וָזֶה מַעֲשֵׂה הַמְּנוֹרָה

Introduction

This discourse by the Alter Rebbe—Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, founder of Chabad Chassidus—explores the mystical dynamics of exile and redemption, the soul's descent and ascent, and the transformative power of prayer. Delivered within the broader framework of Chassidic exegesis, the Alter Rebbe presents a vivid spiritual map: from the apparent degradation of the soul in Egypt-like states, to the redemption achieved when one recognizes the divine orchestration behind both descent and elevation. At the heart of the teaching is the image of the Menorah—hammered from a single piece of gold—symbolizing the unity between the highest and lowest souls, and the role of Ahavas Yisrael (love of fellow Jews) in catalyzing true spiritual light. The discourse instructs not only how to escape "Mitzrayim" (spiritual constriction), but how to generate internal transformation, seeing others with humility and cultivating pure divine service through tefillah. The following summary brings together the thematic and practical threads of this profound teaching.

And this is the making of the Menorah, of hammered gold, until its base and until its flower. Behold, the Menorah is called Knesset Yisrael, which is the holiness of the entirety of the souls of Israel—	וְזֶה מַצְּשֵׂה הַמְּנוֹרָה מִקְשָׁה זָהָב עַד יְרֵכָה עַד פְּרְחָהּ. הָנֵּה מְנוֹרָה נִקְרֵאת כָּנֶסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁהִיא קְדוּשַׁת כְּלֵל - נִשְׁמוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל
as explained in the Menorah of Zechariah: "Do you not know what these are?" (Zechariah 4:5) and he answered: "This is the word of G-d" (ibid. 4:6) – the Menorah is the "word of G-d," it is that which by the word of G-d the heavens were made (Tehillim 33:6), that enlivens all the worlds—	פְּמוֹ שֶׁמְּבוֹאָר בְּמְנוֹרַת זְכַרְיָה: "הֲלוֹא יָדַעְהָּ מַה הֵּמָּה?" (זְכַרְיָה ד׳:ה׳) וַיַּעַן: "זָה דְּבַר ה׳" (שָׁם ד׳:ו׳) – הַמְּנוֹרָה הִיא "דְּבַר ה׳", הוּא אֲשֶׁר "בִּדְבַר ה׳ שָׁמַיִם – נַעֲשׁוּ" (תְּהִלִּים ל״ג:ו׳) הַמְחַיֶּה כָּל הָעוֹלָמוֹת
which is Knesset Yisrael, because it gathers within itself the aspect of Divinity that is called "Yisrael"—the encompassing light of all worlds (Sovev Kol Almin), as it is written (Bereishit 33:20): "And he called it: 'Kel, the G-d of Yisrael"—	שֶׁהִיא כְּנֶסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל שֵׁם שֶׁמְּכַנֶּסֶת בְּתוֹכָה בְּחִינַת אֱלֹהוּת הַנִּקְרָאת יִשְׂרָאֵל – סוֹבֵב כָּל עַלְמִין – כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב (בְּרֵאשִׁית ל״ג:כ׳) "וַיִּקְרָא לוֹ אֵל אֱלֹהֵי – "יִשְׂרָאֵל
and it includes all the souls, from the greatest of the tzaddikim to those of the lowest stature. And therefore it is written (Zechariah 4:6): "To Zerubavel"—a man confused with good and evil, seed of man and seed of beast, who makes himself like a beast, going after pleasant chatter.	ְוְהִיא כּוֹלֶלֶת כָּל הַנְּשָׁמוֹת מִגְּדוֹלֵי הַצַּדִּיקִים וְעַד פְּחוּתֵי עֵרֶךְ. וְעַל כֵּן כָּתוּב (זְכַרְיָה ד׳:ו׳) "אָל זַרַבָּכֶל" – אָדָם הַמְּבֵלְבָּל טוֹב עִם רַע, "זֶרַע אָדָם וּזְרַע בְּהֵמָה" (יְרְמִיָה ל״א:כ״ז), שֶׁמְשִׁים עַצְמוֹ כְּבָהֵמָה, שֶׁמְּהַלֵּךְ אַחַר שִׂיחָה נָאָה.

