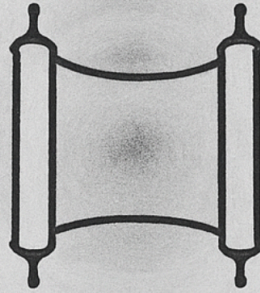


בס"ד

**Rebbe Elimelech
of Lizhensk
Parshas Pekudei**



Dedicated in Honor of

לע"נ

רבי אלימלך בן רבי אליעזר ליפמן

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Noam Elimelech

Parshas Vayakhel & Pekudei

מאמר א

These are the accounts of the Mishkan, etc. Behold, the Torah can be explained in several ways. And it appears to explain that great is the act of charity. One who gives charity to the complete righteous person, who makes a unification in the supernal attributes.

אלה פקודי המשכן כו'. הנה התורה [י"ל] לכמה פנים, ונראה לפרש דהנה גדולה מעשה הצדקה, הנותן צדקה לצדיק השלם שעושה יחוד במדות העליונות

As is known, that there are two attributes: "Tzaddik" and "Tzedek." And through the righteous person who receives the charity, he raises the final hei, which is with us in our exile, to the attribute of Tzedek, and it becomes Tzedakah.

כדוע שיש שני מדות צדיק וצדקה, ועל-ידי הצדיק המקבל את הצדקה הוא מעלה את ה' אחרונה שהיא אמתנו בגלותנו למדת צדק ונעשה צדקה

And then the world becomes filled and satisfied with every good: abundance and blessing and mercy and life and children and sustenance and peace without end or limit. All of this is drawn down through the righteous person who receives the charity.

ואז העולם מלא ושבע כל טוב שפע וברכה ורחמים וחסדים ובני ומזוני ושלוש עד אין קץ ותכלית הנשפע על-ידי הצדיק המקבל את הצדקה

And through the bringing of the influence to the entire world, to every single individual, each according to the measure of his lack and his need. And this is hinted in the verse: "And they shall give, each man a ransom, etc." (Exodus 30:12).

ועל-ידי הולכת ההשפעה לכל העולם לכל אחד ואחד די מחסרו והצטרכותו. וזה מרמז בפסוק "ונתנו איש כופר כו" (Exodus 30:12)

The word "Venatnu" spelled backwards is also "Venatnu," as mentioned above. For through charity, charity comes into the world.

מלת ונתנו האותיות למפרע הוא גם-כן ונתנו כנ"ל, שעל-ידי הצדקה בא צדקה לעולם

And behold, there are three levels of righteous individuals. There is a righteous person who does not pay attention to consider in his receiving of charity the benefit and enjoyment of himself.

והנה יש שלש מדרגות צדיקים. יש צדיק שאינו משגיח לחשב בזבלתו הצדקה לטובת והנאת עצמו

Rather all his intention is only that through this abundance of goodness will be drawn down to all Israel. And constantly his soul and his good will long to see the joy of Israel, that no good thing should be lacking to them.

אלא כל כונתו הוא כדי שיושפע על-ידי-זה שפע טובה לכל ישראל, ותמיד נפש ורצונו הטוב משתוקק לראות בשמחת ישראל שלא יחסר להם כל טוב

But that which concerns his own needs he does not consider at all whatsoever. And everything in his eyes is as if his house were filled and prepared with every good thing.

אבל מה שנוגע לו להצטרכותו אינו משגיח כלל וכלל, והכל בעיניו כאלו ביתו מלא ומוכן כל טוב

And this righteous person is called by the name "male," even though he receives. For all his intention and request is only in order to bestow. And this is the known union that there is a union from itself within itself.

וזה הצדיק נקרא בשם דוכרא אף שהוא מקבל, כי כל כונתו ובקשתו אינו אלא כדי להשפיע, וזה הוא הדיבור הדוע שיש זיווג מיניה וביה

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And there is a righteous person who receives charity and his intention is also for his own benefit, for his sustenance and livelihood. And this one is called by the name “female,” because his intention is also to receive.

ויש צדיק המקבל צדקה וכוונתו גם-כן להנאת עצמו
כדי מזונותיו ופרנסתו, וזה נקרא בשם נוקבא מחמת
שכוונתו גם-כן לקבל

And this righteous person also makes a unification of the two attributes mentioned above through the receiving into his hand of the charity.

