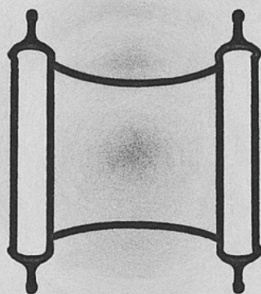


בס"ד

**Menachem Nachum
of Chernobyl
Me'or Einayim
Parshas Matos**



Dedicated To:

אילנה דבורה בת שרה מרים

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Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl

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מאמר א

Introduction

This profound discourse by **Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl**, known as the *Me'or Einayim*, delves into the spiritual essence of eating, fasting, and neder (vows). Reb Nachum, a primary disciple of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid of Mezritch, lived in 18th-century Ukraine and was the first Rebbe of the Chernobyl dynasty.

In this teaching on *Parshas Mattos*, he reveals how everyday acts such as eating and business dealings are opportunities to elevate divine sparks (ניצוצות), and how improper abstinence through vows may obstruct this mission. Grounded in Kabbalistic and Hasidic interpretation, this discourse reframes mundane life as sacred service, while warning of the spiritual cost of misguided asceticism.

And Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes, etc., “If a man vows a vow,” etc., “He shall not profane his word; according to all that comes out of his mouth he shall do.” And we will preface this with what our Sages of blessed memory said regarding what is written about the Nazirite: “And the priest shall atone for him for that which he sinned against the soul” (Bamidbar 6:11). Now, with which soul did he sin? Rather, this refers to one who afflicted himself by abstaining from wine.

וידבר משה אל ראשי המטות כו' איש כי ידר נדר כו' לא יחל דברו ככל היצא מפיו יעשה. ונקדים מה שאמרו רז"ל על מה שכתוב גבי נזיר: וכפר עליו הפה מן אשר חטא על הנפש (במדבר ו', י"א). וכי באיזו נפש חטא? אלא זה שצער עצמו מן היין.

To understand this matter: It is known that the entire world and its fullness was brought into being “By the word of Hashem, the heavens were made; and by the breath of His mouth, all their hosts” (Tehillim 33:6). For through the Divine speech, all reality came into being both great and small and it is this speech that sustains and enlivens them, as it is written (Nechemiah 9:6), “And You give life to all of them.” If not for the vitality within the thing, it would not exist at all.

להבין הענין דנודע כי כל העולם ומלואו (תהלים ל"ג, ו') בדבר ה' שמים נעשו וברוח פיו כל צבאם, כי על ידי הדבור נתהוו כל המציאות דבר קטן וגדול, והוא המקיימם ומחיה אותם, כמו שכתוב (נחמיה ט', ו'): ואתה מחיה את כלם. ולילא החיות שבתוך הדבר היה נעדר מן המציאות.

Rather, these are matters that have fallen through the shattering (shevirah) into this lowly world, as is known from the sin of Adam HaRishon, and also in generations after him many sparks of souls that have fallen are enclothed within things of this world, in types of food and drink and other such worldly items. There is nothing in this world that does not contain a holy spark that emanated from the speech of the Holy One, blessed be He, which gives life to that thing.

אלא שהם דברים שנפלו בשבירה בעולם השפל הזה, כנודע מחטא אדם הראשון, וגם בדורות שאחריו שפמה וכמה ניצוצות נשמות הנופלין מלובשים בדברים מהעולם הזה, במיני מאכל ומשתה וכיצא בהם ממיני העולם. שאין לה דבר מן העולם הזה שאין בו ניצוץ הקדוש שנאצל מדבורו של הקב"ה המחיה אותו הדבר.

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And this is the reason why in that thing which is sweet to the palate, as it is written (Tehillim 34:9), "Taste and see that Hashem is good" meaning: what you taste and see as good is Hashem, for it is the holy spark within that thing which is en clothed in it. As is evident to the eye: after a person eats food and vitality remains within him, the waste is expelled outside, without vitality it is a spoiled and lowly thing.

For the essential nourishment by which a person is sustained and receives strength is the holy spark within that food that is the good taste that the person senses in that food and drink. And therefore, at the moment a person eats the food, the spark unites with the vitality of the person who eats it, and it adds strength to him.

And when one believes with complete and perfect faith that this is spiritual nourishment that it is His Divinity, may He be blessed, en clothed within it and he sets his mind and heart upon the inwardness, and binds himself with all his vitality and intellect to that power and vitality that has been added to him through the holy spark that entered within him, to the Root of all, from which all vitality was emanated

Then he also brings back the holy spark which until now was in shattering and exile back to Him, may He be blessed. And He is greatly delighted by this, as is known. For this is the entire essence of our service: to draw near all the holy sparks from the kelipot, which are in the state of shattering, into the realm of holiness. This is the elevation of holiness from the shattering.

And especially so, when all his service and Torah which he speaks are motivated by the power and vitality he received from the taste of the food, which is the holy spark, as mentioned. And when he unites his speech with the Divine Speech, then the holy spark, which is also the Word of Hashem (as stated earlier), is elevated. For they are all fallen letters, as is known.

והוא הטעם שבדבר ההוא המתוק לחך, כמו שכתוב (תהלים ל"ד, ט'): טעמו וראו כי טוב ה', ר"ל מה שאתם טועמים ורואים כי טוב הוא ה', שהוא הניצוץ הקדוש שבדבר ההוא המלוכש בו. כמו שגראה לעין כי לאחר שאכל האדם המאכל ונשארה החיות בקרבו הפסלת נדחית לחוץ מבלי חיות, והוא דבר נפסד וגרוע.

כי עיקר המזון שהאדם ניזון ממנו ונוסף לו כח, הוא הניצוץ הקדוש שבמאכל ההוא, שהוא הטעם הטוב שהאדם טועם במאכל ובמשקה ההוא. ולכן בשעה שאוכל האדם המאכל נתיחד הניצוץ ההוא אל חיותו של האדם ההוא האוכלו, ונתוסף בו כח.

וכשמתאמין אמונה שלימה גמורה שזה מזון רוחני, שהוא אלהותו יתברך המלוכש שם, ונותן דעתו ולבו על פנימיותו, ומדבק את עצמו עם כל חיותו ומוחו עם זה הכח והחיות שנתוסף בו על ידי הניצוץ הקדוש שבא בקרבו לשרש הכל שממנו נאצלו כל החיות

אזי מביא גם כן הניצוץ הקדוש שהיה עד עכשו בשבירה ובגלות אליו יתברך, שהוא מתענג מאד מזה כנודע. כי זה כל עיקר עבודתנו: לקרב כל הניצוצות הקדושות מן הקליפות שהן בשבירה אל מקום הקדושה שמהיה עליה לקדושה מן השבירה.

ובפרט שכל עבודתו ותורתו שמדבר דברים מקמת זה הכח והחיות שקיבל מטעם המאכל שהוא הניצוץ הקדוש באמור. וכשמיוחד דבורו אל דבור הקדוש יש עליה גם לאותו הניצוץ, שהוא גם כן דבר ה' באמור לעיל, שהן הכל אותיות נפולין כנודע.

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Therefore, every servant of Hashem must look toward the inner aspect of the matter discussed that all his actions be for the sake of Heaven even in eating and drinking: to elevate the sparks of holiness from the shattering, which is like captivity and exile, into the Supernal Holiness.

And also afterward, when he serves Hashem with that power, as mentioned, and speaks words through that vitality he received when he inserts his powers into the words, and binds himself to the supernal speech there is an elevation of the fallen letters, which are the aforementioned holy sparks.

And so too with all matters in this world, such as business dealings and profit from earnings everything is the delight that comes to a person from them. These are the very sparks that belong to him, which are en clothed within that matter that came his way and pertains to him.

As explained by us in another place on this matter, based on our teaching regarding what is written: "In your place they will seat you, and from your own they will give you" (Yalkut Shimoni, Vayikra 26:738), for a person cannot touch what is prepared for his fellow.

Because the sparks that belong to the root of his soul cannot be elevated except through this person himself, to whom they are bound, for they are essentially of his own soul.

And this is the reason why one person must travel to this place and another to that place because the governance of the Creator, blessed be His Name, Who knows that the portions of sparks belonging to his soul are found there, en clothed in food or in some business matter.

And the Creator, blessed be He, arranges causes so that the person goes there, by placing in his heart a desire and clothing the cause in something that necessitates his travel there.