וָזֶה מַצְשֵׂה הַמְּנוֹרָה

And about this the verse says: "And this is the making of the Menorah"—whoever wants to leave the state of evil and make himself into a Menorah, let him do so in this manner: of hammered [gold]. For at first it was a round talent [of gold], and Rashi explains: it was a block of gold, and he struck it with a hammer, etc., to spread out its limbs—	ְוְעַל זֶה אָמַר הַכָּתוּב: "וְזֶה מַעֲשֵׂה הַמְּנוֹרָה" – מִי שֶׁרוֹצֶה לָצֵאת מִבְּחִינַת רַע וְלַצְשׁוֹת עַצְמוֹ מְנוֹרָה יַעֲשֶׂה כַּסֵּדֶר הַזֶּה: "מִקְשָׁה". שֶׁמִּתְחִלָּה הָיְתָה כִּכָּר עָגוֹל, וּפֵרֵשׁ רַשִּ״י: עַשֶׁת שֶׁל כִּכַּר זָהָב הָיְתָה, וּמֵכֶּה בַּקוֹרְנָס וְגוֹ׳ לְפַשֵּׁט – אַבְרָיהָ
and through the hammer's striking, the higher gold would descend downward, and the lower would rise upward, until all the gold became intermixed and nullified from its original form.	וְעַל־יְדֵי הַכָּאַת הַקּוֹרְנָס – יוֹרֵד הַזָּהָב הָעֶלְיוֹן לְמַטָּה וְהַתַּחְתּוֹן עוֹלֶה לְמַעְלָה עַד שֶׁנִּתְעָרֵב כָּל הַזָּהָב וְנִתְבַּטֵּל – מִצּוּרָתָה הָרִאשׁוֹן
So too must a person do with himself: to break the middot (character traits), that they become nullified from their [natural] form, as in the saying: "Nullify your will before His." And that which is above should become below, and let it become intermingled, and this is understood.	כֵּן יַצְשֶׂה הָאָדָם בְּעַצְמוֹ לְשַׁבֵּר הַמִּדּוֹת שֶׁיּתְבַּטְלוּ מִצּוּרָתָם – כְּמַאֲמָר: "בַּטֵל רְצוֹנְךְ מִפְּנֵי רְצוֹנוֹ". וּמַה שֶׁלְמַעְלָה יִהָיֶה לְמַטָּה וְיִתְעָרֵב – וְדָ״ל
And afterward the verse says: "[of] gold." He should come to the level of gold, which is awe (yirah). For silver is love, from the language of "nichsefa" (yearned), that one yearns to cleave to his root, to be illuminated in the Light of Life—	ְוְאַחַר־כָּךְּ אָמַר הַכָּתוּב: "זָהָב". יָבוֹא לְבְחִינַת זָהָב – 'שֶׁהִיא יִרְאָה. כִּי כֶּסֶף הוּא אַהַבָּה – מִלְשׁוֹן "נִכְסְפָּה" – שָׁכּוֹסֵף לְדָבֵק בְּשֶׁרְשׁוֹ לְהָאִיר בְּאוֹר הַחַיִּים
and this is called "hidden love" which is always present in the heart of every Jew, as explained elsewhere.	וְזֶה נִקְרֵא "אַהֲבָה מְסוּתֶרֶת", שֶׁיֵשׁ תָּמִיד בְּלֵב כָּל אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל – כְּמוֹ שֶׁמְבוֹאָר בְּמָקוֹם אַחֵר.
And gold is called awe, as in the verse (Iyov 37:22): "From the north comes gold"—and for this one needs contemplation in the greatness of the Infinite One, blessed be He: how He fills all worlds, and "all is as naught before Him" (Zohar I:11b), and one will fear and be ashamed before the greatness of the Infinite—	וְזָהָב נִקְרֵא יָרָאָה, כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמֵר (אִיּוֹב ל״ז:כ״ב): "מָצָּפוֹן זָהָב יֶאֱתָה" – וְלָזֶה צָּרִיף הָתְבּוֹנְנוּת בִּגְדֵלֵּת אֵין־סוֹף בָּרוּךְ הוּא – אֵיךְ שֶׁהוּא מְמֵלֵּא כָּל עָלְמִין, וְ"כֵלָּא קַמֵּיה כְּלָא חֲשִׁיב" (זֹהַר חֵלֶק א׳ דַּף י״א ע״ב), וְיִירָא – וְיִתְבּוֹשֵׁשׁ מִגְּדֻלַּת אֵין־סוֹף בָּרוּךְ הוּא
and therefore the Men of the Great Assembly instituted prayer with the verses of praise. And from the Torah itself one is only required to say the Shema and a little prayer, like in the First Temple era when they would not pray [formally] because their intellect was clear "in the heavens" all day, seeing and understanding the wonders of the Infinite—	ְוְעַל כֵּן תִּקְנוּ לָנוּ אַנְשֵׁי כְּנֶסֶת הַגְּדוֹלֶה – הַתְפִלָּה עִם פְּסוּקֵי דְּזִמְרָה. וּמִן הַתּוֹרָה אֵין צָרִיךּ אֶלֶּא קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע וּמְעַט תְּפִלָּה – כְּמוֹ בַּבַּיִת הָרָאשׁוֹן שֶׁלֹא הָיוּ מִתְפַּלְלִין, לְפִי שֶׁהָיָה שִׂכְלָם בָּהִיר בַּשָּׁמֵיִם כָּל הַיּוֹם לְרְאוֹת וּלְהָבִין – פְּלָאוֹת אֵין־סוֹף בָּרוּךְ הוּא