והצדיק הנה גם-כן עושה יחוד לשני המדות הנ"ל
על-ידי קבלה לידי הצדקה

And this is “And every man with whom was found blue and purple,” meaning the righteous person who is called by the name “male” as mentioned above, whose every need is as if everything is already found with him prepared.

וזהו "וכל איש אשר נמצא אתו תכלת וארגמן",
דהיינו הצדיק הנקרא בשם דוקרא פנ"ל שכל
הצטרכותו פאלו נמצא אצלו הכל מוכן

“Blue and purple” is a hint to all kinds of goodness, and his intention is only to bestow. “They brought” means that such righteous individuals always bring abundant flow of every good to the world.

תכלת וארגמן" רמז לכל מיני טובה, ואין פונתו רק
להשפיע: "הביאו" ר"ל צדיקים כאלו הם מביאים
תמיד שפע רב כל טוב לעולם

“And every woman” means the second righteous person who is called by the name “female” as mentioned above, except that she is “wise of heart,” meaning in the service of the Creator, may He be blessed, and in His holy Torah to give pleasure to his Maker.

וכל אשה" ר"ל הצדיק השני הנקרא בשם נוקבא
פנ"ל, רק שהיא "חכמת לב" הינו בעבודת הבורא
ותפורה ובתורתו הקדושה לעשות נחת רוח ליוצרו

“With her hands she spun,” meaning through her hands, that the righteous one receives the charity into his hand, he also draws down influence. “And they brought spun material,” meaning influence.

בגדיה טוו" ר"ל על-ידי ידיה שמוקבל הצדק לידי
הוא גם-כן ממשיך השפעה, ויביאו מטוה" הינו
השפעה

“Blue and purple” is a hint to all kinds of influences.

תכלת וארגמן" רמז לכל מיני השפעות

Third: “And all the women whose heart lifted them in wisdom,” meaning the righteous person who has a lifting of the heart in supernal wisdom, even though his intention is to receive and he is also called by the name “female.”

ג' "וכל הנשים אשר נשא לבן אתנה בחכמה", ר"ל
הצדיק שיש לו נשיאת לב בחכמה עליונה, אף
שכוונתו לקבל ונקרא גם-כן בשם נוקבא

“They spun the goats,” meaning a hint that just as wool has its root from the goats, so this righteous person draws influence from the root.

טוו את העזים" ר"ל רמז כצמר ששרשו הוא מן
העזים כך הצדיק הנה מושך השפעה מהשרש

And this is “And these are the accounts of the Mishkan,” a hint to the three righteous individuals mentioned above. “Accounts” means that which the righteous person appoints for every person through good influence.

וזהו "ואלה פקודי המשכן" רמז לשלשה צדיקים
הנ"ל, "פקודי" פירושו מה שהצדיק פוקד את כל
אדם בהשפעה טובה

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In them there are three levels. First: “the Mishkan,” which is from the language of drawing down, that he draws influence through receiving charity into his hand and makes a unification in the two attributes mentioned above.

יש בהם שלש מדרגות, א' "המשכן" הוא מלשון המשכה שממשיך השפעה על ידי קבלת הצדקה לידו ועושה יחוד בשני מדות הנ"ל

And this is “the Mishkan” with the letter hei. Second: “Mishkan,” a hint to the completely perfect righteous person mentioned above. This one is called by the name “male.”

וזהו המשכן בה"א. ב' "משכן" רמז לצדיק השלם והגמור כנ"ל זה נקרא בשם דוכרא כנ"ל

And he is called in hidden and concealed language, because he does not pay attention to himself as if he is not in the world, and he makes a unification from himself within himself.

ונקרא בלשון סתום ונעלם מחמת שאינו משגיח על עצמו כאלו אינו בעולם ועושה יחוד מינייה וביה

“The testimony that was appointed according to the mouth of Moses and Aaron,” who always longed to bestow upon Israel and their intention and attention was not on themselves.

