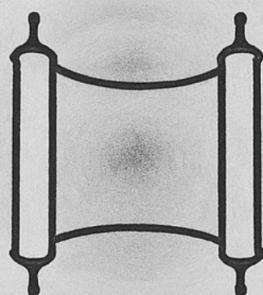


בס"ד

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel
of Horodok
Parshas Va'eschanan**



לע"נ

אלטר חיים בער בן זיסקינד אלכסנדר

Dedicated By:

ר' נחום אהרון & חיה

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Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

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Introduction

This discourse is from **Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok** (also known as the Horodoker), a leading disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch and one of the early pioneers of Chassidus in Eretz Yisrael. A spiritual giant of the second generation of the Chassidic movement, the Horodoker was known for his fiery avodah and his ability to reveal the inner depths of Teshuvah and deveikus. He later led a group of Chassidim who settled in Tiberias in the late 1700s, bringing Chassidus to the Land of Israel.

In this maamar, based on “**וְאַתְּחַנֵּן אֶל ה' בַּעַת הַהִיא**” (**Devarim 3:23**), the Horodoker explores Teshuvah not as a behavioral correction, but as a soul's visceral return to divine oneness. He interweaves halachic midrashim, Kabbalistic metaphors, and existential longing, crafting a vision of Teshuvah as an ascent beyond judgment — into the realm of pure divine compassion and unity.

The verse (Devarim 4:34): "You have been shown to

know." Rashi, of blessed memory, explained: as the Targum renders—you were shown; at the time of the giving of the Torah, He opened for them the seven heavens, and just as He tore open the upper realms, so He tore open the lower realms, and they saw that He is One, etc.

פְּסוּק (דְּבָרִים ד' ל"ד): אַתָּה הָרַאתָ לָדַעַת. פִּירַשׁ
רש"י ז"ל: כְּתַרְגוּמוֹ אֶתְחַזִּי, בְּשַׁעַת מַתֵּן תּוֹרָה
פָּתַח לָהֶם ז' רְקִיעִים, וּכְשֶׁם שֶׁקָּרַע אֶת הָעֲלִיּוֹנִים
לְפָנֶיךָ קָרַע אֶת הַתַּחְתּוֹנִים וְרָאוּ שֶׁהוּא יְחִיד וְכוּ

Behold, the Rabbi began with the verse (Devarim 3:23): "And I entreated Hashem." Rashi explained: "Entreaty" means a free gift, even though the righteous have what to rely upon in their good deeds, etc.

הִנֵּה פָתַח הָרַב בְּפֶסוּק (דְּבָרִים ג', כ"ג): "וְאַתְּחַנֵּן
אֶל ה'", וּפִירַשׁ רש"י "אֵין חֲנוּן אֲלָא מִתְּנַת חֲנֻם,
אֲף עַל פִּי שְׂנֵי לָהֶם לְצַדִּיקִים לְתִלּוֹת בְּמַעֲשֵׂיהֶם
הַטּוֹבִים וְכוּ"

And the matter is as the verse (Yeshayahu 40:1): "Comfort, comfort My people," (Yeshayahu 40:2): "For she has taken from the hand of Hashem double, etc." The Midrash is primary: they sinned doubly, and were struck doubly, and are comforted doubly. This is "Comfort, comfort."

וְהַעֲנֵן הוּא עַל־דֶּרֶךְ הַפֶּסוּק (יִשְׁעִיהוּ מ, א):
"נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי כו'" (יִשְׁעִיהוּ מ, ב): "כִּי לָקְחָה
מִיַּד ה' כְּפָלִים כו'", הַמְדַּרְשׁ הוּא עֵינֶיךָ: חֲטָאוּ
בְּכָפָלִים וְלָקְוּ בְּכָפָלִים וְנַחֲמוּ בְּכָפָלִים, זֶהוּ "נַחֲמוּ
נַחֲמוּ".

And the matter is to understand what is Teshuvah. It is explained many times in the Zohar that it is the place of Binah, and of shofar, and of freedom.

וְהַעֲנֵן לְהִבִּין מֵהוּ תְּשׁוּבָה, מְבֹאֵר בְּמָה פְּעָמִים
בַּזֹּהַר, שֶׁהוּא מְקוֹם בִּינָה וְשׁוֹפָר וְחֵירוּת,

Behold, it is known from many sayings of the Talmud and the Zohar that the kelipah is called "free" (chinam), as the Sages said: Gehinom is for matters of "free" (chinam), and in the Zohar in many places.

