

Introduction

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok (also known as the Horodoker or Vitebsker Rebbe), one of the foremost disciples of the Maggid of Mezritch and among the early leaders of Chassidus, explores in this Maamer the spiritual path of Avraham Avinu and the nature of true deveikus (cleaving to G-d). Through the verse "יַבָּהְשֶׁבֶהְ לוֹ צְּדָקָהּ ', he reveals that genuine connection to G-d transcends intellect and emotion altogether. The journey of Avraham represents the movement from comprehension to surrender, from enlightened understanding to the humility of faith, from the pleasure of giving to the purity of selfless being.

| And he believed in Hashem, and He considered it to him as righteousness: For behold, it is known what Shlomo HaMelech said, "For seven times a righteous man falls and rises." | וְהֶצֶמִן בַּה׳ וַיִּחְשְׁבֶהָ לּוֹ צְדָקָה : כִּי הִנֵּה יָדוּעַ מַה שָׁאָמֵר שְׁלֹמֹה הַמֶּלֶךְ הָעָרוּם "כִּי שֶׁבַע יִפּוֹל צַדִּיק "וָקָם, |
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| Interpretation – that the righteous person subdues all the lowly traits, that he has nothing of his own, only all for the honor of the Blessed One. | פֵּרוּשׁ – שֶׁהַצַּדִּיק מַכְנִיעַ כָּל הַמִּדוֹת הַשְּׁפֵּלוֹת, דְּלֵית לֵיה מִגַּרְמֵיה כְּלוּם, רַק הַכֹּל לְכְבוֹד הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרֵךְ. |
| As King David, peace be upon him, said: "To You, Hashem, is the greatness, etc." And through this he attains divine comprehension within all the attributes. | כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמַר דָּוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ עַלָיו הַשָּׁלוֹם "לְךּ ה׳ הַגְּדֵלְה וְכוּי", וְעַל־יְדֵי זָה בָּא הַשָּׂגַת אֱלֹהוּת בְּכָל הַמִּדּוֹת. |
| And then "A fire goes before Him" — and the sparks are elevated. | ּוְאָז "אֵשׁ לְפָנָיו תַּלֵךּ" – וְהַנִּיצוֹצוֹת נִתְעַלוּ |
| And this is the meaning of "Seven times a righteous man falls," like "he casts down," meaning that all seven lowly attributes he breaks and humbles by bringing divine perception into the traits. | וְזֶהוּ "שֶׁבַע יִפּוֹל צַדִּיק" כְּמוֹ "יַפִּיל", פֵּרוּשׁ – שֶׁכָּל שֶׁבַע מִדּוֹת הַשְּׁפֵלוֹת מְשַׁבֵּר וּמַשְׁפִּילָם עַל־יְדֵי שֶׁמֵבִיא הַשָּׂגוֹת אֱלֹהוּת בַּמִּדּוֹת, |
| And through this — "and rises," all the sparks are elevated. | ַוְעָל־יְדֵי זֶה – "וָקָם", נִתְעַלוּ כָּל הַנִּיצוֹצוֹת. |
| And so was the essence of creation: that the Blessed One created something from nothing so that the righteous should break the physicality and elevate everything to its source, as it is said in the Gemara, "The whole world was created only to accompany this one." | ְוְכֵן הָיָה עִיקַּר הַבְּרִיאָה שֶׁהַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרֵךְּ בָּרָא יֵשׁ מֵאַיִן כְּדֵי שֶׁהַצַּדִּיק יְשַׁבֵּר הַגַּשְׁמִיּוּת וְיַצְלֶה הַכֹּל לְשָׁרְשׁוֹ, כְּמוֹ שֶׁנָּאֱמֵר בַּגְּמָרָא כָּל הָעוֹלָם לֹא נִבְרָא אֶלָּא לְצֵוּוֹת לָזֶה. |
| And all of it is through the Torah, which he studies with awe and love, for in all matters there must be some measure. | וְהַכּּל הוּא עַל־יְדֵי הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁלוֹמֵד בְּיִרְאָה וְאַהַבָּה, כִּי בְּכָל הַדְּבָרִים צָרִידְ לְהִיוֹת אֵיזֶה מִדָּה. |
| And when he speaks with awe and love, he elevates that trait to its source. | וּכְשֶׁמְדַבֵּר בְּיִרְאָה וְאַהַבָּה מַעֲלֶה הַמִּדָּה הַהִיא לְשָׁרְשָׁהִּ |