העדת אשר פקד על פי משה ואהרן "שהיו משתוקקים תמיד להשפיע לישראל ולא היתה פוננתם והשגחתם על עצמם

And this is “And Hashem said to Moses: carve for yourself” (Exodus 34:1). And our Sages expounded: the chips shall be yours.

(Exodus 34:1) "וזהו" ויאמר ה' אל משה פסל לך ודרשו חז"ל הפסלת יהיה שלך כו', (34:1)

And it is possible to intend the explanation of the Gemara: that the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moses that everything that concerns you for your sustenance and needs should be in your eyes like the refuse of food that is rejected from the body.

וזה לכונן פירוש הגמרא שהשם יתברך אמר למשה כל מה שנוגע לך לפרנסתך להצטרכותך יהיה בעיניך כפסלת המאכל הנדחה מן הגוף

That you should not pay attention to that which concerns you.

“From here Moses became wealthy,” meaning that Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, did as the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him.

שלא תשגיח על הנוגע לך: מכאן נתעשר משה, פירוש שמלשה רבינו ע"ה עשה כאשר אמר לו השם יתברך

And all his intention was that they should be filled and satisfied with every good. And this was all his wealth, that he saw in their wealth and their goodness.

והיתה כל פוננתו שיהיו מלאים ושבעים כל טוב, וזה היה כל עשרו שראה בעשרם וטובתם

Third: “the service of the Levites,” meaning the smaller righteous ones who accompany Hashem in His service. They also bestow flow of blessing and life to the world and to all Israel.

ג' "עבודת הלויים" הינו הצדיקים הקטנים הנלוים אל ה' לעבודתו, גם הם משפיעים שפע ברכה וחסים לעולם ולכל ישראל

[NOTE Summary:

Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk explains that the verses describing the contributions for the Mishkan allude to different types of righteous individuals through whom Divine abundance flows into the world. Charity given to a true righteous person is not merely financial support. In the spiritual structure of the worlds it creates a unification between the attributes called צדיק and צדק. Through this unification the final letter ה of the Divine Name, which represents the Divine Presence dwelling with Israel in exile, is elevated and united with its

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source. When this occurs, the result is צדקה, meaning that Divine goodness flows into the world in the form of blessing, mercy, life, sustenance, children, and peace for all people.

The Torah hints that there are three spiritual levels of righteous individuals who serve as channels for this Divine flow. The first and highest level is the completely selfless righteous person. Although he receives charity, he does not think about himself at all. In his mind it is as if he already possesses everything he needs. His only intention is that the charity given to him should become a channel through which Divine abundance spreads to all Israel. Because his intention is purely to give and not to receive, he is called דוכרא, the “male” aspect in the language of Kabbalah, meaning a source of influence. This level is hinted in the verse “every man with whom was found techelet and argaman,” symbolizing that all forms of goodness are already considered present with him.

The second level is a righteous person who receives charity partly for his own needs, such as his sustenance and livelihood. Nevertheless, his heart is devoted to the service of the Creator and the study of Torah. Even though he receives for himself, the act of receiving still creates a spiritual unification and draws blessing into the world. This level is called נוקבא, the “female” aspect, because it includes the element of receiving. The verse “every woman wise of heart” hints to this type of righteous individual, whose wisdom and devotion allow him to transform what he receives into spiritual influence.

The third level is a righteous person whose heart is elevated in supernal wisdom, yet whose primary role is to draw influence from higher spiritual roots and transmit it downward. The verse “they spun the goats” alludes to this process. Just as wool originates from goats and is transformed into thread, so this righteous person draws spiritual energy from its hidden source and brings it into the world in a form that can sustain others.

These three levels are hinted in the phrase “These are the accounts of the Mishkan.” The word פקודי refers to the way the righteous person “appoints” or distributes Divine influence to each individual according to his needs. One level is called המשכן, referring to the drawing down of influence through receiving charity. Another level is משכן without the letter ה, hinting to the completely selfless righteous person who is hidden and inward, concerned only with giving. The third level corresponds to “the service of the Levites,” referring to the smaller righteous individuals who attach themselves to God’s service and who also become channels of blessing for the world.

