support—to those whose intentions are pure. A heartfelt amen, a connection to a tzaddik's words, or sincere yearning can link your partial efforts to something whole. Even in imperfection, your longing can find completion.

Chassidic Story

A young man once asked the Rebbe Elimelech how to pray with proper kavana. The Rebbe answered: "You can't always bring fire. But you can always bring wood. If you place your little offering beside the blaze of a tzaddik, it too will burn."

He continued, "And if you learn Torah just to be called a 'rebbe,' that Torah will be like dry bone. But if you place it in the hands of one who learns for truth, he will raise your words like limbs clothed in life."

Source: Noam Elimelech, commentary on Parshas Pinchas; *Otzar Sipurei Tzaddikim*, vol. 4

END NOTE]

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The Power of the Tzaddik to Elevate the Imperfect and Unite All Israel

Unifying Motifs Across the Discourses:

1. The Tzaddik as Intercessor and Transformer

Across multiple teachings (e.g. "תפלה לעני כי יעטוף", "מה טובו אהלי יעקב פינחס"), Rebbe Elimelech emphasizes that the **tzaddik has the ability to uplift, complete, and rectify the spiritual lacks** of others. Whether it's Torah learned *shelo lishmah*, prayer without kavana, or even actions done without full awareness, the tzaddik—through his purity and *deveikus*—can **infuse soul into the body** of those acts.

2. Body vs. Soul / Action vs. Intention

There's a consistent duality in these teachings between **guf (body)** and **neshamah (soul)**, representing **outer religious action** versus **inner intentionality**. Rebbe Elimelech teaches that mitzvos or Torah done without deep kavana are like bodies without souls. But through attachment to the tzaddik—or through deep internal *mesirus nefesh*—the soul can be restored. This theme is especially pronounced in the discourse on "מתוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה".

3. Deveikus as the Ultimate Goal

In almost every discourse, *deveikus* (clinging to Hashem) is the desired end-state. Whether Pinchas achieves it through *kavanas hamitzvah*, or Moshe Rabbeinu strikes the rock in order to reach the *many*, the goal is always to act in a way that binds **every limb, every emotion, every Jew** to divine unity.

4. The Role of Self-Negation and Sacrifice

Rebbe Elimelech repeatedly highlights the *mesirus nefesh* of the tzaddik—both in spirit and in action. The tzaddik is willing to enter Gehinnom, if need be, for the sake of Israel. Pinchas merges his 248 limbs into divine will. Moshe chooses a less spiritually ideal act (striking the rock) to benefit the broader public. All of these show that **true holiness is measured not by self-elevation, but by self-nullification for the sake of others**.

5. Rectification Through Unity

The act of "attaching the poor man to the tzaddik" or "raising the lower level Torah through the higher" mirrors the theme of **interconnectedness**. Each Jew's deed or prayer is not isolated. It is **part of a collective spiritual organism**, where the stronger uplift the weaker, and the righteous complete what the broken cannot.

In Summary:

These discourses, taken together, reflect Rebbe Elimelech's foundational view of **tzaddikim as spiritual conduits** who not only model divine service but carry others with them. His Pinchas is

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not merely a zealot; he is a mystic who sees the broken Torah of Zimri and responds by elevating even that. The tzaddik doesn't abandon the flawed—he **embraces them, rectifies them, and lifts them up to Hashem**.

This constellation of teachings from Rebbe Elimelech on Parshas Pinchas forms a **cohesive theology of redemption through righteous connection**: through the tzaddik, through deveikus, and through the deep mystical power of mesirus nefesh—not just for personal elevation, but for the wholeness of all Israel.