וְזֶה מַּצְשֵׂה הַמְּנוֹרָה

אֲבָל אַנְשֵׁי כְּנֶסֶת הַגְּדוֹלֶה בִּתְחִלֵּת בַּיִת שֵׁנִי רָאוּ שָׁנִתְמַצְטוּ הַשִּּׁכְלִיִּים וְנִתְקָרְבוּ הַלְּבָבוֹת אֶל הַחוֹמֶר לְרְאוֹת אֶת הַגָּשֶׁם לְבַד – עַל כֵּן תִּקְנוּ לָהֶם תְּפִּלָּה וּבִרְכוֹתֶיהָ שֶׁכּוּלָה סִפּוּרֵי שִׁבְחֵי אֱלֹקִים פְּעָמִים הַרְבֵּה – שַּיָּבֹא לְמִדַּת הַיִּרְאָה
ְוְזָהוּ: "רְפִידָתוֹ זָהָב" (שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים ג׳:י׳) – כְּמוֹ הַמְּסַדֵּר מִטָּה, מְסַדֵּר וּמַנִּיחַ כָּל דָּבָר וְדָבָר לְפָעָנָיו עַל מְקוֹמוֹ – כֵּן הַמְּסַדֵּר שָׁרָחֵי אֱלֹקִים נוֹתֵן מָקוֹם לְכָל דָּבָר ה׳ שֶׁבָּרָא – לָכְבוֹדוֹ לִמְצֹא גְּדֵלָּתוֹ
ְוְיֵשׁ שָׁבְעָה מִינֵי דְּהָבָא בְּדִיקְנָא. דְּהַנֵּה דָּוִד הוּא רֶגֶל רְבִיעִי לַמֶּרְכָּבָה – בְּחִינַת אֱלֹהוּת שֶׁנָקְרַאת: "מַלְכוּתְדְּ מַלְכוּת כָּל עוֹלָמִים" (תְּהָלִים קמ״ה:י״ג). וְדִיקְנָא נִקְרַאת הַמְשָׁכָה מֵהַשֵּׂכֶל
ְוֵישׁ שִׁבְעָה מִינֵי שִּׂכְלִים בְּבְחִינַת דָּוִד הַנִּ״ל – שֶׁיָכוֹל לָבוֹא לִבְחִינַת "זָהָב" – שֶׁהִיא יִרְאָה. וְזֶהוּ: "שִׁבְעָה קָנִים – הַיּוֹצְאִים מִן הַמְּנוֹרָה" – וְהֵם ז׳ יְמֵי הַבִּנְיָן
וְכָל אֶחָד כָּלוּל מִי׳ – הֵם שִׁבְעִים נֶפֶשׁ שֶׁל יַעֲקֹב. וְיֵשׁ שִׁבְעִים שָׁרָשִׁים בְּנִשְׁמוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְכָל אֶחָד מִיִשְׂרָאֵל – אָחוּז בָּאֶחָד מִן הַשִּׁבְעִים שָׁרָשִׁים – הַכְּלוּלִים מִז׳
ןיוּכַל לָבוֹא לִבְחִינַת "זָהָב" – עַל־יְדֵי אֶחָד מִשִּׁבְעַת הַבְּחִינוֹת – לִהְיוֹת "רְפִידָתוֹ זָהָב", וְיִתְלַהֵב בְּהִתְגַלוּת לִבּוֹ רִשְׁפֵי־אֵשׁ – שֶׁהוּא חַם וְיָבֵשׁ. אֲבָל הָאַהַבָּה הַנַּ״ל – אֵינָה נִתְפַּשֶּׂת בְּלִי בְּחִינַת מֵיִם – קַר וָלָח.
עַד יָרֵכָה עַד פִּרְחָה. יָרֵכָה הִיא רֶגֶל הַתַּחְתּוֹן, וּפִרְחָה הֵם הַפְּרָחִים הָעֶלְיוֹנִים. כַּלָּה כְּאֶחָת נִקְרֵאת מְנוֹרָה—
בֵּין גְּדוֹלֵי צַדִּיקִים הַנִּקְרָאִים "פְּרָחָה", עַל שֵׁם שֶׁתוֹרָתָם וּתְפִלָּתָם פְּרָחָה לְעִילָּא – עַל־יְדֵי דְּחִילוּ וּרְחִימוּ, שֶׁהֵם – גַּדְפִין לִפְרָחָה, כְּמְבוֹאָר בַּזֹּהַר