The Torah then brings the example of Moses. When God told Moses “carve for yourself,” the sages teach that the leftover fragments from the Tablets became Moses’ wealth. Rabbi Elimelech explains that the deeper message is that Moses regarded anything connected to his own personal needs as insignificant, like refuse that a person discards from the body. His true wealth was not material riches but the joy he felt when he saw the people of Israel filled with goodness and blessing.

Thus the Mishkan symbolizes not only the physical sanctuary but also the living network of righteous individuals through whom Divine life and abundance continually flow into the world.

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Practical Takeaway:

A person does not need to reach the level of the greatest righteous individuals to participate in this spiritual process. Whenever someone gives charity, supports holiness, or helps sustain those who dedicate their lives to Torah and service of God, he becomes part of the channel through which blessing flows into the world. The teaching also reminds a person to gradually shift focus away from excessive concern for personal gain and toward the wellbeing of others. The more a person learns to rejoice in the goodness of others and in the blessing that spreads through the community, the more he aligns himself with the spiritual path of the righteous.

Chassidic Story:

A well-known story is told about Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk and his brother Rabbi Zusha of Anipoli during the years when they wandered from town to town in poverty. Once they arrived in a village where they had no money at all for food. Rabbi Zusha was distressed and said to his brother that perhaps they should pray for their own sustenance.

Rabbi Elimelech replied that a tzaddik should not focus on his own needs. Instead they should pray that the people of the town should be blessed with abundance, and then surely they themselves would also be sustained.

They began to pray with great devotion for the welfare of the entire town. Shortly afterward a wealthy villager invited them into his home, saying that he had suddenly felt an urge to give charity and host guests. The brothers were given food and lodging.

Rabbi Elimelech then said to Rabbi Zusha that when a person thinks only about his own needs, his prayer remains narrow. But when he prays for the good of others, he connects to a much wider channel of blessing. In that broader flow of goodness, everyone is included.

This story reflects the teaching that the greatest righteous individuals see their own wellbeing only as part of the larger blessing meant for all of Israel. **END NOTE]**

מאמר ב

And he made for the altar a grating, etc. And first we will explain the verse: “And Hashem said to Moses: make for yourself a fiery serpent,” and Moses made a copper serpent (Numbers 21:8–9).

And behold, this requires explanation to understand why Moses changed it. And I will first introduce an explanation regarding what the earlier sages examined: “In the beginning G-d created,” etc.

וַיַּעַשׂ לְמִזְבֵּחַ מִכָּבֵד כּוֹי, וּמִתְחִלָּה נִפְרָשׁ הַפְּסוּקָה
 "וַיֹּאמֶר ד' אֶל מֹשֶׁה עֲשֵׂה לָךְ שֶׁרֶף וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה נָחָשׁ
 "הַנָּחָשׁ" (Numbers 21:8–9)

וְהִנֵּה זֶה צָרִיךְ בִּיאור לְהַבִּין לָמָּה שֶׁנֶּחֱמָה מֹשֶׁה, וְאַקְדָּיִם
 לָךְ לְפָרֵשׁ בְּמַה שֶׁדִּקְדָּקוֹ קָמְאֵי "בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא" כּוֹי

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“At first it arose in thought to create it with the attribute of judgment,” etc. (Rashi on Genesis 1:1). And Heaven forbid for us to think about the Holy One, blessed be He, the One true and simple, that there should be any change with Him, Heaven forbid.

מתחלה עלה במחשבה לבראו במדת הדין כו' וְחִלְיָה לָנוּ לְחַשֵּׁב עַל (Rashi on Genesis 1:1), הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא הָאֵחָד הָאֱמִתִּי הַפְּשוּט שְׁיִהְיֶה חִלְיָה אֵינָה שְׁנוּי אֶצְלוֹ

Rather the essential explanation is as follows: truly a person must serve the Creator in every possible way so as not to sin before Him, Heaven forbid, in any transgression or even the slightest trace of sin.

אִךְ הָעֶקֶר הוּא כֹּה, בְּאֵמֶת וְשִׁצְרִיף הָאָדָם לְעִבּוֹד אֵת הַבּוֹרָא בְּכָל אוֹפְנֵי אוֹפְנֵים לְבִלְתִּי יִחַטָּא לְפָנָיו חִלְיָה בְּשׁוּם עֲבָרָה וְנִדְנוּד חַטָּא

And even the lightest of the light should be in his eyes like the most severe. And this righteous person could exist even through the attribute of judgment.