הִנֵּה הוּא מֵהֵיוֹת יָדוּעַ מִכְּמָה מֵאֲמָרֵי הַש"ס וְהַזֹּהַר
שֶׁהִקְלָפָה נִקְרְאתָ חֲנֻם, כְּמֵאֲמַר רַז"ל גִּיהֵנֻם עַל
עֲסָקֵי חֲנֻם, וּבַזֹּהַר בְּכְמָה מְקוֹמוֹת

And the reason is that they cling to a person freely, and rest upon him without any preparation.

וְהַטַּעַם לְהִיוֹתָם מְתַדְבָּקִים בְּאָדָם חֲנֻם וְשׁוֹרִים
עָלָיו בְּלִתִּי שׁוּם הִכָּנָה

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For for the dwelling of holiness upon a person, great repentance and strong strength and self-sacrifice are required. Then he will cling to His attributes, for behold (Devarim 4:24): "A consuming fire is He."

פי להשראת הקדושה על האדם צריך תיבתא סגי וחילא תקיף ומסירת נפש, אז ידבק במדותיו "כי הלא (דברים ד, כ"ד): "אש אכלה הוא"

Whereas the kelipah rests on its own upon a person in the absence of holiness, for a person is a prepared vessel to receive—if [he is] holy, he is holy, and one who comes to purify is assisted; and if not, God forbid, the kelipah rests on its own.

מה שאין בן הקלפה שורה מעצמה על האדם בהעדר הקדושה, פי האדם פלי מוכן הוא לקבל, אם קדושה קדוש הוא והבא לטהר מסייעין לו, ואם לאו ח"ו הקלפה מעצמה שורה

(Vayikra 13:45): "And he shall call out: 'Impure, impure.'" And experience testifies: a person who does not accustom himself to the affection for holiness...

ויקרא י"ג, מ"ה): "וטמא טמא יקרא", (והחוש), מעיד אדם שאינו מרגיל עצמו בחיבת הקדש

Even though his intellect obligates him, and his faith is with him, to do what is good and upright, and there are many arguments against doing evil—especially regarding arrogance—

אף על פי ששכלו מחייב ואמונתו אתו לעשות הטוב והישר, וכמה טענות נגד עשות הרע ובפרט בבענין הגדלות

nevertheless he does not have the power to act or to submit before the Blessed Creator.

אף על פי כן אין בידו לעשות או להכניע נגד הבורא יתברך שמו

And certainly this is nothing but evil of heart, and the kelipah that rests upon him does not allow him [to act].

ובודאי אין זה כ"א רע לב והקלפה השורה עליו אינה מנחת אותו

Or as our Sages said: he transgressed and repeated it—[it becomes] permitted, etc., rather it becomes as if permitted, etc.

או כמו שאמרו רז"ל עבר ושובה בה התרה וגו' 'אלא נעשית כהיתר כו

Even though he knows the prohibition from the Torah and from intellect, nevertheless the kelipah that rests upon him makes the matter seem permitted.

הגם שיודע האסור מן התורה והמושכל, אף על פי כן הקלפה השורה עליו עושה לו הדבר כמו היתר

And who knows in what way—God spare us—from this knowledge?

ומי יודע באיזו אופן ר"ל מידיעה זו

Therefore, every attribute and limb in a person that is not offered and sanctified to His Blessed Name—automatically impurity falls there and the kelipah is there.

לכן כל מדה ואבר שבאדם שאינו מקטר ומוקדש לשמו יתברך שמו, ממילא חל הטמאה שם והקלפה שם

And it does everything—as a drunkard—sins and transgressions and offenses, without understanding.

ועושה כל מה, כשכור חטאים ועונות פושעים, בלתי הבן

And its end is bitter as wormwood, when he contemplates himself—that everything he did was through the kelipah.

ואחריתה מרה כלענה כשמתבונן בעצמו שכל מה שעשה על-ידי הקלפה

And where, then, is he? And who will see his hope?

ואיזה איפוא הוא ותקנתו מי ישורנה

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And aside from the fact that he himself has distanced from Hashem, he also burdens his Creator with many contractions in order to provide vitality to the kelipah—

as is known, since the vitality of man is from the holy chayos, and a limb from the Shechinah—and when he cleaves to the kelipah, he brings sparks of holiness into the kelipah.

And this is what our Sages said: "And not only that, but they trouble Him, etc."

And the saying of the verse (Yirmiyahu 2:13): "Two evils has My people done," and this is (Iyov 1:8): "Jerusalem has sinned a sin"—in a double expression.

