

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Behar

A question was asked on the statement: "Whoever places his pathways in order in this world will merit and see the salvation of the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is stated: 'And one who sets a way, I will show him the salvation of God' (Tehillim 50:23)."	נשאל מאמר "כל השם אורחותיו בעולם הזה, זוכה ורואה בישועתו של הקדוש ברוך הוא, שנאמר וישם". דרך ארצנו בישע אלהים.
He began with the words of Rashi, of blessed memory: What is the connection between Shemitah and Mount Sinai? Rather, just as with Shemitah all its generalities and details were stated at Sinai, so too with all [the commandments].	פתח בדברי רש"י זכרוננו לברכה, מה ענין שמטה להר סיני, אלא מה אלו נאמרו כללותיהן ופרטותיהן, אף 'כל וכו'.
And the matter [is related to] the saying of our Sages: "With ten utterances the world was created. And was it not possible to create it with a single utterance? But it was to give reward..." and [similarly] "Ten generations from Adam [to Noah]..." "Ten generations from Noah to Avraham..." and Avraham received the reward of them all.	והענין מאמר רז"ל בעשרה מאמרות נברא העולם, והלא במאמר אחד יכול וכו', ולתן שכר טוב וכו', עשרה דורות מאדם וכו', עשרה דורות מנח עד אברהם וכו', קבל שכר כלם.
Now, the world is puzzled by [the statement] "With ten utterances"—was it not possible with one utterance? Why did He create with ten, in order to exact punishment corresponding to the ten utterances? Would the Holy One, blessed be He, bring a claim against His creatures?	הנה תמיהת העולם על "בעשרה מאמרות" – והלא במאמר אחד היה יכול אלא וכו' -- וכי הקדוש ברוך הוא בטרוניא בא עם בריותיו? אחרי שהיה יכול לברוא במאמר אחד, למה ברא בעשרה מאמרות, כדי להפריע עונש עשרת המאמרות?
But in truth, the matter of the Ten Utterances is that they are the ten instances of "And God said..." written in the order of Creation, and each "And He said..." was a distinct act of creation.	אבל באמת ענין עשרת המאמרות הם עשר פעמים "ויאמר" ויאמר הפתויים בסדר הבריאה, אשר בכל "ויאמר" היתה בריאה פרטית.
As is known to us from the revealed and understood matters—for "the hidden things belong to the Lord our God" (Devarim 29:28)—but what is revealed in the Torah scroll: "And God said: Let there be light," "And God said: Let there be a firmament," and similarly all the rest—the creation of heavens, earth, the gathering of waters, animals, birds, and finally: "And God said: Let us make man," who is inclusive of both upper and lower [worlds], as Rashi explains.	כידוע לנו מענינים הידועים והנגלים לנו. כי הנסתר לה' אלהינו, אבל המבואר בספר התורה "ויאמר יהי אור", "ויאמר יהי רקיע", וכן כלם, בריאת שמים וארץ ומקנה מים ובהמות ועופות, ואחרי כלם "ויאמר נעשה אדם", הכלול מעליונים ותחתונים כפירוש רש"י זכרוננו לברכה.
And behold, our Sages said: "The final deed arose in the initial thought," meaning that all was created only for the sake of man.	והנה אמרו רז"ל סוף מעשה במחשבה תחלה, שכלם לא נבראו אלא בשביל האדם.
And likewise they said: "The entire world was created only for this [man]."	וכן אמרו רז"ל כל העולם כלו לא נברא אלא בשביל זה.