על כן צריך כל עובד ה' לראות על פנימיות הדבר האמור שיהיו כל מעשיו לשם שמים, באכילה ושתיה גם כן: להעלות ניצוצי הקדושה מן השבירה שהוא בחינת שביה וגלות אל הקדושה העליונה, על ידי הברכות שמברך וממליך את הבורא יתברך שמו על הדבר שהוא

וגם אחר זה שעובד ה' בפניו שהוא כאמור, ומדבר דבורים על ידי זה בכחותיו שמכניס בדבורים, ומדבק את עצמו לדבורים העליון יש עליה לאותיות הנפולין, שהן ניצוצות הקדושים הנ"ל.

וכן כל הדברים שבה העולם, כגון משא ומתן ורוח השכר הכל הוא התענוג שפא לו מזה. הן הן ניצוצות שלו, ששייכים לו, שמלוכשים בהן הדבר שנוצמן ששייכין לו.

במבואר אצלנו במקום אחד מזה, במאמרנו על-פי מה שכתוב: במקומה יושב ודמשך יתנו לה (ילקוט שמעוני, ויקרא תרצ"ח), כי אין אדם נוגע במין לחברו.

כי הניצוצות השייכים לשרש נשמתו אי אפשר להיות להן עליה כי אם על ידי זה האדם שהן שייכים לשרש נשמתו, שהן בחינת נפשו ממש.

ונהו הטעם שצריך כל אחד לסעד זה למקום פלוני וזה למקום פלוני, כי הנהגת הבורא יתברך שמו, שהוא יודע כי חלקי ניצוצות השייכים לנפשו הן שם מלוכשים במאכל או באיזה משא ומתן.

ומסבב הבורא ברוך הוא סיבות בעבור שילך האדם הלז שם, על ידי שנותן לו בלבו חשק, ומלביש לו הסיבה בדבר מה שייצטרך לסעד לשם.

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But the main intention is that he should eat there and drink or engage in business, and through this elevate those sparks, as this matter is explained at length by us in another place.

And therefore, each person must place his eyes and heart to look upon this that it is the secret of "In all your ways, know Him" (Mishlei 3:6), as we explained in another place. And when he gives his attention to this, he will know how the Creator, blessed be He, enlivens him with His very Divinity, as mentioned.

As it is written (Devarim 8:3): "For not by bread alone..." etc., "but by all that comes from the mouth of Hashem..." this refers to the aspect of speech enclothed in that thing, and in that bread.

It is known that all sustenance is referred to by the term "bread," as it is written (Daniel 5:1): "He served abundant bread."

If so, one who afflicts his soul and deprives himself from enjoying the world is called a sinner just as there is an opinion in the Talmud that "One who sits in fast is called a sinner."

For it too is service of Hashem, like Torah and prayer and tefillin and all the mitzvos, for with the Torah the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world, and with the Torah the world is conducted.

And in every matter there is Torah, as is known. And every believer must believe that there is no thing that is outside the service of the Blessed One, only that it must be according to the Torah.

And the Torah permits eating and drinking only that one must do so for the sake of the act, not for personal pleasure. And in this way, as stated, all is called "warm service."

Therefore he is called a sinner because he withholds the elevation of the holiness to its source, which is enclothed in those types of foods, by denying himself from them.

ועיקר הכוונה שיהיה כל שם וישתה או משא ומתן, ועל ידי זה יעלה הניצוצות ההם, כמבואר אצלנו זה הענין באריכות במקום אחר.

ועל כן צריך כל אחד לשום עיניו ולבו לראות על זה, שהוא סוד בכל דרכיך דעהו (משלי ג', ו'), כמו שכתוב אצלנו במקום אחר. וכשיתן דעתו לזה, ידע איך הבורא ברוך הוא מחיה אותו באלוהותו ממש, כצמור.

כמו שכתוב (דברים ח', ג'): כי לא על הלחם לבדו וגו' כי על כל מוצא פי ה' וגו' שהוא בחינת הדבור המלוכש בדבר שהוא ובלחם שהוא.

שנודע כי כל מזונות נקרא על שם לחם, כמו שכתוב (דניאל ה', א'): עבד לחם רב.

ואם כן, מי שמצער נפשו ומסגף את עצמו לבדו להנות מן העולם נקרא חוטא, כמו שיש דעה בש"ס: היושב בתענית נקרא חוטא.

כי הוא גם כן עבודת ה', כמו תורה ותפלה ותפלין וכל המצוות. כי באוריינתא ברא קודשא-ברוך-הוא עלמא, ובאוריינתא מתנהיג עלמא.

ובכל דבר יש תורה כנודע. וכל מאמין צריך להאמין שאין שום דבר שיהיה חוץ לעבודתו ותפלה, רק שהוא על פי התורה.

אשר התורה התירה לאכול ולשתות, רק שיעשה לשם פועלן ולא להנאת עצמו. רק על דרך האמור נקרא הכל עבודה חמה.

ולכן נקרא חוטא, שמחסר עלית הקדושה לשרשה המלוכש במיני המזונות ההם, שהוא מונע את עצמו מהם.

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Even though he does not have complete understanding of this in perfect wholeness, nevertheless, he still effects an impact through it. As the Baal Shem Tov, of blessed memory (נבג"מ), said: even a non-Jew who ate a type of food in which a holy spark was en clothed and through the power of that eating performed a service for a Jew there is a certain elevation for that spark, even though it is not to the same degree as when a Jew eats it.

אף שאין לו דעת שלם לזה בשלימות הגמור, מכל מקום הוא עושה פעולה מזה. כמאמר הבעל שם טוב נבג"מ: כי אכלו עכו"ם שאכל מין מאכל שמלופש בו ניצוץ הקדוש, ובכח האכילה ההיא עשה שירות לישראל נעשית עליה בצד מה לניצוץ ההוא, אף שאינה כל כך כמו בישאל שאכלו.

Come and see how far these matters reach! For in truth, one who lacks this awareness his Torah and prayer are likewise not in complete wholeness.

בוא וראה עד היכן הדברים מגיעים! כי באמת מי שאין לו דעת בזה, הלא גם תורתו ותפלתו של זה הן גם כן כך שאינן בשלימות גמור.

And nevertheless, he still studies and prays for in any case they are still called Torah and prayer, relative to his level of understanding and they are still considered service.

ואף על פי כן הוא לומד ומתפלל, כי מכל מקום הן נקראין תורה ותפלה לפי ערך דעתו, ומכל מקום נקרא עבודה.

So too with eating and drinking the necessary acts are also considered service. For even on the simple level, he recites many blessings and coronates the Creator, blessed be He, over the foods. This too is service.

כן באכילה ושתיה ההכרחי גם כן עבודה. כי אכלו על פי פשט הוא מברך כמה ברכות וממליך הבורא. ברוך-הוא על המאכלים הוא גם כן עבודה.

Only, one must progress from level to level, just as in prayer one must ascend step by step so too in understanding, one must advance over time.

רק שצריך ללכת ממדרגה למדרגה. כמו שצריך ללכת בתפלה ממדרגה למדרגה ללכת בשכל יותר. מתמזן לזמן.

The general principle is: they are really all one thing for all is the service of Hashem.

כללו של דבר שהן רק דבר אחד, כי הוא הכל עבודת ה'.

Only, when his eating is not "warm service," then at that moment his Torah and prayer are likewise not "warm service."

רק שבעת שאין אכילתו עבודה חמה כך באותו העת אין תורתו ותפלתו עבודה חמה.

And nevertheless, they are still considered service for that moment. The approach is to ascend to a higher level and greater awareness, and become accustomed to bringing satisfaction to the Creator, blessed be He, in all things that are manifestations of His Divinity. Understand this well.

ומכל מקום לעבודה נחשבין לפי העת ההוא. באפן שילך במדרגה יתרה ודעת יתרון, וירגיל שיעשה נחת רוח לבורא יתברך בכל הדברים שהן צמצום אלהותו יתברך והבן.

For that which is stated in the Gemara that "one who sits in fast is called holy" (Taanis 11a) this too is true. For both opinions are true.

כי מה שכתוב בגמרא: היושב בתענית נקרא קדוש (תענית י"א א') הוא גם כן אמת. ששני הדעות הן אמת.

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For the greatness of the level of fasting when done in perfect completeness, as it must be is indeed a very lofty level and a great and complete unification, as is known: that it is the unification of Tiferes and Malchus.