וְהִקְלָה לְשִׁבְלֹת יִהְיֶה בְּעֵינָיו כְּחִמּוּרוֹת, וְזֶה הַצְּדִיק הֵיךָ יָכוֹל לְהִתְקַיֵּם אַף עַל־יְדֵי מִדַּת הַדִּין

And this is what the line of judgment requires, that a person should be like this. But those who ascend spiritually are few who can stand against the strict line of judgment.

וְזֶה שׁוֹרֵת הַדִּין נוֹתֵן שְׁיִהְיֶה הָאָדָם כֹּה, אֲבָל בְּנֵי עֲלִיָּה הֵמָּה מְעוּטִים שְׁיִהְיֶוּ יְכוּלִים לְעִמּוֹד נֶגֶד שׁוֹרֵת הַדִּין

And therefore it was necessary to associate the attribute of mercy. And in truth, at the beginning the Holy One, blessed be He, saw in one and the second two levels.

וְלָכֵן הֵיךָ צְרִיף לְשִׁתּוֹף מִדַּת הַרְחֻמִּים, וּבְאֵמֶת בַּתְּחִלָּה רָאָה הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּאֵחָד הַשְּׁנַי מִדְּרָגוֹת

Meaning a righteous person from the outset and the level of a baal teshuvah. And this is “At first it arose in thought,” etc., meaning from the beginning of creation it arose in thought to create it with the attribute of judgment.

הֵינּוּ צְדִיק מְעִיקְרָא וּמִדְּרָגוֹת בְּעַל תְּשׁוּבָה, וְזֶהוּ מִתְחִלָּה עָלָה בְּמַחְשָׁבָה כו' ר"ל מִהַתְחִלַּת הַבְּרִיאָה עָלָה בְּמַחְשָׁבָה לְבְרָאוֹ בְּמִדַּת הַדִּין

This refers to the righteous person who can exist according to the strict line of judgment. And He saw that the world cannot endure, because the nature of creation makes it impossible that all should be righteous.

קָאֵי עַל הַצְּדִיק שְׁיִכּוֹל לְהִתְקַיֵּם עַל־פִּי שׁוֹרֵת הַדִּין, וְרָאָה שְׂאִין הָעוֹלָם מִתְקַיֵּם מִחֲמַת שְׁטִבְעַת הַבְּרִיאָה בְּלִמְתִּי אֶפְשָׁרִי לְהִיּוֹת כָּלֵם צְדִיקִים

As I wrote elsewhere. And therefore He associated the attribute of mercy. But in truth He considered and saw everything together without any change, Heaven forbid.

בְּאֶשֶׁר כְּתִבְתִּי בְּמָקוֹם אַחֵר, וְשִׁתּוֹף מִדַּת הַרְחֻמִּים, אֲבָל בְּאֵמֶת חָשַׁב וְרָאָה הַכֹּל בְּיַחַד בְּלִי שׁוּם הַשְּׁתַנּוּת חִלְיָה

And this is “I am Hashem your G-d, truth.” Meaning that one who walks truthfully in the service of the Creator, may He be blessed, so as not to sin, even the attribute of judgment is mercy for him.

וְזֶהוּ "אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֱמֶת", ר"ל מִי שֶׁהוֹלֵךְ בְּאֵמֶת בְּעִבּוּדַת הַבּוֹרָא יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁלֹא יִחַטָּא חִלְיָה אַף הַמִּדַּת הַדִּין הוּא רְחֻמִּים אֶצְלוֹ

And he has nothing to fear from the attribute of judgment. And this is “I am Hashem before a person sins and after a person sins” (Rosh Hashanah 17b).

וְאִין לוֹ לְהִתְיַרָא מִמִּדַּת הַדִּין, וְזֶהוּ "אֲנִי ה' קָדָם וְאַחֵר שְׁיִחַטָּא הָאָדָם וְאַחֵר שְׁיִחַטָּא (Rosh Hashanah

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For before a person sins, even judgment is mercy. And even after he sins, I am Hashem of mercy.