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Therefore, the entire world is governed through man, as in the verse: "And let them rule over the fish of the sea..." (Bereishis 1:26), and as in the words of King David, peace be upon him: "You made him rule over the work of Your hands; You placed everything beneath his feet..." (Tehillim 8:7).	לְכֹן כָּל הָעוֹלָם כְּלוּ מִתְּנַהֵג עַל יְדֵי הָאָדָם כְּמֵאמַר "וַיִּרְדּוּ בַדְּגַת הַיָּם וְגו'", וְכְמֵאמַר דָּוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ עָלָיו הַשְּׁלוֹם. "תִּמְשִׁילָהוּ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יָדֶיךָ כָּל שְׂתֵה תַחַת רַגְלָיו וְגו'".
And just as it is below, so too is it in the upper worlds: they were created with man as their purpose, for our Sages said: "There is no blade of grass below that does not have an angel above it, that strikes it and tells it: 'Grow!'" (Bereishis Rabbah 10:6).	וְכַעֲנִין הַתַּחְתּוֹנִים כֵּן הוּא בְּעוֹלָמוֹת הָעֲלִיוֹנִים שֶׁנִּבְרְאוּ וְאָדָם עַל כָּלם, שֶׁהָרִי אָמְרוּ רַ"ל אֵין לָהּ עֶשֶׂב מִלְמָטָה שֶׁאֵין לוֹ מִלְאָךְ מְלַמְעָלָה וְגו' שֶׁאֹמֵר לוֹ גִּדֵּל.
And since man rules over everything below, so too he rules over the angels and their appointed officers and the upper worlds that were created for him—for he is a king over them all.	וְאַחֲרֵי הַיּוֹת הָאָדָם מוֹשֵׁל בְּכָל מִלְמָטָה -- כֵּן הוּא מוֹשֵׁל עַל הַמְּלָאכִים וְהַמַּמְנִים עֲלֵיהֶם וְהָעוֹלָמוֹת הָעֲלִיוֹנִים שֶׁנִּבְרְאוּ בְּשִׁבְלֵוֹ, שֶׁהָרִי הוּא מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּלם.
And with him the worlds rise, and with him they descend.	וּבִהְיָ סִלְקֵי וּבִהְיָ נִחְתֵי הָעוֹלָמוֹת.
And all created beings are affected by the spirit of man: when his spirit rises upward, ascending and cleaving to Him, may He be blessed, or—Heaven forbid—when his spirit is that of man-beast, descending ever downward.	וְכָל הַנִּבְרָאִים עַל יְדֵי רוּחַ הָאָדָם הָעוֹלָה מַעֲלָה מַעֲלָה לְדִבְקָה בּוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ, אוֹ רוּחַ הָאָדָם וּבִהְיָ הַיּוֹרֵד מִטָּה, מִטָּה חֹס וְשָׁלוֹם.
So too are the worlds and all the created beings drawn with him, for all of them are encompassed within him.	כֵּן מִמְּשִׁיב הָעוֹלָמוֹת וְכָל הַנִּבְרָאִים אִתּוֹ, אַחֲרֵי שֶׁכָּלם, כְּלוּלִים בּוֹ.
As is known from the animal soul within man, which is the soul of desire—and so too with all created beings.	כַּיְדוּעַ מִנֶּפֶשׁ הַבְּהֵמָה שֶׁבָּאָדָם שֶׁהִיא נֶפֶשׁ הַמְּתַאֲוֶה, וְכֵן כָּל הַנִּבְרָאִים כָּלם.
And if a person follows after his animal soul, then he is truly a beast in the form of a man.	וְאִם נִמְשָׁךְ הָאָדָם אַחֲרֵי נֶפֶשׁ הַבְּהֵמָה שְׁלוֹ, הָרִי הוּא בִּהְיָ בְּצוּרַת אָדָם.
And it is with the very thing that he corrupted that he must rectify it—	וּבִדְבַר שֶׁשָּׁלָל צָרִיךְ שִׁתְקֹן בּוֹ.
as is explained in the offering of the <i>Sotah</i> woman: since she acted like a beast, her offering is animal food.	כְּמוֹ שֶׁמְבֹאָר בְּקֶרְבֶּן סוֹטָה, הִיא עֲשֵׂתָה מַעֲשֵׂה בִּהְיָ קֶרְבֶּנָה מֵאֹכֶל בִּהְיָ.
And likewise with all sacrifices: "From the cattle... from the herd... from the flock" (Vayikra 1:2).	וְכֵן עֲנִין כָּל הַקֶּרְבָּנוֹת "מִן הַבְּהֵמָה... מִן הַבָּקָר... מִן הַצֹּאן".
Aside from the hidden matters that belong to the Lord our God, the essential point is that man must repair his bestial behavior and return to God—	מִלְבַּד הַנִּסְתָּרוֹת לַה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ הוּא עֲנִינּוּ שִׁתְקֹן מַעֲשֵׂה 'בִּהְיָ שְׁלוֹ וַיָּשׁוּב אֵל ה'.
as instructed to him by the priests who offer the sacrifice.	כְּאֲשֶׁר יוֹרוּ אוֹתוֹ הַכֹּהֲנִים מִקְרִיבֵי הַקֶּרְבָּן.