These are the letters of the word תַּעֲנִית (fasting) which can be read as “ת”ת עני,” meaning Tiferes and Aniy (poverty), for that is the name of the attribute of Malchus, as is known, that “she has nothing of her own.”

Nevertheless, because such fasting requires great intellectual capacities not every mind can bear this. For the unification is only complete when the matter is expanded inwardly beyond its external form.

Therefore, it is better for him to direct his awareness to fulfill “In all your ways, know Him” (Mishlei 3:6), which is easier for him. Understand this.

And this is the meaning of “And for which soul did he sin? Rather, this is the interpretation of ‘soul’ that he afflicted himself by refraining from wine.”

For he diminished and withheld the soul that was enclothed in that wine from being brought near to holiness and it remained mundane, so to speak.

And this is [the meaning of] “When a man shall vow a vow to Hashem... to bind a bond upon his soul” that he binds his soul by this, preventing it from drawing close to holiness, as above.

That is, the soul enclothed in that matter, which pertains to the portion of his soul he could have connected and elevated it above, but now he forbade it from being brought close.

Therefore the Torah says, “He shall not profane his word” for it is the utterance of the mouth of Hashem, the spark enclothed there he should not leave it mundane.

Rather, “According to all that proceeds from the mouth of Hashem” which is a lofty matter, and according to the full intention of the Creator, blessed be He, in the spark that He enclothed in that food and drink “he shall do and rectify.”

כי גדל מדרגת התענית באמת, בשלימות הגמור הצריך לזה הוא מדרגה גדולה מאד, ויחוד הגדול והגמור, כנודע: שהוא יחוד תפארת ומלכות.

שהן אותיות תענית שהוא ת”ת עני, כי כן נקראת מדת המלכות כנודע: דלית לה מגרמה כלום.

מכל מקום, מפני שצריך מוחין גדולים לזה לאו כל מוחא סביל דא, שיהא היחוד הגמור על ידי התפשטות הדבר מחיצוניותו.

על כן טוב לו שיתן דעתו לקיים בכל דרכיו דעהו (משלי ג, ו') שהוא יותר נקל לו. והבן.

וזהו: ובאיזו נפש חטא? אלא זה פרוש נפש: שציער עצמו מן היין

שחסר ומנע הנפש המלוכש ביינו ההוא מבלי שיוקרב אל הקדושה, ונשארו חולין בביכול

וזהו איש כי ידר נדר לה' כו' לאסר אסר על נפשו שאוסר על ידי זה על נפשו לבדלי קרבה אל הקדושה, כנ"ל

דהיינו: הנפש המלוכש בדבר ההוא ששייך לחלק נפשו שהיה יכול לקשרו ולקרבו למעלה ועכשו אסרו מבלי שיקרב

לקד אמה תורה: לא יחל דברו שהוא מוצא פי ה', הניצוץ המלוכש שם אל ושאירנו חולין

רק ככל היוצא מפיו של הבורא יתברך שהוא דבר גבוה, ובכל פנות הבורא פרוש-הוא פניצוץ הנה שיהלכישו שם במאכל ובמשמה ההיא יעשה ויתקן

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Therefore, our Sages of blessed memory said: "Whoever vows it is as if he built a private altar (*bamah*), and one who fulfills it it is as if he offered upon it a sacrifice at a time when private altars were forbidden" (Nedarim 22a).

For in truth, the one who elevates the sparks through his eating this is called a *korban* (sacrifice), for he brings close and unites the holy spark to its source.

As it is said: "A person's table atones for him" (Chagigah 27a) for in truth, there is no greater *korban* than this, which is a complete unification.

And therefore it is called "shulchan" (table) from the word *shlichut* (mission), because those sparks that belong to his soul are "sent" to him in the foods that come into his hands on the table upon which he eats so that he may elevate them.

And therefore it is called "the table that is before Hashem" (Yechezkel 41:22), for it brings the spark close before Hashem, as stated.

But not so one who vows for he does not offer the *korban* before Hashem. Even if his intention is for the sake of Heaven, nonetheless, it is as if he brought it upon a *bamah*, not *lifnei Hashem* (before Hashem). Understand this.

Blessed is Hashem forever, amen and amen.

[NOTE Summary:

The discourse begins with the verse "איש כי ידר נדר" and the concept of *neder* (vows), focusing on how the Torah warns against nullifying one's speech. Reb Nachum explains that every physical object in this world contains divine vitality sparks of Godliness that fell into the material realm due to the shattering of vessels (שבירת הכלים). These sparks are sustained by the speech of Hashem, the creative utterance that formed the world and all that is in it.

When a person eats or engages in worldly activity with the proper awareness, they draw these sparks back to their divine source. Taste and physical pleasure are not incidental they are the experience of the divine spark itself. Eating is therefore not just permissible it is a form of *avodah* (service), and the food itself is a messenger bringing the soul its assigned sparks.

Abstaining from food via vows or fasting, when done without deep awareness and intention, can leave these sparks trapped. The Gemara says "היושב בתענית נקרא חוטא" (he who fasts is called a sinner), and yet in another

לכך אמרו רז"ל: כל הנודר באילו בנה במה, וכל המקיימו באילו הקריב עליה קרבן בשעת איסור (הבמות נדרים כ"ב א').

פי באמת, זה שמעלה הניצוצות על ידי אכילתו נקרא קרבן, שמקרב ומיחד ניצוץ הקדש לשרשו.

כמו שנאמר: שלחנו של אדם מכפר עליו (חגיגה כ"ז א'), פי באמת אין לה קרבן גדול מזה, שהוא יחוד גמור.

ולכך נקרא שלחן מלשון שליחות, שהניצוצות ההם ששוכים לנפש ונשלחין אליו, שיעלה אותן במאכלים הבאים לידי על השלחן שאוכל עליו.

ולכן נקרא השלחן אשר לפני ה' (יחזקאל מ"א, כ"ב), שמקרב לפני ה' באמור.

מה שאין כן הנודר שאינו מקריב הקרבן לפני ה', אף שהוא מכון לשם שמים מכל מקום הני באילו הקריב לה' בבמה ולא לפני ה'. והבן.

ברוך ה' לעולם, אמן ואמן.

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place, it says he is holy. Both are true: fasting done with complete yichud (unification of Tiferes and Malchus) is extremely elevated, but without deep inner knowledge, it causes spiritual loss.

The climax is the reinterpretation of the neder. To forbid something to oneself may seem pious, but in truth, it might prevent one's soul from elevating its assigned spark. Therefore, the Torah warns, "לֹא יִהְיֶה דְבָרֶךָ" do not render the utterance of Hashem within that object as mundane. Instead, fulfill "כָּכֹל הֵיוּצֵא מִפִּי" bring out the divine purpose embedded in every spark.

The true korban (sacrifice) is one's table. As the Gemara says, "שולחנו של אדם מכפר עליו," the table is the altar upon which the divine service of eating takes place. Hence, one who makes a neder is compared to one who brings a sacrifice outside the designated Temple space he diverts the offering from being לה' לפני ה' to just לה', bypassing the divine intent embedded in the material world.

Practical Takeaway:

Serve Hashem not only in prayer and Torah, but in every bite and every moment of business or life. Elevate the sparks by eating with awareness, blessing with intention, and viewing every interaction with the world as a sacred mission. Avoid unnecessary vows or fasting unless you're certain it leads to deeper divine connection. The goal is not abstinence, but redemption from within the world.

Chassidic Story:

Reb Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl once stayed with a wealthy Chassid who served him a lavish meal. When asked how such opulence aligned with holiness, the Rebbe replied: "These dishes are full of sparks waiting to return to their Source. The moment you brought them to me, they sang." He explained that each food has its moment and person it travels until the right soul uplifts it through mindful consumption. "This is my korban," he said, "and your table is the altar." (Source: *Shivchei HaBaal Shem Tov*, retold by later Chernobyler descendants)

TPX (Therapeutic-Psychological Integration)

This discourse by Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl offers a radical reframing of the boundary between spirituality and physicality. At its heart lies a transformative therapeutic insight: that healing and divine connection are not found in escape from the world, but in immersion within it when guided by mindful awareness.

The soul, says Reb Nachum, is on a mission to redeem pieces of its own self scattered throughout the material world. Every taste, every deal, every moment of physical engagement may contain a spark that "belongs" to your soul and is waiting to be brought home. This reframes physical desire not as something to suppress, but as an encoded signal guiding you to your soul's lost fragments.