וְזֶה מַעֲשֵׂה הַמְּנוֹרָה

and even the base is truly a part of the Menorah—only that it must be of pure gold without alloy. As it is written in another verse: "of one piece, pure gold" (Bamidbar 8:4). For if the gold has any impurity of a foreign kind, its appearance changes to a greenish hue—	וואפלו הירה הוא האמח מוורה. רק שיהיו זהר שהור
so too, through evil it becomes changed; and a sign of sin is jaundice (דרוקן). One must entirely turn away from evil, and this is [achieved] through believing each morning in "renewals every morning"—	בֵּן עַל־יְדֵי הָרַע נִשְׁתַּנָּה. וְסִימָן לַעֲבֵרָה – הַדְּרוֹקֶן. וְצָרִיךְּ לִהְיוֹת "סוּר מֵרָע" לְגַמְרֵי. וְהַיְנוּ – לְהַאֲמִין בַּבֹּקֶר – ""חָדָשִׁים לַבְּקָרִים
that today the world is renewed anew, as in the saying (Berachot 58b): "Who renews in His goodness each day continually the work of creation," that truly it is created today, from nothing to something—	שֶׁהַיּוֹם נִתְחַדֵּשׁ הָעוֹלָם מֵחָדָשׁ – כְּמַאֲמַר: "הַמְחַדֵּשׁ בְּטוּבוֹ בְּכָל יוֹם תָּמִיד מֵעֲשֵׂה בְרֵאשִׁית" (בְּרָכוֹת נ״ח ב׳) – – שָׁמַפָּשׁ נִבְרָא מֵאַיִן לְיֵשׁ
and today too he is created—like the first man. Surely he will fear and be ashamed to rebel before the eyes of His glory, and will not want the world of nothingness.	וְגַם הַיּוֹם נוֹצָר – כְּמוֹ אָדָם הָרָאשׁוֹן. בֶּוַדַּאי יִירָא וְיִתְבּוֹשֵׁשׁ מִלְּמְרוֹת עֵינֵי כְבוֹדוֹ – וְלֹא יִרְצֶה בְּעוֹלָם הָאֵיִן.
Also, with the sense of sight we see every day the act of creation: at first darkness—night—and afterwards "let there be light"—the sun for the day.	גַם בַּחֲוֹשׁ הַרְּאִיָּה – אֲנַחָנוּ רוֹאִים בְּכָל יוֹם מַצְשֵׂה בְרֵאשִׁית: בַּתְּחָלָּה – חשֶׁךְ הַלַּיְלָה, וְאַחַר כָּךְ – "יְהִי אוֹר", שֶׁמֶשׁ לַיּוֹם.
And this is [the meaning of] "Every day I will bless You" (Tehillim 145:2)—that through what I see, that He rolls away the light, etc., and darkness [comes] in place of the day's light—through this I recognize and bless You.	וְזֶהוּ: "בְּכָל יוֹם אֲבָרְכָהְ" (תְּהָלִּים קמ״ה:ב׳) – בְּמַה שֶׁאֲנִי רוֹאֶה – שֶׁגוֹלֵל אוֹר וְגוֹ׳ וְחֹשֶׁךְ מִפְּנֵי אוֹר הַיּוֹם – בָּזֶה אֲנִי מַכִּיר לְבָרְכָךֵּ
And let not a person say that it is impossible for him to separate from evil and lusts that have become rooted through transgression.	וְאַל יֹאמֵר הָאָדָם שֶׁנִּמְנַע אָצְלוֹ לְהָפֶּרֵד מִן הָרַע וְהַתַּאֲווֹת שָׁנִשְׁתַּרְשׁוּ בְּאִיסוּר.
Therefore, we say in the prayer: "True—You have redeemed us from Egypt" (from the blessing following Shema). Hashem our G-d—Egypt is called "the nakedness of the land" (Vayikra 18:3), meaning attachment to lusts in his thought, and the evil surrounds him such that he cannot escape or remove his mind from them—	עַל־כֵּן אָנוּ אוֹמְרִים בַּתְּפָלֶה: "אֱמֶת – מִמִּצְרַיִם גְּאַלְתָּנוּ ה׳ אֱלֹקֵינוּ". מִצְרַיִם נִקְרֵאת "עֶרְוַת הָאֶרֶץ" (וַיִּקְרָא י״ח:ג׳) – הַיְנוּ – הַדִּיבּוּק בַּתַּאֲווֹת בְּמַחֲשֵׁבְתּוֹ, וְהָרע – מַקִּיפוֹ – שֶׁאֵינוֹ יָכוֹל לָצֵאת וּלְהַסִּיחַ דַּעְתּוֹ מֵהֶם
this is the aspect of "Egypt," from which he cannot escape except by the will of Hashem.	זָהוּ בְּחִינַת "מִצְרַיִם", שֶׁאֵינוֹ יָכוֹל לְבְרֹחַ מִשֶּׁם – כִּי אִם בִּרְצוֹן ה׳
And this is [the meaning of] "Women ruled over us" (Yeshayahu 3:12)—"women" in the plural, whether in what is permitted or what is forbidden—then Hashem brings him out of Egypt.	ְוֶזֶהוּ: "נָשִׁים מָשְׁלוּ בָנוּ" (יְשַׁעְיָה ג׳:י״ב) – "נָשִׁים" לְשׁוֹן רַבִּים – בֵּין בְּהֶיתֵּר בֵּין בְּאִיסוּר – אָז הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּהְ הוּא מוֹצִיאוֹ מִמְצְרַיִם.
what is foldidden—then flashem drings film out of Egypt.	רוֹ וֹלְינִינִי רוּרִ צִׁינִין רְוֹבִּילִין בְּינִין בְּינִין בְּינִין בְּינִין בְּינִין בְּינִין בְּינִין