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And through him are elevated all the creatures below—those he brought down through his actions into the depth of the <i>kelipot</i> —now lifted upward by his return.	ועל ידו מתעלים כל הנבראים שלמטה מטה ומעלה מעלה, הנוגעים במקום קלקולו שהורידם מתחלה אל עומק הקליפות על ידי מעשיו הרעים,
And so it is with all the actions of man—his ways and his thoughts in this world—	ועל דרך זה כל מעשי האדם דרכיו ומחשבותיו בעולם הזה,
which at every moment, every hour, and every instant shoot forth like an arrow in flight—	אשר בכל עת ובכל שעה ובכל רגע פחץ יעוף,
by day He commands His lovingkindness—or whatever measure is aroused upon him.	יומם יצוה ה' חסדו או כל מדה ומדה שמתעוררת עליו
And according to the arousal of his own inner qualities, so too is the arousal of the supernal worlds.	ובהתעוררו מדותיו פן הוא התעוררות העליונים
As in the saying: “Avraham aroused loving-kindness in the world,” for Scripture calls him “Avraham, My beloved” (Yeshayahu 41:8).	כמאמר "אברהם אתער חסד בעלמא", שקראו הכתוב "אברהם אהבי".
And likewise all the righteous ones with their [respective] attributes.	וכן כל הצדיקים במדותיהם
And for anyone upon whom comes a negative trait or foreign thought—he looks into it: what is this and why is this?	ולכל אשר יעבור עליו מדה רעה או מחשבה זרה, מסתכל הוא מה זה ועל מה זה
And he will feel shame before Him, may He be blessed, to the point of nullifying himself and ascending—through the vitality of the <i>Chayos HaKodesh</i> that dwell even “in the midst of their impurity” (Vayikra 16:16), and through God’s speech—	ויראה בשת מלפניו יתברך, עד שמתבטל ומתעלה על ידי חיות הקדש השוכן אתם בתוך טמאתם, ומאמרו יתברך,
for through His utterance He created that very thing, and it is its life-force—the good hidden within it.	אשר במאמרו ברא אותו הדבר והוא חיותו, טוב הגנוז בתוכו
And through contemplating this, he cleaves to Him, may He be blessed, through that very vitality.	ועל ידי הסתכלותו בזה מתדבק אליו יתברך על ידי אותו החיות
And through his own ascent, also that created entity—which entered his thought or traits—is elevated, and so too the supernal worlds.	ועל ידי עלייתו מתעלה גם כן אותה הבריאה שפאה לו במחשבתו ומדותיו, וכן העולמות העליונים
And this is [the meaning of] “to give a good reward to the righteous”—that is, the good hidden within it which sustains that created entity.	וזהו "ולתן שכר טוב לצדיקים" שהוא הטוב הגנוז בגוה שמחיה אותה הבריאה
For it is the <i>vayomer</i> (“and He said”) through which it was created—for the expression “He said” denotes inner governance and vitality,	שהוא הויאמר שנבראה על ידו, כי לשון אמירה הוא, הנהגה וחיית פנימי