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Psychologically, this speaks to those burdened by guilt or confusion around pleasure, body, and worldly engagement. Instead of splitting body and soul, Reb Nachum suggests integration. The experience of pleasure taste, delight, desire is not inherently selfish or sinful. It may be a divine signal. The spark within the food the pleasure, the sweetness, the vitality is the trace of the Divine in exile.

However, the discourse also cautions: without awareness, this mission is missed. Just as trauma can disconnect a person from their body, vows or rigid asceticism can spiritually exile a person from the divine mission embedded in their lived experience. The person who fasts, who abstains out of fear or guilt, may be bypassing the very healing and purpose embedded in their assigned path. Their soul's spark remains "חולין" mundane, unredeemed.

This has profound implications for trauma survivors, people recovering from disembodiment, or those healing religious guilt. It teaches: you are allowed to engage. You are *meant* to engage. But with consciousness. The goal is not to escape the world, but to become so deeply present within it that you elevate it from the inside.

One who eats, blesses, works, and lives with such awareness turns their table into an altar. The body becomes a sanctuary. The meal becomes a korban. And the scattered, hidden parts of the self the sparks are finally brought home.

Story

In 1944, Viktor Frankl a Jewish neurologist and psychiatrist was deported to Auschwitz. Before the war, he had developed a therapeutic approach called logotherapy, rooted in the belief that human beings are driven by a search for meaning, not merely pleasure or power. During his time in the camps, Frankl observed that those who could find meaning even in suffering were more likely to survive.

One evening, a fellow prisoner who had lost hope confided in Frankl that he could no longer find a reason to live. In that moment, Frankl did not try to cheer him with false optimism. Instead, he asked him to describe his favorite memories meals with his wife, the taste of warm soup, a quiet afternoon reading. As the man spoke, tears welled in his eyes. He realized that even within suffering, there had been beauty. That spark of memory grounded him. The next morning, he joined the labor detail with a new sense of purpose.

Frankl later wrote:

"Even in the concentration camp, we were able to discover the value of life in a bowl of watery soup shared with a friend."

(Source: *Man's Search for Meaning*, Viktor E. Frankl)

This moment encapsulates Reb Nachum's core insight: even the simplest taste when received with presence can become a spiritual act. The Divine spark isn't only found in lofty meditations, but in the hidden sweetness of everyday experience. The meal, the memory, the life itself *they are the altar*. **END NOTE]**

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מאמר ב

Introduction

This discourse is from **Reb Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl**, known as the **Meor Einayim**, a primary disciple of the **Maggid of Mezritch** and spiritual successor to the teachings of the **Baal Shem Tov**. Living in the 18th century in Ukraine (1730–1797), Reb Nachum emphasized Divine immanence and unity, teaching that God is present within all aspects of reality, especially through speech, thought, and mitzvos. This maamar, based on Parshas Matos, explores the mystical mechanics of speech, its Divine origin, and how safeguarding one's words connects a person to the Infinite Light. It emphasizes the transformative power of pure speech, the danger of defilement, and the sacred responsibility of human articulation as a channel for Divine presence.

“And Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes,” etc. It is known what our Sages of blessed memory said in the Talmud: “And Elokim spoke all these words, saying” (Shemos 20:1) this teaches that the entire Torah was said in a single utterance something which the mouth cannot articulate, nor the ear hear until Israel said to Moshe: “You speak with us and we will hear,” etc. (Shemos 20:16).

וידבר משה אל ראשי המטות וגו'. נודע מה שאמרו רז"ל בש"ס: וידבר אלהים את כל הדברים האלה לאמר (שמות כ', א') מלמד שכל התורה כלה נאמרה בדבור אחד, מה שאין הפה יכול לדבר, ואין האזן יכולה לשמע עד שאמרו ישראל אל משה: דבר (אתה) עמנו ונשמעה וגו' (שמות כ', ט"ז).

To understand this behold, the Blessed Creator surely knew that Israel did not have the strength or capacity to hear in such a manner, where the entire Torah was included in one utterance. If so, for what purpose was it said in this way?

להבין זה: הלא הבורא יתברך שמו ידע שאין כח ויכלת ביד ישראל לשמע בדרך הזו שנקללה כל התורה בדבור אחד. ואם כן, לאיזו פונה נאמרה בדבור אחד?

But the truth is as follows: It is known that the Torah was given in general and in detail: the general requires the particular, and the particular requires the general.

אבל האמת הוא כי נודע שהתורה נתנה בכלל ופרט. הכלל צריך לפרט, והפרט צריך לכלל.

For the secret of the giving of the Torah is [as described] in *Sefer Yetzirah*: “He established them in the mouth” that is, the lights of the twenty-two letters of the Torah were implanted in the human mouth as an inner and holy speech from His holiness, may He be blessed.

והוא כי סוד נתינת התורה הוא בספר יצירה: קבעו בפה שאורות כ"ב אותיות התורה נקבעו בפה האדם, בבחינת דבור פנימי וקדוש מקדושתו יתברך.

This refers to the intellect and holy vitality from Him, may He be blessed. And this is the difference between Israel, His close people, and the nations of the world: though they also have speech, theirs is only external speech as is known.

שהוא השכל והחיות הקדוש ממנו יתברך. וזהו ההפרש בין ישראל עם קרובו לבין אומות העולם: שאף שיש להם גם כן דבור אינו אלא דבור חיצוני, כנודע.

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This is what is called “nefesh chayah” (a living soul) as the Targum Onkelos translates the verse (Bereishis 2:7): “And man became a living soul” as “a speaking spirit.” For this is the essential holy vitality within a person, through which he attaches himself above, as is known.

וזה נקרא נפש חיה, בתרגום אונקלוס על הפסוק (בראשית ב', ז'): ויהי האדם לנפש חיה לרוח ממללא, שהוא עיקר החיות הקדוש שבתוך האדם, ובו מדבק את עצמו למעלה, בנוגע

And this is the essence of the giving of the Torah in its general form: that the general speech was implanted in the human mouth.

וזהו עיקר נתינת התורה בדרך כלל שנקבע הדבור הכללי בפה האדם

And this general [capacity] exists in every single Jew even in the ignorant person. Only, the general must be explained: one must study Torah in its details.

והכלל הזה יש בכל אחד ואחד מישראל, אפילו עם הארץ. רק שהכלל צריך לפרוש צריך ללמוד התורה בפירוטה.

But were it not that the general, holy, inner speech was implanted first, a person could never come to complete wholeness or to truly understand the Torah.

אבל לולא שנתן הדבור הכללי הקדוש בפנימיות תחילה לא היה האדם יכול לבוא לידי שלימות גמור, ולידי הבנת התורה באמתה.

And through the five organs of articulation of the mouth, in their inwardness, one can reach the details, and guide himself even in matters of this world according to Torah.

ועל ידי ה' מוצאות הפה בפנימיותו יוכל להגיע אל הפרט, ולהנהיג את עצמו בכל דבר, אפילו מדברי עולם הזה, בתורה.

For it is known that the secret of speech is the governance of the world, as in the word “davar,” which also means leadership or control as in the verse (Tehillim 47:4): “He shall subdue peoples under us,” (*y'daber amim tachteinu*), as is known.

פי נודע סוד הדבור הוא הנהגת העולם, כלשון דבר שהוא לשון הנהגה, כמו (תהלים מ"ז, ד'): ידבר עמים תחתינו, בנוגע

This is the secret of the final ה' of the Divine Name, which corresponds to the aspect of *Adnus* (אדנות), meaning “Master of the world,” for the entire governance of the world is through this attribute.

שהוא סוד הה' אחרונה של שם המיוחד, שהוא בחינת אדות, שהוא אדון כל הארץ שכל הנהגת העולם על ידי מדה זו

Therefore, every dimension and function in the world, in all its aspects, is through speech for example, commerce and all such matters, for speech is the very instrument through which all beings were created.

ולכן כל בחינה ונהגת העולם בכל עניניו הכל על ידי הדבור, כגון משא ומתן וכל פיוצא בזה שהוא הדבור שבו נבראו כל הנבראים

As it is written (Tehillim 33:6): “By the word of Hashem the heavens were made...”

כמו שכתוב (תהלים ל"ג, ו'): בדבר ה' שמים נעשו גו.