וָזֶה מַצְשֵׂה הַמְּנוֹרָה

	1
For from where would a Jewish soul come to such a level of Egypt—they are called "sons to the Omnipresent," whose nature is to do the will of their Father in Heaven—but it is from Him, may He be blessed, that the evil inclination was given.	פִּי מֵאַיִן יָבוֹא אִישׁ יִשְׂרְאֵלִּי לְבְחִינַת מִצְרַיִם – שֶׁנִּקְרְאוּ "בָּנִים לַמָּקוֹם", שֶׁטִּבְעָם לַצְשׁוֹת רְצוֹן אֲבִיהֶם שֶׁבַּשָּׁמַיִם בּ אֶלָא הוּא מֵאִתּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ שֶׁנָתַן הַיֵּצֶר הָרָע.
As in the saying: "that I have made worse, etc." (Shemuel I 24:11)—just as the exile of Egypt came through a cycle that Hashem caused to revolve with our ancestors, until He brought them [into Egypt], etc.—	– כְּמַאֲמֶר: "אֲשֶׁר הַרַעְתִּי וְגוֹי" (שְׁמוּאֵל א' כ״ד:י״א) כְּמוֹ שֶׁהָיָה גָּלוּת מִצְרַיִם עַל־יְדֵי גַּלְגָּל שָׁגִּלְגֵּל הַקָּדוֹשׁ – בָּרוּדְ הוּא עִם אֲבוֹתֵינוּ עַד שֶׁהֵבִיאָם וְגוֹי
and therefore it is written: "And I planted you as a noble vine, entirely of true seed" (Yirmiyahu 2:21)—even when a person falls, Heaven forbid, into lusts, into the level of שנ"ר"ק (crookedness), nevertheless it is "entirely true seed,"	ְעַל כֵּן כָּתוּב: "וְאָנֹכִי נְטַעְתִּיךְ שׁוֹרֵק כֵּלָה זָרַע אֱמֶת" (יִרְמְיָהוּ ב׳:כ״א) – אֲפִלּוּ כְּשֶׁהָאָדָם נוֹפֵל לְמַטָּה חַס וְשָׁלוֹם לְתַאֲוֹת – בְּחִינַת "שוֹרֵ"ק" – בַּעֲקַמְּמוּת – "אֲפַל־פִּי־כֵן "כֵּלָּה זָרַע אֱמֶת
and he can change, and he can make from it a סגו"ל—a treasure from all the nations.	וְיָכוֹל לְהִשְׁתַּבּוֹת, וּלְהָפֹּךְ מִזֶּה "סְגוּלֶה" – סְגוּלֶה מִכֶּל הָעַמִּים
And so it was in Egypt, where Hashem said: "I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again" (Bereishit 46:4). "I" [refers to] He who says "I will descend and I will bring you up"—	ְוַכֵן הָיָה בְּמִצְרַיִם – שֶׁאָמֵר הַקּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא: "אָנֹכִי אֵרֵד עִמְּךּ מִצְרִיְמָה וְאָנֹכִי אַעַלְךּ גַּם עָלֹה" (בְּרֵאשִׁית מו׳:ד׳) – "אָנֹכִי" – מִי שֶׁ"אָנֹכִי אֵרֵד וְגוֹי", "וְאָנֹכִי – "אַעַלְךּ