דְּקוּדָם שְׂיִחְטֹא גַם הַדִּין הוּא רַחֲמִים, וְאַף אַחַר שְׂיִחְטֹא אֲנִי ה' הַרְחַמִּים

And this is “And they shall make for Me a sanctuary,” etc. (Exodus 25:8), that the Temple above corresponds to the Temple below.

שְׁבִית, (Exodus 25:8) וְזֶהוּ "וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ" כֹּוּ הַמִּקְדָּשׁ שְׁלִמְעֵלָה מְכוּוֹן כְּנֶגֶד בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ שְׁלִמְטָה

And when a person sanctifies himself below, he makes a sanctuary for Hashem, blessed be He.

וְכַשְׁאֲדָם מִקְדָּשׁ עֲצָמוּ לְמִטָּה עוֹשֶׂה מִקְדָּשׁ לַה' יִתְבָּרַךְ

And this is “And they shall make for Me a sanctuary.” When? “And I will dwell among them,” meaning when they sanctify themselves below, then I dwell among them.

וְזֶהוּ "וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ", אֵימָתִי, "וְשִׁכַנְתִּי בְתוֹכְכֶם", הֵינּוּ כְּשִׁיחְדָּשׁוּ עֲצָמָם לְמִטָּה שָׂאוּ אֲנִי שׁוֹכֵן בְּתוֹכְכֶם

Then they make for Me a sanctuary above.

אִז עוֹשִׂין לִי מִקְדָּשׁ לְמַעְלָה

And this is “Make for yourself a fiery serpent” (Numbers 21:8), meaning people who burn in their holiness and like flashes of fire in their fervor. Certainly these righteous individuals, about them it is said “You shall decree a matter and it shall be established for you” (Job 22:28).

ר"ל בְּנֵי, (Numbers 21:8) "וְזֶהוּ" עֲשֵׂה לָךְ שֶׁרֶף אֲדָם הַשּׂוֹרְפִים בְּקִדּוּשָׁתָם וְכַרְשֵׁפֵי אֵשׁ הַתְּלֵהבוֹתָם, בּוֹדָאֵי הַצְּדִיקִים הִלְלוּ עֲלֵיהֶם נֶאֱמַר וְתִגְזַר אוֹמֵר כֹּוּ (Job 22:28)

“And place it upon a banner,” meaning that you should place this righteous person as a banner for the world, so that everyone will understand that all his actions and deeds are entirely miraculous acts.

וְשִׂים אֹתוֹ עַל גִּס" פִּירוּשׁ שְׂתִשִּׂים אֵת הַצְּדִיק הַזֶּה לְגִס לְעוֹלָם, שְׂיִבִינוּ הַכֹּל שְׂכַל פְּעוּלוֹתָיו וּמַעֲשָׂיו הַכֹּל מַעֲשֵׂה נִסִּים

And this is “everyone who is bitten,” meaning anyone who has a bite, that is, he lacks something, whether healing or sustenance, life, or children.

וְזֶהוּ "כָּל הַנִּשְׂוָף" ר"ל כָּל מִי שִׁישׁ לוֹ נִשְׂיָכָה, דְּהֵינּוּ שֶׁחָסַר לוֹ אֵיזָה דְּבָר הֵן רְפוּאָה וְהֵן מְזוּנֵי חַיִּי בְּנֵי

“And he shall look at it and live,” immediately with even the slightest glance the righteous person mentioned above will draw down for him everything.

וְרָאָה אֹתוֹ וְחַי" תִּכְרַף בְּרֵאזָה כָּל דָּהוּ בְּעֵלְמָא יְמִשְׁיָד" לוֹ הַצְּדִיק הַזֶּה לְהַכֹּל

And Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, saw that those who ascend spiritually are few, and “Moses made a copper serpent” (Numbers 21:9).

וּמַעֲשֵׂה רַבִּינוּ ע"ה רָאָה שְׂבַנֵּי עֲלִיָה הֵמָּה מְעוּטִים וּמִפְּרֵשׁ רִש"י ז"ל לְשׁוֹן נוֹפֵל עַל הַלְשׁוֹן, ג"ל הַפִּירוּשׁ כֹּה, נִחַשׁ הוּא הַשֵּׁטֶן הוּא הַיִּצָּר הָרַע הָעוֹלָה וּמְקַטְרָג

And Rashi of blessed memory explained: a play on the language. It can be explained as follows: “serpent” is the Satan, the evil inclination that rises and prosecutes.