And this is the aspect of the five organs of articulation (*hei motza'os ha-peh*) which is Torah as it is said (Mishlei 8:30): “And I was by Him as a craftsman” (*emun*), which is “the utterance of the mouth of Hashem.”

והוא בחינת ה' מוצאות שהוא התורה, כמו שכתוב: נאמנה אצלו אמון (משלי ח', ל') שהוא מוצא פי ה'

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For He, may He be blessed, flows His light through the five articulations. The Infinite Light, blessed be He, flows into the letters, and into all that was created through the letters which includes all the worlds and their fullness.

שהוא יתברך שופע בה' המוצאות, שאור אין-סוף ברוך-הוא הוא משפע באותיות, ובכל מה שנוברא באותיות שהוא כל העולמות ומלאם.

For the Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, are one, and the power of the Creator is present in His creation.

פי אורייתא וקדשא-ברוך-הוא חד, וכח הפועל בנפעל.

In every thing there is the hidden force of the five articulations, and the Light of Life Ein Sof, blessed be He is flowing in hidden form within the letters, which are en clothed and concealed in that object.

ויש בכל דבר ה' מוצאות בהעלם, וחי החיים אור אין-סוף ברוך-הוא שופע בהעלם האותיות המלוכשות ונעלמות בדבר ההוא.

Especially in Torah: the Infinite Light flows into the letters.

ובפרט בתורה אור אין-סוף ברוך-הוא שופע באותיות.

A person must be careful not to defile the five articulations that were implanted in his mouth, for the Light of Ein Sof flows also into these articulations, which are the general giving of the Torah.

וצריך האדם שלא יטמא ה' מוצאות שנקבעו בפיו, שגם בן אור האין-סוף שופע בה' מוצאות האלו, שהן נתינת התורה הכללית.

He should guard his mouth and tongue from evil, that he not defile them through false speech, gossip, slander, and idle words so as not to sever the articulations implanted in his mouth from the Source of Life, the Light of Ein Sof, as mentioned.

וישמר פיו ולשונו מרע, לבלתי יטמאם בדברי שקר ולשונו הרע ורכילות ודברים בטלים כדי שלא יפריד ה' מוצאות שנקבעו בפיו מחי החיים אור אין-סוף ברוך-הוא, כאמור.

And when one guards himself from defiling his mouth, it will be easy for him to attach himself in his occupation with Torah and prayer to the letters that were implanted in his mouth and to bind himself to the Light of Ein Sof, blessed be He, that flows within the letters, since he has not become separated from Him and has guarded his speech.

וכשישמר מלטמא פיו, אז יהיה נקל לו לדבק את עצמו בעסק תורה ותפלה באותיות שנקבעו בפיו, לדבק את עצמו לאור אין-סוף ברוך-הוא השופע בתוך האותיות, מאחר שלא נפרד ממנו יתברך ושמר הדבור.

As we said elsewhere regarding the verse (Tehillim 58:2), "Is it indeed mute righteousness you speak?" What is the craft (*umanuso*) of a person in this world? Let him make himself like a mute. Might one think even regarding words of Torah? Therefore it says, "Righteousness you shall speak."

כאמור אצלנו במקום אחר על מה שכתוב (תהלים נ"ח, ב'): האמנם אדם צדק תדבקון מה אומנותו של אדם בעולם הזה? ישים עצמו כאלם. יכול אף לדברי תורה בן? תלמוד לומר: צדק תדברון.

For when the Jewish person believes that the speech implanted in his mouth is nothing less than the giving of the Torah and the indwelling of His Shechinah, may He be blessed who dwells below through the opening of the body, which is speech via the five organs of articulation

פי כשיאמין האדם הישראלי שזה הדבור שנקבע בפיו אינו רק בחינת נתינת התורה ובחינת שכנינתו יתברך השוכן בתחתונים על ידי פתח הגוף שהוא הדבור בה' מוצאות

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and that He, blessed be He, flows and enlivens that very speech in his mouth, and the Divine Name *Adnus* (אדנות) that dwells within him is what speaks as it says (Tehillim 51:17): "My Lord, open my lips"

that the meaning is that *Adnus* opens my lips so they may speak words animated by vitality flowing from Him this being the aspect of *Adnus* as mentioned

then surely, if he believed this with perfect faith, he would know that on his own, he is like a mute and that it is He, may He be blessed, who is, so to speak, speaking these words of Torah and prayer.

And he would not act for his own sake at all, but would attach himself to His great light, and would yearn with fiery love to connect himself to the primal speech from which all speech emanates.

All the more so, he would never speak words disconnected from Him, may He be blessed such as gossip, slander, and the like.

And even in necessary worldly matters, he would not be separated from his cleaving to Him, for even there it is primordial speech, hidden since all was created through it, as mentioned.

And his speech would not be something that separates him for his speech would not be mundane, as is known.

And this is [the meaning of] "What is a person's craft in this world?" even in all matters of this world, he should make himself like a mute: that on his own, he is mute, through his faith that speech is the *Adnus*, the Shechinah, may He be blessed, who dwells in his five articulations, as mentioned.

Might one think this also applies to words of Torah? The explanation is that it is known: the secret that the shell precedes the fruit meaning, a person must ascend from level to level.

And at first, when one sets his heart to study Hashem's Torah even though he is not yet at the level to study *lishmah* (for the sake of Heaven), meaning for the sake of the Name, the five articulations (ה' המוצאות), which is the primordial speech

וְשֶׁהוּא יְתַבְּרֶה שׁוֹפֵעַ וּמְחִיָּה אֶת הַדְּבֹר הַהוּא שֶׁבִּפִּי, וְהָאֲדוּת שֶׁשׁוֹכֵן בְּתוֹכוֹ הוּא הַמְּדַבֵּר. כִּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב (שִׁם נ"א, י"ז): אֲדֹנָי שְׁפֹתַי תִּפְתָּח

שֶׁהַפִּנּוּחַ: שֶׁהָאֲדוּת תִּפְתָּח שְׁפֹתַי, שֶׁיִּדְבְּרוּ הַדְּבֹרִים בְּחַיִּית הַנִּשְׁפָּע מִמֶּנּוּ שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת אֲדוּת כְּנ"ל

בְּדֹאֵי אִם הִנֵּה מֵאֲמִין זֹאת בְּאַמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה, הִנֵּה יוֹדֵעַ שֶׁמִּצַּד עֲצָמוֹ הוּא כְּאֵלִם, וְהוּא יְתַבְּרֶה כְּבִיכּוֹל הַמְּדַבֵּר דְּבֹרִים אֵלּוּ בְּתוֹרָה וּתְפִלָּה

וְלֹא הִנֵּה עוֹשֶׂה בְּשִׁבִּיל עֲצָמוֹ כָּלֵל, וְהִנֵּה מְדַבֵּק אֶת עֲצָמוֹ לְאוֹרוֹ הַגָּדוֹל, וְהִנֵּה מִשְׁתַּוְּקֵם בְּאַהֲבָה עִנְיָה לְדַבֵּק אֶת עֲצָמוֹ אֶל הַדְּבֹר הַקָּדוֹם שֶׁמִּמֶּנּוּ נִאֲצָלוּ כָּל הַדְּבֹרִים

וְכָל שֶׁכֵּן שֶׁלֹּא הִנֵּה מְדַבֵּר דְּבָרִים נִפְרָדִים מִמֶּנּוּ יְתַבְּרֶה, כִּנֵּן דְּבָרֵי לְשׁוֹן הָרַע וְרִכִּילוֹת

וְאִפְלוּ בְּכָל דְּבָרֵי עוֹלָם הִנֵּה הֶהָכְרָחִים, לֹא הִנֵּה מִפְּסָק מְדַבְּקוֹתוֹ יְתַבְּרֶה, שֶׁגַּם שִׁם הוּא דְּבֹר הַקָּדוֹם נִעֲלָם, מֵאַחֵר נִשְׁבּוּ נִבְרָאוּ כְּאִמּוֹר

וְלֹא הִנֵּה דְּבֹרוֹ מִפְּרִידוֹ, שֶׁלֹּא הִנֵּה שִׁיחָתוֹ שִׁיחָת חוּלִין, כְּנוֹדָע