And behold, after he contemplates that he is like one deceived and straying on the road, he must return and go back in the path by which he came, to the straight path—and this must be in that same place.

But all his repentance must be elevation—to turn away from snares of death to the paths of life in all his attributes.

Therefore, teshuvah is called *Binah* (understanding) and *Cheirus* (freedom), for through contemplation he returns to Hashem, and the beginning of his corruption was through wandering like a drunkard, and the kelipah rested upon him automatically.

And now, through contemplation, he regrets and repents and exits to freedom from the seven nations—which are the kelipah, which are the bad attributes.

It is also called *Shofar*, for when he contemplates all that befell him from the "wicked waters"—and where he went and turned his glory when distancing from holiness and the Living of life, and he clothed sack and ashes, which is the kelipah—

and not on himself alone, but on the holy and on the Sanctuary also, as mentioned—

then trembling will seize him, and bitterness will be his—besides fear of Gan Eden and Gehinnom.

ומלבד זה שנתרחק מהשם יתברך בעצמו אלא שמטריח את קונו בצמצומים רבים להשפיע חיות אל הקלפה

כידוע מהיות חיות האדם מחיות הקדש ואבר מן השכינה, ובהתדבקו אל הקלפה מכניס נצוצי הקדושה אל הקלפה

וזהו שאמרו רז"ל "ולא עוד אלא שמטריחין אותו",

ומאמר הפסוק (ירמיהו ב, י"ג): "שנים רעות עשה עמי" וזהו (איוב א, ח): "חטא חטאה ירושלם" בכפל

והנה אחרי שמתבונן היותו כמתעתע ותועה בדרך, צריך לחזור ולשוב בדרך אשר בא בה אל הדרך הישר וזהו באותו מקום

אבל כל תשובותיו הרמות, צריך להיות לסור ממקושי מנות אל דרכי החיים בכל מדותיו

לכן נקראת התשובה בינה וחרות, שהרי על-ידי התבוננות שב אל ה', ותחלת קלקוליו הוא מהתענות כשכור, והקלפה שורה עליו ממילא

ועכשיו על-ידי התבוננות מתחרט ושבו ויוצא, לחרות מז' עמין שהם הקלפה שהם מדות הרעות

גם נקראת שופר, שהרי כשמתבונן על כל מה שעבר עליו ממים זידונים ואנה הלך ופנה הודו בהרחיקו מן הקדושה וחי החיים והלביש שק ואפר, שהוא הקלפה

ולא על-עצמו כיהם על הקדש ועל המקדש גם-כן כנזר

אז תאחזוהו פלצות ומרה תהנה לו מלבד יראת גורעון וגיהנם

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And behold, in truth, when the living one puts to heart the bitterness of the sin itself—after he has already done it—it is more difficult in the heart of man than all the punishments possible to be upon that sin, both in this world and in the World to Come, doubly multiplied.

והנה באמת כשהחי יתן אל לבו מרירות החטא בעצמו אחרי אשר כבר עשהו, הוא יותר קשה בלב אדם מכל הענשים האפשרי להיות על חטא זה, הן בעולם הזה והן בעולם הבא כפלי כפלים,

And justice demands it, for those punishments are a healing and remedy and cleansing of that sin in order to heal him.

והדין נותן שהרי אותם הענושין הם רפואה ומזור ומירוק אותו החטא בכדי להבריאו

And presumably the wound is the deficiency and lack, and the bitterness is even more than the remedy—

ומסתמא המכה היא הגריעות והחסרון, והמרירות יותר ויותר מן הרפואה

and therefore one is healed by the remedy from the wound.

וזהכי הוא מתרפא ברפואה מן המכה

And behold, it is known the saying of our Sages: With the Torah the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world—that is, with the letters of the Torah, as is known from the Zohar.

והנה ידוע אמרו רז"ל באורייתא ברא קוב"ה ע"למא, שהוא באותיות התורה כי ידוע מן הזוהר

That all a person's actions and schemes are all letters.

שכל מעשה האדם ותחבולותיו הכל הם אותון

And if he sinned, God forbid, he inserts the letters into evil, God forbid.