that Hashem helps him "also ascend"—that the level of "also" (בַּם) refers to ascent as well. (See what is written in the discourse ויעש regarding the explanation of "גם זו לטובה.")	שֶׁהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא עוֹזְרוֹ "גַּם עָלֹה" – שֶׁבְּחִינַת "גַּם" יִהְיֶה לוֹ גַּם־כֵּן עֲלִיָּה. (וּרְאֵה מַה שֶׁכָּתוּב בְּדְבְרֵי הַמַּאֲמֶר: "וַיַּעֵשׁ משֶׁה נְחַשׁ נְחֹשֶׁת" – בְּעִנְיֵן פֵּרוּשׁ "גַּם זוֹ" ("לְטוֹבָה.
And this is "True—you have redeemed us from Egypt," because we are "entirely true seed," as above—therefore, "from Egypt You redeemed us, Hashem our G-d,"	ן ָדָהוּ: "אֱמֶת – מִמִּצְרַיִם גְּאַלְתָּנוּ" – כִּי "כַּלָה זָרע אֱמֶת" – "כַּנַּ"ל – עַל כֵּן: "מִמִּצְרַיִם גְּאַלְתָּנוּ ה׳ אֱלֹקֵינוּ
that redemption is that Havayah becomes our G-d.	שְׁהָנֶה "הוי׳ לֵאלֹקֵינוּ". "שְׁהָנֶה "הוי׳ לֵאלֹקִינוּ".
"From the house of slaves"—enslaved to lusts—"You redeemed us." And how was the redemption? "You killed all their firstborn."	מְבֵּית עֲבָדִים" – הַמְשֵׁעְבָּד לְתַּאֲווֹת – "פְּדִיתָנוּ". וְאֵיךְּ" הָיְתָה הַגְּאֻלָּה? – "כָּל בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם הָרַגְתָּ.
For in the world, the firstborn of every womb is called "firstborn," and so too in the soul, the intellect is the "first" of wisdom.	פִּי בָּעוֹלָם נִקְרָא "פֶּטֶר כָּל רֶחָם" – הָרִאשׁוֹן. וְכֵן בַּנֶּפֶשׁ ב."– הַשֵּׂכָל הוּא "רַאשִׁית חָכְמָה".
And this is: "all their firstborn"—that is, the intellects of Egypt, for each one wants to establish his will through his intellect—You killed, meaning he fell from his level, and his will—this is called "death."	ן זֶהוּ: "כֶּל בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם" – הֵם הַשֵּׂכְלִיִּים שֶׁל מִצְרַיִם – שֶׁכָּל אֶחָד רוֹצֶה לְהַעֲמִיד רְצוֹנוֹ עַל־יְדֵי שִׂכְלוֹ – "הָרַגְתָּ" "– שֶׁיִּפּּל מִמַּדְרֵגָתוֹ וְרְצוֹנוֹ – שֶׁנִּקְרֵא "מִיתָה.