וְנִהוּ מֵה אֻמְנוֹתוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם בְּעוֹלָם הַנֶּה? אִפְלוּ בְּכָל דְּבָרֵי עוֹלָם הַנֶּה, יַעֲשֶׂה עֲצָמוֹ כְּאֵלִם שֶׁמִּצַּד עֲצָמוֹ יִהְיֶה כְּאֵלִם, עַל יְדֵי הָאֲמָנָה שֶׁהַדְּבֹר הוּא הָאֲדוּת, שֶׁכִּינָתוֹ יְתַבְּרֶה, הַשׁוֹכֵן בְּה' מוֹצֵאֹת שְׁלוֹ, כְּנ"ל

יְכוֹל אִף לְדַבְּרֵי תוֹרָה? פְּרוּשׁ: דְּנוּדָע סוּד קְלִיפָה קוֹדֶמֶת לְפָרִי שִׁצְרִיף הָאָדָם לְלֶכֶת מִמְּדֻרְגָּה לְמְדֻרְגָּה

וּמִקּוֹדֶם שְׁנוּתוֹ לְבוֹ לְלִמּוּד תוֹרָתוֹ יְתַבְּרֶה, אִף שֶׁאִין בּוֹ עֲדִין מְדֻרְגָּה זֶה שֶׁיִּלְמֹד לְשִׁמָּה, שֶׁהוּא לְשֵׁם ה' הַמוֹצֵאֹת, שֶׁהוּא דְּבֹר הַקָּדוֹם

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he should not say, "I will not study at all," but rather "Righteousness you shall speak." For from [learning] not for its own sake, one comes to [learning] for its own sake.

לא יאמר: לא אֶלְמַד כָּלֵל, רק צֶדֶק תִּדְבְּרוּ, כִּי מִתּוֹךְ שְׁלֹא לְשִׁמָּה בָּא לְשִׁמָּה.

For in any case, it is still Torah. And according to his intellect at that moment, so too is the contraction of His Divinity to him at that time.

כִּי מִכָּל מְקוֹם הִיא תּוֹרָה. וְכִפִּי שְׁכָלוֹ בְּזִמְנֵה הָהוּא כֵּן צִמְצוּם אֱלֹהֵת לֹו בְּזִמְנֵה הָהוּא.

Only, he should not remain on one level. Later, even his earlier learning will be repaired. Understand this. We have explained this at length elsewhere.

רק שְׁלֹא יַעֲמֹד עַל מַדְרָגָה אַחַת. אַחֵר כִּף יִתְקַן גַּם לִימּוּדוֹ הַקָּדוּם. וְהֵבִן. וְכָבֵר בְּאַרְבָּנוּ זֶה בְּמִקְוֶה אַחֵר. בְּאַרְיִכוֹת.

And therefore, by every mitzvah it is said: "And Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to the Children of Israel" to draw down the primordial speech, the aspect of ה', to Israel in a general way.

וְלָכֵן בְּכָל מִצְוָה וּמִצְוָה נֶאֱמַר: וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁהוּא לְהַמְשִׁיךְ הַדְּבִיר הַקָּדוּם, בְּחִינַת ה', לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּדֶרֶךְ כָּלֵל.

For all of this is the essence of the giving of the Torah that the aspect of ה', which is His very Name, and "a portion of Hashem," should be drawn and flow into the Children of Israel through the speech that emanates from the primordial speech, as is known.

כִּי כָל זֶה הוּא עֵיקַר נְתִינַת הַתּוֹרָה: שְׂבִיחַת ה', שֶׁהוּא שְׁמוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ מִמֶּשׁ, וְחֵלֶק ה' יִנְמֹשׁ וַיִּשְׁפַּע לְתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל יְדֵי הַדְּבִיר שֶׁנֶּאֱצַל מִן הַדְּבִיר הַקָּדוּם, כְּנוֹדָע.

So long as he acts as stated not, God forbid, separating the speech from Him, may He be blessed but rather drawing himself close with all that exists in the world, in which is found the aspect of the five articulations, and with all speech, upwards to the Light of the Infinite, may He be blessed since he has not separated the speech from the Light of the Infinite that enlivens it, as mentioned

וּבְלִבֵּד שְׂעִיעֵשָׁה כְּאִמּוֹר שְׁלֹא יִפְרִיד חֵס וְשְׁלוֹם הַדְּבִיר מִמֶּנּוּ יִתְבָּרַךְ, רק שִׁיגְרֵב אֶת עֲצָמוֹ עִם כָּל מֶה שֶׁבְּעוֹלָם, שִׁשִּׁם בְּחִינַת ה' מוֹצְאוֹת, וְעִם כָּל הַדְּבִירִים לְמַעַלָּה לְאוֹר אֵינֶי-סוֹף בְּרוּךְ-הוּא מֵאַחֵר שֶׁאֵינוֹ מִפְּרִיד הַדְּבִיר מֵאוֹר אֵינֶי-סוֹף הַמְחִיָּהוּ, כְּאִמּוֹר

then, in every thing he sees, he will perceive the goodness within it. And there will be no partition separating him from the good.

אֲזִי בְּכָל דָּבָר שֶׁיִּרְאֶה יִרְאֶה הַטּוֹב שֶׁבַּדְּבָר, וְלֹא יִהְיֶה מַחְיָצָה מִפְּסָקָת בֵּינֵנוּ לְבֵין הַטּוֹב.

As David HaMelech, peace be upon him, said: "You supported my right hand" (Tehillim 18:36), and as it is written (Tehillim 16:5): "You support my portion" as our Sages interpreted: that He, blessed be He, supports His hand and shows the person the good portion.

כְּמוֹ שֶׁאֱמַר דָּוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ עָלָיו הַשְּׁלוֹם: תִּמְכֶּת בְּיָד יְמִינִי, וְכְמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב (תְּהִלִּים ט"ז, ה'): אַתָּה תוֹמֵךְ גּוֹרְלִי, כְּדֶרֶשֶׁת רַז"ל עַל זֶה שֶׁהוּא יִתְבָּרַךְ תוֹמֵךְ יָדוֹ וּמוֹרָה לְאָדָם חֵלֶק הַטּוֹב.

As it is written (Devarim 30:19), "And you shall choose life" for through not being separated from Him, may He be blessed, by not having interrupted the speech from Him, may He be blessed

כְּפִשׁ"כָּתוּב (דְּבָרִים ל', י"ט): וּבַחֲרַתְּ בַחַיִּים, כִּי עַל יְדֵי שֶׁהוּא אֵינוֹ מִפְּרִד מִמֶּנּוּ יִתְבָּרַךְ, שְׁלֹא הִפְסִיק הַדְּבִיר מִמֶּנּוּ יִתְבָּרַךְ.

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then the Creator, may He be blessed, who is the Infinite Light,
Life of life, flows into his five articulations.

אם כן הבורא ברוך־הוא, שהוא אור אין־סוף, חי
החיים שופע בתוך ה' מוצאות שלו

And in everything he sees among the created beings, he sees the
hidden good within them

ובכל מקום שהוא רואה בנבראים רואה הטוב הגנוז
בהם

which is also the Light of the letters through which the created
beings are created.

שהוא גם כן אור האותיות שבהן נבראים הנבראים

If so, then surely He, may He be blessed, supports his hand so
that he will choose life

ואם כן, בודאי הוא יתברך תומך ידו שיבחר בחיים

for since he is with Him, may He be blessed, and cleaves to the
Life, the Infinite Light, he is already attached to life

מאחר שהוא אצלו יתברך ודבוק בחיים, אור
אין־סוף ברוך־הוא הוא כבר דבוק בחיים

and will certainly always choose life.

ובודאי יבחר תמיד בחיים

As it is known: "One who comes to purify, they assist him"
because the holiness within him, which has clung to him, is what
assists him.

כנודע: הבא לטהר מסייעין לו, כי הקדושה שבתוכו
שנדבק בו היא המסייעתו

And certainly he will turn from all evil, which is something
opposed to him

ובודאי שיסור מכל רע, שהוא דבר נגדי אצלו

since he is near the primordial speech and cleaves to the Life of
life. Understand this.

מאחר שהוא אצל הדבור הקדום, ודבוק בפי החיים.
והבן

And therefore: "One who comes to defile, they open for him"

ולכן: הבא לטמא פותחין לו

for once he comes to defile, then he is already, as a matter of
course, separated from His light, may He be blessed

כי ממילא על ידי שבא לטמא, מסתמא כבר נפרד
מאורו יתברך

and the five articulations of his mouth are interrupted, which
were the sanctuary of the Infinite Light,

ונפסקו ה' מוצאות שלו שהיו היכל אור אין־סוף
ברוך־הוא

and thus life is cut off, and without any assistance he falls into
evil, and sees no good.