ואם חטא ח"ו מכניס האותיות ברע ח"ו

Therefore, confession was established in alphabetical order, so that afterward, when he contemplates the distortion of his actions,

לכן נתקן הודוי בדרך אלפא-ביתא בכדי שאחר כך כשמתבונן על התעוותות א"ת מעשיו

and seizes in his heart the greatness of the bitterness of the sin itself, as mentioned above—which is doubly worse than all punishments—

ותופס בלבבו גודל מרירות החטא בעצמו כנ"ל, שהוא כפלים מכל הענושין

he certainly regrets and cries out over what has passed: "I am guilty"—and the entire confession—until all his strength and all his attributes are nullified.

בדאי מתחרט וצועק על מה שעבר: אשמתי וכל הודוי עד כלות כל כחותיו ובטול מדותיו

For from the greatness of bitterness, a fire not fanned has seized him—

כי מגודל המרירות אש לא נפח אצתו

such that it is impossible to express it in speech or statement, only in a voiced sound—

אשר אי אפשר להכניסו בדיבור ואמירה כי"אם בקול הברה

he groans with groaning and wails with wailing, and simply cries out to Hashem.

'גנחתי גנח וילולי ייל, וצועק סתם אל ה

And the God answers him with a voice, for thereby the letters are elevated from the evil.

והאלהים יענונו בקול, כי בזה מתעלים האותיות מן הרע

For he has elevated speech—which are the letters—into voice, which is above speech.

שהרי הוא העלה הדיבור שהם האותיות אל הקול שהוא למעלה מן הדיבור

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And this is what is called *Shofar*.

וְזֶהוּ שֶׁנִּקְרָא שׁוֹפָר,

And from the contemplation in his daas, he enters into *Binah*,
and from there to *Chochmah*, which is the love of Hashem—

וּמִן הַתְּבוּנוֹת בְּדַעְתּוֹ נִכְנָס בְּבִינָה וּמִשָּׁם אֶל
'הַחֲכָמָה' שֶׁהִיא אֲהָבַת ה'

which has come to him because of the jealousy of Hashem
Tzevakos, who was jealous for Himself with great compassion
upon Hashem—

שֶׁהִגִּיעַ אֵלָיו מִחֲמַת קְנָאת ה' צְבָאוֹת שֶׁקָּנָא לְעַצְמוֹ
'בְּגִדּוֹל רַחֲמָנוּתוֹ עַל ה'

for He was forced into great constriction because of his sins.

וְהִכְרַח עֲצָם צִמְצוּמוֹ עַל-יְדֵי חֲטָאָיו

And from that compassion he comes to love of Hashem, in that
he is zealous for Hashem's jealousy—

'וּמִן הַרַחֲמָנוּת בָּא אֶל אֲהָבַת ה' בְּקִנְאוֹ אֶת קְנָאת ה'

and he judges himself with bitterness of heart, more than
double all the punishments.

וְעוֹשֶׂה דִין בְּעַצְמוֹ עִם מְרִירוֹת לְבוֹ כְּפָלִים מִכָּל
הָעֲנוּשִׁין

And Pinchas became zealotry, and acquired his world in one
hour. And this is: "Better is reproof in a man's heart..." etc.,
and this is: "In the place where penitents stand..." etc.

וּנְעִשָׂה פִּינְחָס קְנָאָה, וְקוֹנֶה עוֹלָמוֹ בְּשָׁעָה אַחַת,
וְזֶהוּ יָפָה מְרִירוֹת בְּלִבּוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם כִּי וְזֶהוּ בְּמָקוֹם
'שֶׁבַעֲלֵי תְּשׁוּבָה עוֹמְדִין וְכוּ'

And this is the words of the verse: "נִחְמוּ נִחְמוּ" etc., and the
comfort is doubled, for the verse speaks of penitents who
return due to fear of sin itself, and not due to fear of
punishment—which is double the bitterness of punishments.

וְזֶהוּ דְּבָרֵי הַפְּסוּק "נִחְמוּ נִחְמוּ וְכוּ" וְכוּפֵל הַנִּחְמָה
שֶׁהַפְּסוּק מְדַבֵּר בְּבַעֲלֵי תְּשׁוּבָה מִחֲמַת יְרֵאת חֲטָא
עַצְמוֹ וְלֹא מִחֲמַת יְרֵאת עוֹנֵשׁ, שֶׁהוּא כְּפֵל
מִמְרִירוֹת שֶׁל עֲנָשִׁין

This is "speak to the heart of Jerusalem," for "speak" is a harsh
expression—to the heart of one who fears with completeness.
And "call to her"—"call" is an expression of affection, an
expression used by the ministering angels, as it says
(Yeshayahu 6:3): "And one called to another."