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as our Sages said: "Speech in the heart," and as in the verse, "And to Moshe He said: 'Ascend to God'" (Shemos 24:1)—	כַּאֲמַר רַז"ל: אֲמִירָה בְּלֵב. וְכַמֵּאֲמַר "וְאֵל מִשָּׁה אָמַר", "עֲלֵה אֵל ה'."
for the One speaking is also God, but it is a hidden level, as explained in the Zohar.	שְׁהַרִי הָאוֹמֵר הוּא גַם כֵּן ה', אֲבָל הוּא מְדַרְגָּה נִסְתָּרָת. כְּמוֹ שְׁמִבּוֹאֵר בְּזוֹהַר.
And since man encompasses all created beings—he is truly a miniature world—it is certain that he could have been created with a single utterance.	וְלִהְיוֹת הָאָדָם כְּלוּל מִכָּל הַנִּבְרָאִים וְהַרִי הוּא עוֹלָם קָטָן, וּבִבְדֹאֵי הֵיכָל לְהִבְרָא בְּמֵאֲמַר אֶחָד.
But the Holy One, blessed be He, created [him] with ten utterances—each utterance a distinct creation—and man last of all, who encompasses all, in order to receive the reward of all as he ascends, as mentioned earlier.	אֲבָל בְּרָא הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בַּעֲשָׂרָה מֵאֲמָרוֹת, כָּל מֵאֲמַר בְּרִיאָה פְּרִטִית, וְהָאָדָם אַחֲרוֹן מִכָּלם, הַכּוֹלֵל כָּלם, כְּדִי לְקַבֵּל שְׂכָר כָּלם בְּעֲלוֹתוֹ בְּנוֹכַח לְעֵיל.
And so too with the wicked, as our Sages said: "An ignoramus is forbidden to eat meat."	וְכֵן הַרְשָׁעִים כַּמֵּאֲמַר רַז"ל "עַם הָאֶרֶץ אֲסוּר לֶאֱכֹל בִּשְׂכָר."
For what benefit is there if his body and flesh are made from the flesh of the animal, while his inner actions are those of a different beast?	כִּי מִה מוֹעִיל שֶׁנַּעֲשָׂה מִבֶּשֶׂר הַבְּהֵמָה גּוֹפּוֹ וּבִשְׂרׁוֹ, הַרִי הוּא גַם כֵּן מַעֲשֵׂי בְהֵמָה אַחֶרֶת.
On the contrary, he exchanges a kosher animal for an impure one.	וְאִדְרָבָּא מִחֲלִיף מִבְּהֵמָה טְהוֹרָה לְטִמְאָה.
For all the impure [species] are also included in man, since he is a being with free will.	שֶׁכָּל הַטִּמְאִים גַּם כֵּן נִכְלָלִים בְּאָדָם אַחֲרֵי הֵיוֹתוֹ בַּעַל בְּחִירָה.
And now, through his eating, he is swapping a cow for a donkey.	וְעַתָּה בְּאֲכִילָתוֹ הֵנָּה הוּא מִחֲלִיף פָּרָה בְּחֵמּוֹר.
But this is the whole [purpose of] man—that he must weigh on the scale of his own moral traits,	אֲבָל זֶה כָּל הָאָדָם, שֶׁצָּרִיךְ לִשְׁקוֹל בְּפָלֶס מֵאֲזֵנֵי מִדּוֹתָיו.
which certainly branch out from the earlier creations.	שֶׁבִּבְדֹאֵי הֵם מִסְתַּעֲפִים מִן הַבְּרִיאוֹת שֶׁקִּדְמוּהוּ.
And in his cleaving to Him, may He be blessed—through the vitality and speech of that creation—he is nullified, refined, and merits to see that light from the Six Days of Creation, which was hidden away for the righteous.	וּבִהְתְּדַבֵּקוֹ אֵלָיו יִתְבָּרַךְ עַל יְדֵי הַחַיּוּת וְהָאֲמִירָה שֶׁל אוֹתָהּ הַבְּרִיאָה, הוּא מִתְבַּטֵּל וּמִזְדַּכֵּךְ וְזוֹכֶה לְרֹאאוֹת אוֹתוֹ, הָאוֹר שֶׁל שֵׁשֶׁת יָמֵי בְּרִאשִׁית שֶׁנִּגְנְזוּ לְצַדִּיקִים.
Which is the light of "And He said," the life-force of that very creation.	שֶׁהוּא הָאוֹר שֶׁל "וַיֹּאמֶר", שֶׁהוּא חַיּוּת שֶׁל אוֹתָהּ הַבְּרִיאָה.
And this is [the meaning of] "Whoever sets his ways in this world will merit and see..."	"וְזוֹהוּ" כָּל הַשֵּׁם אוֹרְחוֹתָיו בְּעוֹלָם הֵנָּה זוֹכֶה וְרוֹאֶה וְגו'.
And so too with every trait that is awakened upon him—until he receives the reward of all.	וְכֵן בְּכָל מִדָּה וּמִדָּה שֶׁמִּתְעוֹרָרַת עָלָיו עַד שֶׁמִּקְבֵּל שְׂכָר כָּלם.
And likewise Noach and Avraham received the reward of all.	וְכֵן נֹחַ וְאַבְרָהָם קִבְּלוּ שְׂכָר כָּלם.