וְרָאָה מַעֲשֵׂה רַבִּינוּ ע"ה לַעֲשׂוֹת נִגְדוּ נְחֹשֶׁת, שָׂאָף מִי שְׂאִינוּ כָּל-כֹּף צְדִיק כַּנ"ל, וְלָזָה מְרַמֵּז נְחֹשֶׁת

And Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, saw to make against it copper, that even one who is not such a great righteous person as mentioned above, and this is hinted by copper.

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For the copper of the donations of the Mishkan atoned for the deed of the serpent, that even such a righteous person will have the ability in his hand to accomplish everything.

שְׁהַנְחֹאֲשֶׁת שֶׁל נֹדֶבֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן הָיָה מְכַפֵּר עַל מַעֲשֵׂה נֹחַשׁ, שְׁגָם הַצַּדִּיק כְּזֶה יִהְיֶה יְכוּלֵת בְּיָדוֹ לַפְעוּל הַכֹּל

And Moses did not change from the words of the Holy One, blessed be He, for so was the intention of creation at the beginning as mentioned above.

וְלֹא הָיָה מְשַׁנֵּה מִשְׁנֵה מִדְּבָרֵי הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, כִּי כֵן הָיָה כְּוִנַּת הַבְּרִיאָה בַּתְּחִלָּה כִּנ"ל

And this is “And he made for the altar a grating of network of copper” (Exodus 38:4). “A grating” means to sift with a sieve in order to see the deeds of the righteous person from the outset.

"וְזֶהוּ "וַיַּעַשׂ לַמִּזְבֵּחַ מְכַבֵּר מַעֲשֵׂה רֶשֶׁת נְחֹשֶׁת ר"ל מְכַבֵּר פִּירוּשׁ כּוֹבְרוֹ בְּכַבְרָה, (Exodus 38:4) לְרֵאוֹת אֶת מַעֲשֵׂה הַצַּדִּיק דְּמַעֲיָקְרָא

And those who ascend spiritually are few. Therefore he made and caused that even the righteous person who is not at such a great level can also accomplish everything.

וּבְנֵי עֲלִיָּה הֵמָּה מְעוּטִים, וְלָכֵן עָשָׂה וּפְעַל שְׁגָם הַצַּדִּיק שְׂאִינֵו בְּבַחֲיָנָה גְּדוּלָּה כָּל־כָּד גַּם הוּא יְכוּל לַפְעוּל הַכֹּל

And the measure of the verse should be thus: “And he made for the altar,” meaning so that the altar should be an altar of atonement.

וַיִּהְיֶה שְׁעוֹר הַפְּתוּב כָּד, "וַיַּעַשׂ לַמִּזְבֵּחַ" ר"ל לְמַעַן וַיִּהְיֶה מִזְבֵּחַ כְּפָרָה

“A grating,” the necessity to see the deed of the completely righteous person. “Copper, work of network,” meaning that since most people are caught in the trap and net of the serpent, the evil inclination.

מְכַבֵּר" הַהֶכְרַחֵי לְרֵאוֹת מַעֲשֵׂה הַצַּדִּיק הַגָּמוּר, "נְחֹשֶׁת מַעֲשֵׂה רֶשֶׁת" ר"ל וּמַחְמַת שָׂרֵב כְּנֵי אָדָם נִלְקָדִים בְּמַצוּדַת וְרֶשֶׁת הַנְּחֹשׁ הַיֵּצֶר הָרָע

He made and caused that even the righteous person hinted by the name copper will accomplish everything, as mentioned above, and this is clear.

עָשָׂה וּפְעַל שְׁגָם הַצַּדִּיק הַמְרָמֵז בְּשֵׁם נְחֹשֶׁת יַפְעוּל הַכֹּל כִּנ"ל, וְק"ל

[NOTE Summary:

Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk explains the deeper spiritual meaning behind the verses about the fiery serpent, the copper serpent made by Moses, and the copper grating of the altar. These verses reveal an important principle about the different spiritual levels through which Divine influence enters the world.