זֶהוּ דְּבָרוֹ עַל לֵב יְרוּשָׁלַם, כִּי דְּבָרוֹ הוּא לְשׁוֹן
קוֹשֶׁה, עַל לֵב יִרְאָ שְׁלָם, וְקִרְאוֹ אֵלֶיהָ שֶׁקִּרְאוֹ לְשׁוֹן
חִיבָה לְשׁוֹן שֶׁמֶלֶאכֵי הַשָּׁרָת מְשַׁתְּמָשִׁים (יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ ו,
"ג): "וְקִרְאָה זֶה אֶל זֶה

For from the bitterness one comes to love and affection. And
this is: "for her sin has been appeased"—for he has returned
out of love, and his willful sins are transformed to merits, and
from sin becomes will.

כִּי מִן הַמְרִירוֹת יָבוֹא אֶל הָאֲהָבָה וְהַחִיבָה, וְזֶהוּ כִּי
נִרְצָה עוֹנָה, שֶׁהָרִי הוּא שֶׁב מֵאֲהָבָה וְזִדּוֹנוֹת נִעְשִׂין
לֹו כְּזָכוֹת וּמִן הָעוֹן נִעֲשֶׂה רְצוֹן

And why all this? "For she has taken from the hand of Hashem
double for all her sins," for this returnee was aroused in his
heart over Hashem's compassion—doubly—about the sin
itself: how he did it and troubled his Creator so.

וְלָמָּה כָּל זֶה "כִּי לָקַחָה מִיַּד ה' כְּפָלִים בְּכָל
חַטָּאתֶיהָ", שֶׁהָרִי זֶה הִשָּׁב נִתְעוֹרַר בְּלִבּוֹ עַל
רַחֲמָנוּת הַשֵּׁי"ת כְּפָלִים עַל הַחֲטָא בְּעַצְמוֹ אִיד
עֲשָׂהוּ וְהִטְרִיחַ אֶת קוֹנוֹ כִּף

And this is (Devarim 3:23): "וְאַתָּחֲנוּן"—for this is the way of the
righteous, who are crushed and of humble spirit and lowly in
their own eyes despite all their good deeds.

וְזֶהוּ (דְּבָרִים ג, כ"ג): "וְאַתָּחֲנוּן" כִּי דָרָה צְדִיקִים
שֶׁהֵם דְּכָאֵי וְשִׁפְלֵי רוּחַ וְנִבְוִזִים בְּעֵינֵיהֶם עִם כָּל
מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם הַטּוֹבִים

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For this is the explanation of luminaries—as is known—even a *kesser* (crown) is dark before the Supreme Cause. And their essential desire and longing is to cleave to Hashem.

As is known that the trait of the tzaddik is connection, and they do not place attention upon their good deeds and their radiance, for what are they worth compared to the light of Hashem, for they are blackness before Him and utter material.

As it is said (Mishlei 6:23): "For a mitzvah is a lamp and Torah is light," for the mitzvah is a lamp—light bound with physicality, and Torah is light—pure and abstract from all physicality.

And this is the desire of the tzaddikim—to cleave to the supernal source and from there draw and lower compassion to all worlds, in the way of the tzaddik, who is the connector of all worlds.

And likewise their prayer—they do not pay attention to their good and radiant deeds, for what are they compared to the infinite light, may He be blessed.

Rather they request a free gift, like Hashem gives even to kelipos—as it says (Nechemiah 9:6): "And You give life to them all."

And this is what is written (Devarim 3:23): "בְּעֵת" *בהוא*—meaning at whatever time it is from the 24 times, such is their prayer to draw compassion as a free gift at any time.

And this is "לאמר"—which means to say to others. That is, it is the source and root of speech, which is above everything—for speech from the heart, and all the more so above the attributes.

And automatically the attributes and judgments are nullified.

And this is what it says: A person should always first arrange the praise of the Omnipresent and only afterward pray and request his needs.

That is, he must connect to the supernal source—like here, where it says: "אַתָּה הַחֵלֶת לְהִרְאוֹת אֶת עֲבָדְךָ"—which is the source and root of speech.