וְזֶה מַּעֲשֵׂה הַמְּנוֹרָה

But the firstborn of Israel—their intellect is Divinity, to contemplate the greatness of the Infinite, blessed be He, in prayer, which is called "bed" in the Zohar—	וּבְכוֹרְדּ יִשְׂרָאֵל – שִּׂכְלוֹ אֱלֹקוּת – לְהָתְבּוֹנֵן בִּגְדַלַּת אַין־סוֹף בָּרוּדְ הוּא בַּתְּפִלָּה – שָׁנִקְרַאת "מִּטָּה" בַּזּהַר – אֵין־סוֹף בָּרוּדְ
and in prayer there is a bed, throne, menorah, and table (see Zohar II, 237a)—	ְרֵשׁ בַּתְּפָלֶה "מִטָּה", "כְּסֵא", "מְנוֹרָה", וְ"שֵׁלְחָן" (רְאֵה (זֹהַר חֵלֶק ב׳ דַּף רל״ז ע״א – (זֹהַר חֵלֶק ב׳ דַּף
"Its couch is gold" (Shir HaShirim 3:10)—You redeemed, so that it will not be by happenstance, due to lack, for that would still be exile. But redemption and freedom is from the servitude of livelihood—that nothing will obstruct prayer—	רְפִידָתוֹ זָהָב" (שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים ג׳:י׳) – "גְּאַלְתָּ" – שֶׁלֹא" יִהְיֶה דֶּרֶדְ מִקְרֶה מִפְּנֵי מְנִיעָה – שֶׁזֶּהוּ גָּלוּת עֲדַיִן – אֶלָּא תִּהָיֶה הַגְּאֻלָּה וְחֵרוּת מִשִּׁעְבּוּד הַפַּרְנָסָה – שֶׁלֹא יִהְיֶה – דָּבָר מוֹנֵעַ מִן הַתִּפִּלָּה
because without prayer it is impossible to be "departing from evil."	פָי בְּלִי תְּפָלָה – אִי אֶפְשָׁר לְהִיוֹת "סוּר מֵרֶע".
And therefore, they instituted confession (וידוי) every day in prayer—so that before prayer, when one reflects on his lowliness, that he is in Egypt, and reflects on the greatness of the Infinite—he will surely regret the evil—	וְלָכֵן תִּקְנוּ וִדּוּיִים בְּכָל יוֹם בַּתְּפָלֶה – שֶׁקֹדֶם הַתְּפָלֶה, כְּשֶׁיִתְבּוֹנֵן בִּשְׁפֵלוּתוֹ – שֶׁהוּא בְּמִצְרִיִם – וְיִתְבּוֹנֵן בִּגְדַלַּת – אֵין־סוֹף בָּרוּךְ הוּא – יִתְחָרֵט בְּוַדַּאי מִן הָרָע
and in prayer, there will be verbal confession—and then there will be "a single menorah of pure gold," such that its base and its blossoms will be "one menorah."	וּבַתְּפִלֶּה יִהְיֶה "וִדּוּי דְּבָרִים" – וְאָז יִהְיֶה "מְנוֹרָה אַחַת "זָהָב טָהוֹר" – שָׁיִהְיֶה יְרַכָּה וּפִרְחָה "מְנוֹרָה אַחַת
However, the main thing is that there must be complete unity—each with the other—not looking at the fault of his fellow, etc.	– אָבָל הָעִקָּר – שֶׁצָּרִיךְ לִהְיוֹת אַחְדוּת גָּמוּר – זֶה עִם זֶה – שָׁלֹא יַבִּיט בְּרָעַת חֲבֵרוֹ וְגוֹ׳,
This means that one must know that above, there is a Menorah of hammered work—where the higher descends below and the lower ascends above; evil sometimes descends below and enters into a wicked person—and conversely,	ְהַיְנוּ – שָׁיֵדַע שָׁיֵשׁ לְמַעְלָה "מְנוֹרַת מִקְשָׁה" – שֶׁהָעֶלְיוֹן יוֹרֵד לְמַטָּה, וְהַתַּחְתוֹן עוֹלֶה לְמַעְלָה. שֶׁהָרַע יוֹרֵד – לְפַעָמִים לְמַטָּה וְנִכְנָס בְּאָדָם רָע – וּלְהֵפֶּךְ
the performance of a mitzvah by a wicked person sometimes ascends above and is taken by another.	ְצְשִׂיָה שֶׁל מִצְוָה מֵאָדָם רָשָׁע – לְפָעָמִים עוֹלָה לְמַעְלָה וְנוֹטֵל אַחֵר.
And every person must ascribe the deficiency to himself, and the good that he sees as possibly being another's—because it rose above—and the evil of others as perhaps his own, because it descended below.	וְכָל אָדָם צָרִידְּ לִתְלוֹת הַחֶּסְרוֹן בּוֹ, וְהַטוֹב שֶׁלּוֹ – שֶׁמָּא הוּא שֶׁל אַחֵר שֶׁעָלָה לְמַעְלָה, וְרָעַת אֲחֵרִים – שֶׁמָּא הִיא שָׁלּוֹ שֶׁיָרְדָה לְמַטָּה.
Then, truly, the base and the blossoms will be one—that each one considers himself as the "base," and his fellow as the "blossom," and his fellow the same in reverse—	וְאָז – יִהְיֶה בֶּצֶמֶת "אֶחָד" – הַיֶּרַהְּ עִם הַפְּרָחִים – שֶׁכָּל אֶחָד יַחֲזִיק עַצְמוֹ לִבְחִינַת "יָרַךְּ", וְחֲבֵרוֹ לִבְחִינַת – "כָּרַח", וַחָבֵרוֹ לְהֵכֶּךְ