The Torah states that God told Moses: “Make for yourself a fiery serpent and place it upon a banner” (Numbers 21:8). Rabbi Elimelech interprets the word שָׂרֵפ not simply as a snake but as a hint to righteous individuals who burn with holiness and fiery devotion to God. Their passion for Divine service resembles sparks of fire. Such individuals possess extraordinary spiritual power, and about them it is said, “You shall decree a matter and it shall be fulfilled for you” (Job 22:28). Their prayers and words carry tremendous spiritual influence.

The command to place the serpent “upon a banner” symbolizes elevating such a righteous person as a visible sign for the world. People should recognize that the deeds and actions of such a tzaddik are themselves miraculous. Through him, Divine blessing flows into the world. Therefore the verse continues, “Anyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.” The “bite” represents any deficiency or suffering that a person experiences, whether illness, lack of sustenance, or other needs such as life and children. By connecting to the righteous

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person and directing one's gaze toward him, even with the slightest spiritual awareness, Divine blessing can be drawn down to heal and restore what is lacking.

However, Moses understood that individuals who reach such a high level of holiness are rare. The truly elevated souls who burn with constant spiritual fire are few. Therefore Moses made "a copper serpent." Rashi explains that the Torah uses a play on words between serpent (נחש) and copper (נחושת). Rabbi Elimelech interprets this symbolically. The serpent represents the Satan or the evil inclination that rises and accuses. Copper, on the other hand, symbolizes a lower spiritual level. Moses introduced a system through which even a tzaddik who is not at the highest level could still serve as a channel of Divine influence.

The copper used in the Mishkan donations is connected to this idea. The sages teach that the copper of the Mishkan atoned for the sin connected to the serpent. In the spiritual sense this means that even a righteous person who has not reached the most elevated level can still overcome the forces of accusation and draw blessing into the world.

This idea is further hinted in the verse describing the altar: "He made for the altar a grating of network of copper" (Exodus 38:4). Rabbi Elimelech explains that the word מכביר can mean a sieve used for sifting. The imagery suggests examining the deeds of the highest righteous individuals and recognizing that such levels are rare. Since most people are not able to reach such heights, God arranged that spiritual influence could still be drawn into the world through other righteous individuals of more modest spiritual stature.

The copper network of the altar also symbolizes the reality that most people become caught in the "net" of the serpent, meaning the traps of the evil inclination. Because humanity struggles with these spiritual obstacles, God established a system of mercy whereby even lower levels of righteousness can serve as channels of Divine blessing and atonement. Through such tzaddikim, influence continues to flow into the world despite the imperfections of human beings.

Thus Moses did not truly change God's command. Rather, he revealed the deeper intention of creation itself. From the very beginning, the Divine plan included multiple levels of spiritual leadership so that blessing could reach all people, even when the world does not contain many perfectly righteous individuals.

Practical Takeaway:

This teaching encourages humility and hope at the same time. On one hand, it reminds a person that the highest spiritual levels are rare and difficult to attain. On the other hand, it teaches that Divine influence does not depend solely on the existence of perfect saints. Even individuals who have not reached the highest level can still serve as channels of goodness and blessing when their hearts are directed toward God.

A person should therefore strive to increase holiness within his own life while recognizing that every sincere effort to serve God contributes to the flow of blessing in the world.

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Chassidic Story:

A well-known story illustrates Rabbi Elimelech's outlook on spiritual leadership. Once a man came to Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk complaining that he could not reach the level of the great saints he had heard about. He felt discouraged, believing that since he was not a perfect tzaddik his efforts had little value.

Rabbi Elimelech responded with an analogy. A great palace is illuminated by many different lights. At the center may stand a large chandelier whose brilliance fills the entire hall. But along the walls there are also smaller lamps. If those lamps were extinguished, the palace would still become darker.

He explained that the world is similar. There are rare individuals whose holiness shines like a great chandelier. Yet the world also depends on many smaller lights. Every person who serves God sincerely adds another light to the palace.

The visitor left encouraged, understanding that even if one does not reach the highest spiritual level, one's service still contributes to bringing light and blessing into the world.

END NOTE]