שהוא פירוש מאורים, כי ידוע שאפילו כתר, אוכם הוא קדם עלת העלות, ועקר חשקם ותאותם, הוא לדבק בה,

כי ידוע שמדת הצדיק הוא התקשרות, ואינם שמים על לבם מעשיהם הטובים אשר אור לה' כי אוכם הוא מפניו יתברך וגשם גמור הוא

בנאמר (משלי ו, כ"ג): "כי נר מצוה ותורה אור", שהמצוה הוא נר שהוא אור הדבוק בגשמי ותורה אור שהתורה היא אור פשוט ומפשט מכל הגשמים

וזהו חשק הצדיקים להדבק במקור העליון ומשם ממשיכים ומשפילים רחמים לכל העולמות כדרך הצדיק שהוא התקשרות כל העולמות

וכן דרך תפלתם גם כן שאין שמים לבם אל מעשיהם הטובים ומאירים כי במה נחשבו להם, נגד אור אין סוף ברוך הוא

אלא מבקשים מתנת חנם שהוא כמו שהשי"ת ברוך הוא מחיה הקליפות, כמאמר (נחמיה ט, ו): "ואתה מחיה את כלם",

וזהו שכתוב (דברים ג, כ"ג): "בעת ההוא", פירוש אם הוא באיזו עת שהוא מן הכ"ד עתים, כן הוא דרך תפלתו להמשיך רחמים בתרומת מתנת חנם בכל עת שהוא

וזהו "לאמר" שהוא מלשון לאמר לאחרים, פירוש שהוא מוצא ושרש הדבור שהוא למעלה מן הכל, שגרי אמירה בלב, וכל שכן שהוא למעלה מן המדות

וממילא מתבטלים המדות והדינין

וזהו לעולם יסדר אדם שבו של מקום תחלה, ואחר כך יתפלל ויבקש צרכיו

פירוש שצריך להתקשר מקור העליון כמו בכאן שאמר "אתה החלת להראות את עבדך" שהוא מוצא ושרש דבר

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And from there to draw compassion in the order of the attributes: "גְּדֹלָה וְאֵת יְדֵי הַחֲזָקָה".

וּמִשָּׁם לְהַמְשִׁיךְ רַחֲמִים כְּסֹדֶר הַמִּדּוֹת: "גְּדֹלָה וְאֵת
יְדֵי הַחֲזָקָה",

And afterward, when he arrives at the place of the lack that he lacks, he brings into his heart that everything is from Him, may He be blessed.

וְאַחֵר כִּי בְשִׁמְגִיעַ אֶל מְקוֹם הַחֲסָרוֹן אֲשֶׁר חָסֵר לוֹ,
מִכְנִיס בְּלִבּוֹ שֶׁהָרִי הַכֹּל מֵאֵתוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ

And in every lack, there must be a greater constriction from Hashem. And certainly, some sin in his heart caused it, and he becomes bitter and repents—until he returns to the root of wisdom and love of Hashem as mentioned above.

וּבְכָל חֲסָרוֹן מִכְרַח לְהִיּוֹת צְמֻצוֹם בְּיוֹתֵר שֶׁל
הַשֵּׁי"ת, וּבִדְאִי גֵרָם אֵיזָה חֲטָא בְּלִבּוֹ וּמִתְמַרְמֵר
וְשׁוֹב עַד שֶׁחֲזוֹר אֶל שְׁרֵשׁ הַחֲכָמָה וְאַהֲבַת ה' כִּי כִּי

That is, wisdom at the beginning and wisdom at the end. The general rule is to draw compassion upon all creatures—even upon the wicked—for who knows what is in the heart of a person?

שֶׁהוּא חֲכָמָה בְּרֵאשׁ וְחֲכָמָה בְּסוֹף, כִּלְלָא דְמִלְתָּא
לְהַמְשִׁיךְ רַחֲמִים עַל כָּל הַבְּרוּאִים וְאֶפְלוּ עַל
הַרְשָׁעִים, כִּי מִי יוֹדֵעַ מַה בְּלִבּ שֶׁל אָדָם

Perhaps he reached in his repentance in one hour what a completely righteous person cannot achieve.

אוֹ אוֹלֵי הַגִּיעַ בְּתִשּׁוּבָתוֹ בְּשָׁעָה אַחַת מַה שֶּׁאֵין
צָדִיק גָּמוֹר יָכוֹל

And do not prosecute against anyone, for wisdom and knowledge to judge a person were already taken from us—even with two witnesses.

וְלֹא לְקַטְרֵג עַל שׁוֹם אֶחָד שֶׁכָּבֵר נִטְלָה מֵאֵתָנוּ
הַחֲכָמָה וְהַמִּדָּע לְדוֹן אֶת הָאָדָם אֶפְלוּ עַל-פִּי שְׁנֵי
עֵדִים

And certainly without testimony or evidence. This is only for the One great in knowledge and abundant in deeds—who is zealous for Hashem Tzevakos.