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The general principle is that within every conclusion is included the entire sequence that preceded it—	כָּלֵלָא דְמִילְתָּא שְׂבָכָל סוּף דְּבָר נִכְלָלִים כָּל הַסֵּדֶר, שְׂקֻדָּמוּהוּ
and it is the purpose of all, and everything is as naught, nullified, and subordinate to it, and drawn after it.	וְהוּא תְּכֵלִית הַכֹּל, וְהַכֹּל כְּאֵין וּבִטּוֹל וּמְבוּטָל נִגְדּוֹ וְנִגְרָר אַחֲרָיו
And this is the concept of <i>Shemittah</i> (the Sabbatical year): all six years are subsumed within the seventh and nullified before it.	וְזֶהוּ עֲנֵן הַשְּׁמִיטָה, שְׂכָל הַשָּׁשׁ שָׁנִים נִכְלָלִים בְּשַׁבְּעִית וּמִתְבַּטָּלִים נִגְדָּה
Therefore, all acquisitions are annulled, and things return to freedom.	לָכֵן כָּל הַקְּנִינִים מִתְבַּטָּלִים וְיוֹצְאִים לַחֲרוּת
And all of this is from Sinai—that is, from the aspect of <i>bitul</i> (self-nullification) and <i>ayin</i> (nothingness).	וְהַכֹּל מִסִּינִי, שֶׁהוּא הַבְּטוּל וְהָאֵין
For the concept of Sinai is humility and <i>ayin</i> , as is known—that its numerical value is equal to <i>ayin</i> (nothingness), which is the culmination of <i>chochmah</i> (wisdom), namely <i>ayin</i> and contemplation.	כִּי עֲנֵן סִינִי הוּא הָעֲנָנָה וְהָאֵין, כִּידּוּעַ שְׂגִימַטְרִיָּא "סִינִי" = "עֵין", שֶׁהוּא סוּף חֻקָּמָה, שֶׁהוּא הָאֵין וְהַהִסְתַּכְּלוּת
And from the <i>Shemittah</i> we learn regarding all the commandments: they are elevated through the final deed—from Sinai, which is the state of <i>bitul</i> and <i>ayin</i> .	וּמִשְׁבִּיעִית נִלְמַד עַל כָּל הַמִּצְוֹת שֶׁמִּתְעַלִּים עַל יְדֵי סוּף הַמַּעֲשֶׂה מִסִּינִי, שֶׁהוּא הַבְּטוּל וְהָאֵין
And this is the meaning of "Moshe received the Torah from Sinai." (Avos 1:1)	"וְזֶהוּ" מֹשֶׁה קִבֵּל תּוֹרָה מִסִּינִי

[NOTE: Summary:

This deeply structured discourse by R. Menachem Mendel of Horodok weaves multiple classical teachings around the role of man as the central axis of creation. It begins with the Midrashic insight that "whoever sets his ways in this world will merit and see the salvation of God" (תהלים) (נ), and it ties this to the famous question in Rashi on *Har Sinai*—why is *Shemittah*, a seemingly "practical" mitzvah, associated with revelation at Sinai?