והרי נפסק החיים, וממילא בלא סיוע נופל ברע,
ואינו רואה הטוב

As explained by us elsewhere on what is written about that
peddler who would go around the towns near Tzippori

כאמור אצלנו על מה שכתוב בהוא רוכל שהיה
מחזר בעירות הסמוכים לצפורי

and he would proclaim: "Who wants the elixir of life?" They all
gathered around him and he said to them (Tehillim 34:13):

ומכריז: מאן בעי סמא דחיי? איכפפו כולי עלמא,
(ואמר להם) (תהלים ל"ד, י"ג)

"Who is the man who desires life, loves days to see good? Guard
[your tongue from evil]..."

מי האיש החפץ חיים, אהב ימים לראות טוב נצר
...// לשונך מרע

his intention was to inform them of all this: that the essence is
guarding speech.

כונתו היתה להודיעם כל האמור: שהעיקר הוא
שמירת הדבור

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And through guarding speech, it will be fulfilled in him: "You supported my right hand," that he may always follow the right side of Torah, which is "And you shall choose life," as said.	ועל ידי שמירת הדבור, יקלם בו: תמכת בימיני, שילך תמיד לימינה של תורה, שהיא ובחרת בחיים, כאמור.
For it is known that the body is called a "city," as our Sages said: "a small city... this is the body."	כי נודע שהגוף נקרא עיר, כמו שאמרו רז"ל: עיר קטנה כזו זה הגוף.
And "Tzipori" represents the resting of the Shechinah, as it is written (Mishlei 27:8):	וצפורי נקרא השקטות השכינה, כמשפכות (משלי): (כ"ז, ח).
"Like a bird wandering from its nest..." He would go around the towns bodies of people who are near to Tzipori,	כצפור נודדת מן קנה כזו והיה מחזר בעירות, בגופי בני אדם, שהם סמוכים לצפורי.
meaning, those who want to draw themselves under the wings of the Shechinah.	שרוצים לקרב את עצמם תחת כנפי השכינה.
And he would teach them this wisdom: "Who is the man who desires life" that the Life of life be established within him permanently.	ומלמדן דעת זו: מי האיש החפץ חיים שיהא חי החיים נקבע בו בקביעות.
"Loves days" these are the [divine] attributes, and in every one of them he will see the good.	אהב ימים שהן המדות, ובכל המדות יראה הטוב.
"Guard your tongue from evil" to guard the speech implanted within him, as explained above.	נצר לשונך מרע לשמור הדבור הנקבע בו, כאמור.
And through this, his speech will become a sanctuary for the Infinite Light, may He be blessed	ועל ידי כן, יהיה הדבור שלו היכל לאור אין-סוף ברוך-הוא.
and he will merit to cleave to the Life of life, and he will see only the good in all things.	ויזכה להיות דבוק בחי החיים, ולא יראה רק הטוב בכל דבר.
And all the elements, the foundations of his body's structure, will agree each one aligned with its proper service.	ויסכימו כל הדברים, יסודות בגן גופו, כל אחד לעבודתו.
For they too have their root in His Name, may He be blessed, as is known	כי הן גם כן שרשן משמו יתברך כנודע.
that they are the chain-like extension of the four letters of the Name Havayah.	שהוא השתלשלות ד' אותיות של שם הוי'
But when speech is not properly guarded and becomes blemished, it causes evil to dominate within him	וכשאין הדבור שמור פראוי ונפגם מגביר הרע שבו.
and it draws him into the four elements, which lead to corrupt traits.	ומושך אותו על ידו בד' יסודות לרע המדות.
For this is the state of separation, as is known, since the good is unity, and the evil is separation.	שהוא בבחינת פירוד כנודע שהטוב הוא בבחינת אחדות, והרע הוא בבחינת פירוד.

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From the element of fire comes craving and fiery lusts for evil desires;	כי מצד האש מתאווה ומתלהב לתאוות רעים
from the element of water love of pleasures;	ומצד יסוד המים אהבת התענוגים
from the element of wind arrogance and pride;	ומצד יסוד הרוח התנשאות והגאווה
and from the element of earth laziness in the service of Hashem, may He be blessed.	ומצד יסוד העפר העצלות בעבודתו יתברך
And if so, when the elements fall into the dominance of evil,	ואם כן, כשהיסודות נופלין בהתגברות הרע
they do not agree on a single thing; each one pulls in a different direction,	אינן מסכימין לדבר אחד רק כל אחד ממשיך דבר שואין אחר מסכים עמו
and when the elements are good then certainly the Infinite Light, blessed be He, flows into his five articulations,	וכשהיסודות הן בטוב כל שכן שאור אינסוף ברוך הוא שופע בה' מוצאות שלו
and they agree on one matter.	והן מסכימין לדבר אחד
Each of them, at the time of Divine service, contributes:	כל אחד, שבשעת עבודת ה'
great fiery passion and spiritual pleasure in the service of Hashem, may His Name be blessed	צורך להתלהבות הגדול ולענוג הרוחני בעבודתו יתברך שמו
which is the essence of unification.	שהוא עקר היחוד
And the [holy] words, which are of the quality of wind as it is written "a speaking spirit" (רוח ממללא)	והדבורים שהן בבחינת רוח, כמ"ש: רוח ממללא
and the element of earth corresponds to what is written: "All came from the dust and all returns to the dust,"	ויסוד עפר הוא על דרך מה שכתוב: הכל היה מן העפר והכל שב אל העפר
even the sun's orbit, which is the upper dust from which all creatures were formed.	אפילו גלגל חמה, שהוא בחינת עפר העליון שממנו נתהוו כל הנבראים
That is the lowest attribute, as is known, for even the sun's orbit was created from it.	שהוא בחינת מדה תחתונה בנודע שאפילו גלגל חמה ממנה נתהווה
And so too his soul and his speech connect and return to that dust	ואם כן, אף נשמתו ודברו מתקשר ושב אל בחינת העפר שהוא
which is the "hei," as previously stated.	שהוא בחינת ה' כאמור
And this is [the meaning of] "And Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes"	וזהו וידבר משה אל ראשי המטות
the "heads of the tribes" are called the letters,	ראשי המטות נקראים האותיות
which are the ones that govern, as explained above	שהן המנהיגין כאמור
for "speaking" is a term that implies governance.	שהוא לשון דבור המורה על הנקיה

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That [Moshe] drew down into them the speech from the primordial speech.

וְהָיָה הַמִּשְׁיבִי לָהֶן הַדְּבָר מִדְּבַר הַקְּדוּם

And this is [what is meant by] “to the Children of Israel, saying to them”

וְהָיוּ לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר אֲלֵהֶם

meaning that by this [process] the words they speak should be known as the command of Hashem

עַל פִּי זֶה, שֶׁזֶה הַדְּבָר שֶׁמְדַבְּרִים, יֵדְעוּ אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה'

that He, may He be blessed, is the One who vitalizes the speech, commands it, and binds it to His Infinite Light,

שֶׁהוּא יְתַבְּרֵךְ הַמִּטְּיָה הַדְּבָר, וּמְצַנֶּה אוֹתוֹ, וּמְדַבֵּק אוֹתוֹ אֶל אוֹרוֹ, שֶׁהוּא אֵין-סוֹף בְּרוּךְ-הוּא

and He, so to speak, is the One speaking those very words.

וְהוּא כְּבִיכּוֹל הַמְדַבֵּר הַדְּבָרִים הָהֵם

Therefore: “If a man vows a vow to Hashem or swears an oath...”

וְעַל-כֵּן: אִישׁ כִּי יִדַּר נֶדֶר לֵה' אוֹ הִשָּׁבַע שְׁבוּעָה

as is known from the Zohar regarding the verse “If a soul sins... and hears the voice of an oath...”

כְּנוֹדַע מִסֵּפֶר הַזֵּהָר עַל נֶפֶשׁ כִּי תִחַטָּא וְשָׁמְעָה קוֹל אֱלֹהִים

for they swear it [the soul] before it enters this world

שֶׁמִּשְׁבִּיעֵינָם אוֹתָהּ קֹדֶם בּוֹאָהּ לְעוֹלָם הַזֶּה

not to stray from the words of the Creator, may He be blessed, and from His Torah.