ווה מַעשה הַמְּנוֹרָה

and then Aharon the Kohen will be able to light the fire in all seven lamps—he, being the Kohen Gadol, of great kindness, within whom are all the kindnesses—	– יוּכַל אַהַרֹן הַכּּהֵן לְהַדְלִיק אֵשׁ בְּכָל ז׳ הַנֵּרוֹת – שֶׁהוּא כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל – רַב חָסֶד – שֶׁכָּל הַחֲסָדִים בּוֹ
he will be able to draw down from <i>ahavah rabbah</i> to <i>ahavas olam</i> , and then automatically the interior will be filled with love, with revelation of heart, like flames of fire, etc.	יוּכַל לְהַמְשִׁיךְ מֵאַהְבָה רַבָּה לְאַהְבַת עוֹלָם – וְאָז מִמֵּילָא יִהְיֶה "תּוֹכוֹ רַצוּף אַהָבָה" – בְּהִתְגַּלוּת לִבּוֹ כִּרְשָׁפֵי אֵשׁ וֹגוֹ׳.
	17 [-
And this is: "When you raise up the lamps"—that Aharon should raise them.	ָוְזֶהוּ: "בְּהַעֲלֹתְדָּ אֶת הַנֵּרוֹת" – שָׁאַהָרוֹן יַעֲלֶה אוֹתָם.

NOTE Summary:

The Alter Rebbe begins by framing exile itself—like that of Egypt—as a divinely-orchestrated process meant to awaken the essential truth in every Jew. Even when a soul falls into lusts or spiritual crookedness (שורק), it remains "entirely true seed" (כולה זרע אמת), possessing the inherent potential for elevation. Just as Hashem says, "I will descend with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up," the descent is purposeful and is coupled with a guaranteed ascent. This dual motion reflects the dynamic of Teshuvah: from the depths, one can reach higher than ever before.

Redemption is thus not external alone—it is internal. The intellect of Egypt (symbolized by their firstborns) seeks to justify ego through reason; these are "killed" spiritually when Divine truth is revealed. By contrast, the "firstborn" of Israel is the G-dly intellect—focused on contemplating the greatness of Ein Sof (Infinite G-d) during tefillah. Tefillah itself is likened to a complete divine vessel: bed, throne, menorah, table—each a part of the sanctuary of the soul.

To truly access prayer as a redemptive force, one must begin with humility: recognizing one's own lowliness, confessing (וידוי), and realizing one is in Mitzrayim—spiritually constrained. This honest self-reflection paves the way for heartfelt prayer, where one becomes a Menorah "of pure gold"—from base to blossom—refined and unified.

Yet the climax of the discourse lies in the transformative idea of unity: not only should each person see themselves as the "base" and their fellow as the "blossom," but they should attribute any spiritual deficiency to themselves and any good in themselves possibly to others. This radical humility creates true unity, enabling Aharon—the archetypal embodiment of abundant love and kindness—to kindle all seven branches of the Menorah, illuminating every Jewish soul with divine fire.

וָוֶה מַעֲשֵׂה הַמְּנוֹרָה

Practical Takeaway:

The Alter Rebbe teaches us that:

- No fall is absolute—every descent is bound to a future ascent when we believe we are still "zera emes."
- Tefillah is not only a means of communication but a space of personal redemption. It requires honest introspection (וידוי), daily renewal, and mental focus on the greatness of Hashem.
- True unity is possible only when we judge others favorably and ourselves critically. This humility is not weakness, but the foundation of communal light.
- By internalizing these lessons, we transform spiritual exile into inner redemption—and allow the divine "Menorah" to shine purely within and between us.

Chassidic Story:

One morning in Liozna, the Alter Rebbe entered the shul and found two of his devoted Chassidim in a bitter disagreement. Each had accused the other of lacking sincerity in davening. The Alter Rebbe interrupted them gently and asked, "Tell me—do you see another's face during prayer?"

They were quiet.

He continued, "When Aharon Hakohen kindled the Menorah, he didn't look to see which flame was tallest or brightest. He simply lit each one with the same love, because they were all one piece—מקשה אחת זהב מהור".

The Rebbe then added, "If you see your friend's shortcomings during davening, it's not his failing—it is your exile. Redemption begins when you stop looking down and start looking inward."

The two Chassidim embraced and later said that from that moment on, their tefillah—and their relationship—became a source of true light.

Source: Told over in Shivchei HaBesht and later generations of Chabad lore, attributed by oral tradition to the Alter Rebbe in Liozna. **END NOTE**