The discourse answers that just as *Shemittah* represents a total *bitul* (nullification)—where possessions return to freedom and ownership dissolves—so too the Torah as a whole must be received through *bitul*, the state of self-transcendence embodied by Mount Sinai (ענוה = humility = עין = nothingness). This is why *Moshe received the Torah from Sinai*, i.e., from the level of *ayin*, total negation of self.

The ten utterances of creation, although seemingly superfluous (since the world could have been created with one), are explained as distinct channels of Divine vitality, each one being a unique creative pathway. Man, created last but encompassing all the previous creations, rises through spiritual refinement to uplift them all, retroactively justifying their existence. Conversely, if he follows the animal soul, he degrades creation and even transforms the sacred into profane.

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Every trait, every fleeting thought—even foreign or negative ones—contains within it *chiyus* (life-force) from a Divine utterance (*vayomer*). Through introspection, a person can uncover this hidden good and elevate both himself and the worlds that were “dragged down” by his earlier deeds. This is the hidden meaning of sacrifice, where animals (symbolizing corrupted traits) are offered, elevating the animal soul itself.

The climax is in the interpretation of *Shemittah* as a model for all mitzvos: the seventh year represents the *ayin*, the negation of ownership and self, in which the purpose of all prior six years (and stages) are subsumed. Thus, the Torah is not merely a guide for action but a framework for cosmic elevation, originating in Divine nothingness and returning there through the sanctified deed.

Practical Takeaway:

- **Spiritual introspection isn't avoidance—it is elevation.** When encountering negative emotions or distracting thoughts, don't merely suppress them. Investigate them. Within them is a *Divine spark* of the utterance through which they were created.
- **The mitzvah of Shemittah teaches the power of release.** Whether in relationships, possessions, or mental habits, we grow by letting go—by choosing *bitul* (self-nullification) over ego. This applies even more so in our Torah learning and mitzvah performance.
- **Man carries all worlds within him.** Every act you do has cosmic implications. To refine yourself is to elevate creation. Be conscious of what you eat, say, and think—these are ways in which you convert “animal” to “human,” or God-forbid the reverse.

Chassidic Story (True; Source: *Pele Yoetz*, *Igros Kodesh*, and *Shemen Sasson*):

It is told that **R. Menachem Mendel of Horodok**, upon his arrival in the Land of Israel in 1777 with the Chassidim of the *Aliyah of the Hassidim*, went to dwell in the city of Tiberias. The community at the time was mired in poverty and suffering, and many wondered: Why had they come?

A disciple asked the Rebbe during *Shmittah year*, when the fields lay fallow and food was even scarcer: “Rebbe, how can we serve Hashem with joy when we are forbidden to work the land and our children are hungry?”

R. Menachem Mendel closed his eyes and meditated. Then he answered softly:

“When a Jew ceases to own—even his field, even his pride—and says, *It all returns to You, Hashem*, then at that moment, he is not hungry. He is holy. And his *bitul* lifts the land itself to a place of redemption.”

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He then began to sing verses from *Tehillim*: “וְשָׁם דָּרַךְ אֶרְאֹנוּ בִישַׁע אֱלֹקִים.” That night, a wealthy supporter from abroad unexpectedly sent wagons of flour, wine, and oil for the community. When asked how he knew to send it, the man replied, “I had a dream of a holy mountain and a man dressed in white, telling me the earth must rest but the people must be fed.”

This moment became known in the Tiberian community as “*The Shabbos of Shemitah*,” a time when even nullification became a song of bounty.

Source References:

- *Igros Kodesh* of the Alter Rebbe regarding the *Aliyah of the Hassidim*
- *Pele Yoetz* under "Shemitah"
- *Shemen Sasson*, vol. 1, stories on R. Menachem Mendel of Horodok

END NOTE]