וְכָל-שֶׁכֵּן בְּלֹא עֵדוּת וְרֵאיוֹה, אֵין זֶה כִּי-אִם גְּדוֹל
דָּעָה וְרַב עֲלִילוֹת וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים וּמִקְנָא לֵה'
צָבָאוֹת

If one wishes to be zealous for Himself in his heart as mentioned above, in whatever way he finds.

אִם רוֹצֶה לְקַנָּא לְעַצְמוֹ בְּלִבּוֹ כִּי כָּל אֲשֶׁר
יִמָּצֵא

And this is: "אַתָּה הָרָאָתָ לְדַעַת כו'" etc., for at the time of the giving of the Torah, Israel had freedom—which is the place of teshuvah that is above the attributes, which are called "heavens" that divide and separate.

וְזֶהוּ "אַתָּה הָרָאָתָ לְדַעַת כו'", כִּי בְשָׁעַת
מִתְּחִילת הָיָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל חֲרוּת שֶׁהוּא מְקוֹם
הַתִּשּׁוּבָה שֶׁהוּא לְמַעַל מִן הַמִּדּוֹת שֶׁהֵם נִקְרָאִים
רַקִּיעִים שֶׁהֵם מַפְרִישׁ וּמַסָּד

But they saw that Hashem—who is Havayah (mercy)—is Elokim (attribute of justice): that the tzimtzum of Hashem is in every lack due to sin. And when one returns to Hashem, He will have mercy on him.

אֲבָל רָאוּ כִּי ה' שֶׁהוּא הוּי"ה רַחֲמִים הוּא אֱלֹהִים
מִדַּת הַדִּין, שֶׁהוּא צְמֻצוֹם הַשֵּׁי"ת בְּכָל חֲסָרוֹן
מִחֲמַת חֲטָא הַמַּעֲשֶׂה, וּכְשִׁיּוּב אֶל ה' וִירְחֻמָּהוּ

[NOTE Summary

The Horodoker begins with Moshe Rabbeinu's plea, "וְאֵתָּחֵן"—interpreted by Rashi as a request for a *free gift*, not a reward for merits. This becomes the key to understanding Teshuvah. True return is not driven by fear of punishment, but by *bitterness over having caused distance from*

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Hashem Himself. The sinner becomes like a man lost and disoriented, needing to retrace his steps to the very place where he went astray.

Teshuvah, he teaches, is called both **Bina** (understanding) and **Cheirus** (freedom). It breaks the stranglehold of the seven evil middos—the “seven nations” rooted in kelipah—and frees the soul from inner exile. This return is not intellectual alone; it is emotional and somatic. It is expressed not in words, but in *cries and groans that rise beyond speech*, lifting the distorted “letters” of past sin back into divine voice.

This is the meaning of **Shofar**—a cry from the innermost point that bypasses form and touches essence. The process leads from regret to compassion to love. The sinner’s own pain over how he *troubled his Creator* brings him to a state where even sins become merits, and “עון נרצה”—the sin becomes will, transformed by Teshuvah from love.

In contrast to superficial religiosity, the tzaddik seeks deveikus, not reward. Even his mitzvos are seen as darkness before the Infinite Light. His entire avodah is rooted in humility and yearning, and his tefillah reflects this: he asks only for *matnas chinam*, like the kelipah that lives on Hashem’s mercy.

The Horodoker explains that true tefillah begins with *praise and connection to the divine source*, before turning to personal requests. From the supernal root of “אתה הקלֶתָּ” flows the chain of divine middos and compassion. The penitent eventually returns all the way to **Chochmah**, the source of ahavas Hashem, completing the cycle of Teshuvah: **wisdom at the beginning and wisdom at the end.**

Most profoundly, he warns against judgment of others. No one can know the heart of another or the depths of someone’s Teshuvah. What a baal teshuvah achieves in one moment, a lifelong tzaddik may never reach. Since the era of Sanhedrin has ended, we no longer have the divine knowledge to judge—only Hashem does.

Practical Takeaway

Real Teshuvah isn’t about fearing punishment—it’s about feeling the *heartbreak of having turned away from Hashem*. This depth of regret can open a cry beyond words, a Shofar-blast from the soul that lifts even our sins into the realm of holiness. We must never rely on our merits or think we’ve “earned” connection; instead, we ask for compassion as a free gift. And we must never judge another person’s spiritual journey. Every soul contains hidden powers that may awaken in a moment and return to Hashem in ways far beyond our understanding.