שֶׁלֹּבְלָתִי סוּר מִדְּבָרָיו שֶׁל הַבּוֹרָא בְּרוּךְ-הוּא וְתוֹרָתוֹ

And this is [the meaning of] “This is the word that Hashem commanded” as stated above

וְהָיוּ: זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' כְּאֲמוֹר

that it is literally the word of Hashem.

שֶׁהוּא דְבַר ה' מִמֶּלֶשׁ

And even so, that “if a man vows a vow or swears an oath” though he is already sworn and obligated

וְעַם כָּל זֹאת שֶׁאִישׁ כִּי יִדַּר נֶדֶר אוֹ יִשָּׁבַע שְׁבוּעָה שֶׁהוּא מִשָּׁבַע וְעוֹמֵד

therefore, it is not proper unless to prohibit something

עַל-כֵּן אֵינוּ רְאוּי כִּי אִם לְאַסוֹר אִיסוּר

meaning, to bind [the matter] with his soul, which is the “living soul,” the speaking spirit, as explained earlier.

שֶׁהוּא לְקֻשְׁר עִם נִפְשׁוֹ שֶׁהִיא הַנֶּפֶשׁ חַיָּה, שֶׁהִיא רוּחַ מְמַלְלָאֲכֵמָאוֹר

And “he shall not profane his word” meaning, not to desecrate the speech implanted in his mouth

וְלֹא יַחַל דְּבָרוֹ שֶׁלֹּא יַחַלֵּל הַדְּבָר הַקָּבוֹעַ בְּפִיו

“according to all that comes out of his mouth he shall do”

כָּכֵל הַיּוֹצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה

that is, according to all that comes out of the mouth of the Creator, may He be blessed, so to speak

דִּהְיִינוּ: כָּכֵל הַיּוֹצֵא מִפִּיו שֶׁל הַבּוֹרָא בְּרוּךְ-הוּא, כְּבִיכּוֹל

that the person’s intention should be to bind himself, through speech, to Him, may He be blessed, and never sever from Him

שֶׁתִּהְיֶה כּוֹנֵנוֹ לְדַבֵּק עַל יְדֵי הַדְּבָר בּוֹ יְתַבְּרֵךְ, וְאֵל יִפְסִיקֵנוּ מִמֶּנּוּ

“so shall he do always, and then it shall be good for him in this world and the next.”

כֵּן יַעֲשֶׂה תָמִיד וְאֵז טוֹב לוֹ בְּזֶה וּבִבְּא

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“Blessed is Hashem forever, Amen and Amen.”

בְּרוּךְ ה' לְעוֹלָם אָמֵן וְאָמֵן

[NOTE Summary:

The discourse begins by revealing that speech (dibbur) is not merely a human faculty but the very mechanism by which God created and sustains the world “by the word of Hashem, the heavens were made.” The power of speech flows from the lower ‘hei’ of the Divine Name, representing Malchus and the Divine presence that governs creation.

This spiritual architecture continues in every person, for human speech is rooted in the five outlets of the mouth (hei motzaos hapeh) the same forces that shape Torah and creation. When one speaks, he is channeling the Divine presence. Thus, if one guards his speech from falsehood, gossip, and idle chatter, he preserves the Divine flow within his words and aligns himself with the primordial speech through which all is created. The discourse highlights that the one who believes deeply that his words are animated by the Shechinah will become “like a mute” aware that he himself is not the source of speech, but rather that Hashem is speaking through him. This is the meaning of “Adonai, open my lips” that Adnus, the Shechinah, opens our mouths, and we merely host its light.

Even mundane speech is part of Divine utterance. The ideal is that even in business or daily matters, one speaks in a way that maintains awareness of Divine unity, so no word is separate from Hashem. This is the ultimate refinement: to speak with such purity that the letters of one’s words become a sanctuary for the Or Ein Sof.

The tzaddik not only guards his own speech but elevates all speech past, present, and future by drawing the Divine source back into fallen words. The mitzvah of vows (nedarim) and oaths is linked to this power: when a person declares a commitment, it is binding because his words are tied to the original Voice of God. The discourse concludes with the idea that by guarding the tongue, one can attain the state of “choosing life,” as described in the verse “U’vacharta ba’chaim.” One sees the good in all things because the Divine light within all creation becomes apparent to him. He becomes unified with the original speech, and even the four physical elements of the body fire, water, air, earth align harmoniously toward serving Hashem.

Practical Takeaway:

Guard your speech as if your words are Divine vessels because they are. Whether learning Torah, speaking to others, or engaging in everyday conversation, speak with awareness that Hashem’s presence resides in your mouth. Avoid gossip, falsehood, and idle chatter not out of fear alone, but from love and awe for the sacred force flowing through your voice. Make your words into temples for the Infinite Light, and you will see good in all things and be drawn closer to the Source of life.

Chassidic Story:

Reb Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl once stayed at an inn with his students. That night, as he recited the bedtime Shema, his voice was soft, almost inaudible. Yet the entire room felt thick with awe. One chassid asked, “Rebbe, you barely said anything, and yet we trembled.”

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The Meor Einayim replied:

"When I say 'Shema Yisrael,' I must be sure I am not the one speaking. I wait until I sense that the Shechinah is speaking through me. When that happens even a whisper can shake the heavens."

TPX (Therapeutic-Psychological Integration):

This powerful discourse from Reb Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl explores the deeply mystical roots of human speech and its profound psychological and spiritual implications. At its core is the notion that our words are not merely expressions of thought but vessels of Divine energy. Speech is the channel through which the Infinite manifests within the finite. Every utterance contains latent spiritual potential. This idea reframes not only how we talk, but how we experience agency, identity, and purpose.

In therapeutic terms, the discourse reveals an integrated model of embodied holiness: the human being is not a divided self, but a unified system of body, speech, thought, and Divine consciousness. The "mouth" is not neutral it is the threshold through which either spiritual connection or spiritual dissociation flows. Just as trauma can split speech from inner truth, sacred mindfulness of speech can heal that fragmentation.

Reb Nachum's warning against lashon hara, idle chatter, and impure speech speaks psychologically to the way dysfunctional verbal patterns reinforce internal disconnection. When we speak cynically, harshly, or impulsively, we sever our words from our deeper soul-awareness. This is a form of spiritual exile what the discourse calls "disconnecting from the Infinite Light." In contrast, when we speak with intention even about mundane matters we transform ordinary experience into a sanctuary. We bring presence to our presence. We become hosts of meaning, not just conveyors of noise.

The tzaddik is not one who is silent, but one who speaks only when speech flows from alignment. He sees even the words of Torah or mitzvah as potentially misaligned if said without consciousness. This introduces a vital therapeutic tool: radical authenticity in speech. Our healing begins when we pause, humble ourselves before the moment, and let the deeper self speak.

The metaphor of the four elements fire, water, air, and earth mirroring personality traits (passion, pleasure, pride, and sluggishness) aligns seamlessly with parts-work therapy and somatic awareness. Speech can either inflame those elements or harmonize them. Thus, sacred speech is an integrative practice, aligning body and soul, thought and language, desire and purpose.

This model also reframes vows and oaths as a re-alignment between the conscious and superconscious self. A nedder (vow) becomes spiritually potent only when one's inner world is bound up with God's speech when one has not "profaned his words." This teaches us that integrity begins with how we speak to ourselves, how much of our speech is merely habit, and how much is rooted in presence.

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Ultimately, the discourse offers not just theology, but a path of deep healing: when we learn to see our speech as sacred, we no longer feel powerless. We rediscover the voice that was always Divine within us and by guarding it, we heal not only our relationship to others, but our relationship to life itself.

Story

In 1962, a young therapist named Dr. Viktor Frankl was giving a lecture in New York. After surviving Auschwitz, Frankl developed logotherapy a system that asserts that meaning is the primary human drive. During the lecture, a woman stood up and asked, "How did you not lose faith in humanity after all you saw?"

He paused, then whispered:

"Because even in the camps, there were those who chose their words carefully. They used their last breaths to give others hope, to share a crust of bread, to bless the Shema. Speech became sacred. Where there is sacred speech, there is still humanity." Frankl concluded, "They reminded me that even in horror, man can still choose to be a sanctuary."

(Source: Lecture transcript, Columbia University, 1962, cited in *Man's Search for Meaning*, revised edition)

END NOTE]