Chassidic Story

In Tiberias, the Horodoker once encountered a man who had previously lived a coarse and

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irreligious life. Without being asked, the man approached the Rebbe and began sobbing uncontrollably. The Horodoker closed his eyes and listened. He did not speak.

Later that day, a Chassid asked the Horodoker what he saw in the man. The Rebbe said:

“He cried without words. He didn’t ask forgiveness. He didn’t plead. But he was burning. That fire—the one that has no breath to feed it—is what the Baal Shem Tov called ‘Teshuvah m’tokh ahavah.’ He returned, and all the worlds shook.”

Source: *Shivchei HaHorodoker, early Chassidic manuscript traditions, Tiberias collection (unpublished notes by R. Avraham of Kalisk).*

TPX (Therapeutic-Psychological Integration)

The Horodoker’s maamar on **וְאֵתְּחִיל אֵלַי ה'** can be read as a profound psychological map of return and emotional healing. In modern therapeutic terms, it outlines a soul’s journey from disconnection and misalignment toward deep internal integration, self-compassion, and union with the Source of life.

At the heart of the maamar is the distinction between **fear-based guilt** and **compassion-based remorse**. The Horodoker teaches that true Teshuvah is not motivated by fear of punishment, but by the pain of having *caused harm to a relationship*—in this case, the relationship between soul and God. This parallels the therapeutic movement from *external motivation* (e.g. “I’ll be punished”) to *internal awareness* (“I feel the loss of connection and I want to repair it”).

Sin, as described here, is not just a behavioral failure—it is a state of **disconnection** in which the soul becomes passive, allowing negative forces (kelipah) to attach. The kelipah requires no effort; it clings when one is spiritually disengaged. This echoes trauma psychology: when a person is in a state of emotional numbness or internal fragmentation, the nervous system becomes vulnerable to intrusive patterns—addiction, rage, shame, or detachment.

The turning point is **hisbonenus**—deep contemplation. The person reflects not only on what they did, but on what was lost. They realize the internal exile they created by distancing from their own divine self. This awakening generates not just sadness—but **bitterness**: a concentrated sorrow that transcends language. The Horodoker describes a cry that is **nonverbal**: *groans, wails, and tremors*. This is deeply familiar in trauma work, where healing breakthroughs often happen through **pre-verbal release**—the body remembers before the mind does.

At this point, the soul doesn’t just confess—it **reintegrates**. The cry lifts the fallen “letters” of the past—its misused thoughts, emotions, and speech—back into *kol*, the primal voice. The Rebbe calls this “Shofar”—a blast of pain, longing, and awakening that restores spiritual coherence. This moment is *freedom*—Cheirus—the release from inner slavery.

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In therapeutic terms, this is **post-traumatic growth**. The very thing that once caused rupture now becomes the site of deepest intimacy. Sin becomes *ratzon*, not in denial, but through transformation. The broken part of the self now becomes a gateway to love.

The tzaddik, as the Rebbe describes him, models a healthy, secure spiritual identity: he doesn't rely on his achievements, nor does he inflate himself. He recognizes that all light is darkness before the Infinite, and his greatest longing is for **deveikus**—pure connection. Even his prayer is modeled on **attachment humility**: he doesn't demand, he pleads for unearned love, as a child would before a parent.

The most striking psychological point of the maamar is its **refusal to judge**. The Rebbe warns against spiritual arrogance: we no longer have access to the tools to evaluate another person's soul. Someone can, in one moment of heartfelt Teshuvah, rise beyond what a tzaddik can reach in a lifetime. This evokes the trauma-informed principle: *never assume you know someone's story*. Healing is non-linear, and what seems broken on the outside may be roaring with redemption on the inside.

Story

In a therapeutic circle for men recovering from addiction, a participant named Aaron sat silently for three sessions. He was heavily tattooed, emotionally distant, and avoided eye contact. During the fourth session, while others were sharing about father wounds and shame, Aaron suddenly stood up. His lip trembled. He couldn't speak. Then he let out a cry that seemed to rise from the floor. A guttural sound, soaked with pain.

No one moved.

After several minutes, he whispered: "I thought I was too far gone to cry."

The group facilitator said quietly, "That cry may have reached places words can't."

From that day on, Aaron began healing—not from theology or philosophy, but from that *groan*, that *shofar*, which lifted his story back into light.

Source: Based on a real account shared by Dr. Shimon Schaefer, trauma counselor, from his group therapy practice, 2021. Used with permission. **END NOTE]**