| Therefore, the beginning of creation was for the sake of Torah, which is called "the beginning of His way," for everything is through the Torah. | לְפִיכָךְ הָיְתָה תְּחָלֵּת הַבְּּרִיאָה בִּשְׁבִיל הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁנָּקְרֵאת "רֵאשִׁית דַּרְכּוֹ", כִּי הַכּּלֹ הוּא עַל־יְדֵי הַתּוֹרָה |
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| And this is, "Hashem acquired me at the beginning of His way," meaning the first drawing forth of the creation of worlds was for the Torah; "way" being a term of extension or drawing forth. | ְוֶזֶהוּ "ה׳ קָנָנִי רֵאשִׁית דַּרְכּוֹ" פֵּרוּשׁ – מְּחָלֵּת הַמְשָׁכָה שֶׁל בְּרִיאַת הָעוֹלָמוֹת הָיְתָה בִּשְׁבִיל הַתּוֹרָה, "דֶּרֶךּ" הוּא לְשׁוֹן הַמְשָׁכָה |
| "Before His deeds of old," meaning the essence of creation was so that all His works, which He brought into being from nothing, should be elevated back to their root — and this is, "Before His works," that His works should ascend to the beginning, to what preceded all. | קֶדֶם מִפְעָלָיו מֵאָז", פֵּרוּשׁ – הָעִיקֶּר הַבְּּרִיאָה הָיָה" כְּדֵי שָׁיִצְלֶה כָּל מַצְשָׂיו שָׁל הַשַּׁם יִתְבָּרַהְ שֶׁהֶמְצִיא יֵשׁ מֵאַיִּן לְשָׁרְשָׁם, וְזָהוּ "קֶדֶם מִפְּעָלָיו" – שָׁיַצְלֶה מִפְעָלָיו לְקֶדֶם מֵאָז. |
| He explained how he elevates — by bringing divine comprehension into the seven attributes. | פַּירֵשׁ אֵיךְ מַעֲלֶה – עַל־יְדֵי שֶׁמֵּבִיא הַשָּׂגוֹת אֱלֹהוּת בָּז׳ מִדּוֹת. |
| And this is, "To the garden of nuts I went down to see the budding of the vine." | וְזֶהוּ "אֶל גִּנַת אֱגוֹז יָרַדְתִּי לְרְאוֹת הַפָּרְחָה הַגֶּפֶן". |
| Meaning — as it is stated in the Gemara, the letter gimel and dalet stand for "gomeil dalim" — benefactor to the poor. | פַירוּשׁ – דְאִיתָא בַּגְמָרָא גִּימ״ל דָּלֵ״ת – גּוֹמֵל דַּלִּים. |
| Its meaning is that the righteous one is called a "benefactor to the poor," for he brings divine comprehension into the lower levels within the seven physical attributes, and through this the sparks are elevated, as mentioned above. | פֵּירוּשׁוֹ הַצַּדִּיק נָקְרָא "גּוֹמֵל דַּלִּים", שֶׁמֵּבִיא הַשָּׂגוֹת אֱלֹהוּת בַּמַּדְרֵגוֹת הַתַּחְתּוֹנוֹת בְּז׳ מִדּוֹת הַגַּשְׁמִיִּים, וְעַל־יְדֵי זֶה נִתְעַלוּ הַנִּיצוֹצוֹת כַּנַּ״ל. |
| And this is, "To the garden of nuts," meaning — the Master of the world is grasped within the seven physical attributes through the righteous one, who is called gimel. | וְזֶהוּ "אֶל גִּנַּת אֱגוֹז", פֵּירוּשׁוֹ – אֲלוּפוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם נִשָּׂג בְּז׳ מִדּוֹת הַגַּשְׁמִיִּים עַל־יְדֵי הַצַּדִּיק הַנִּקְרָא גִּימ״ל. |
| And this is the word "egōz" — meaning: Alef (the Master of the world) gomeil (benefactor) zayin (seven attributes). | וָזָהוּ אֱגוֹ״ז – אֲלוּפוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם גּוֹמֵל ז׳ מִדּוֹת. |
| And all of this is through the elevation of the sparks. | ּוְהַכּּל הוּא עַל־יְדֵי שֶׁהַנִּיצוֹצוֹת יִתְעַלוּ. |
| And this is, "To see the budding of the vine," in order that speech, which is Malchus called "vine," should be elevated (as stated in the Zohar in the passage "and in the vine three branches"). | וְזֶהוּ "הַפָּרְחָה הַגָּפֶן" כְּדֵי שָׁיִּתְעַלֶּה הַדְּבּוּר שֶׁהוּא מַלְכוּת שָׁנַּקְרֵאת "גָּפֶן" (כְּמוֹ שֶׁנָּאֱמֵר בַּזּהַר בַּמַּאֲמָר (""וּבַגֶּפֶן שְׁלשָׁה שָׂרִיגִים. |
| And this is, "And He considered it to him as righteousness," for the righteous one is a benefactor — meaning he is called the vav, which has nothing of its own. | – וְזֶהוּ "וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ לוֹ צְדָקָה", כִּי הַצַּדִּיק הוּא גּוֹמֵל פֵּירוּשׁ שֶׁנָּקָרָא וָ"ו דְּלֵית לֵיה מִגַּרְמֵיה כְּלוּם. |

| He subdues all the attributes to the Holy One, blessed be He, and is only a vav — a line of extension — through which divine comprehension enters the attributes. | שֶׁמַכְנִיעַ כָּל הַמִּדּוֹת לַה׳ יִתְבָּרֵךְ, וְאֵינוֹ רַק וָ״ו הַמְשָׁכָה שָׁעַל־יְדָה בָּאָה הַשָּׂגַת אֱלֹהוּת בַּמִּדּוֹת. |
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| And the Shechinah does not descend below the yud; thus, there is a revelation of wisdom, which is yud, within the lower levels. | וְאֵין הַשְּׁכִּינָה יוֹרֶדֶת לְמַטָּה מִיּוּ״ד, נִמְצָא יֵשׁ הִתְגַּלוּת הַחָּכְמָה שֶׁהִיא יוּ״ד בַּמַּדְרֵגוֹת הַתַּחְתּוֹנוֹת. |
| Therefore, the righteous one is called gimel — for he is vav-yud. | ָלְפִיכָךְ נִקְרָא הַצַּדִּיק גִּימ״ל שֶׁהוּא נָ״ו יוּ״ד. |
| And when he benefits the poor, he brings the yud, which is wisdom, into the levels that are in poverty. | וּכְשֶׁהוּא גּוֹמֵל דַּלִּים מֵבִיא הַיּוּ״ד חָכְמָה לַמַּדְרֵגוֹת שֶׁהֵם בְּדַלוּת. |
| And from the dalet comes the hei — that the yud, which is wisdom, enters into it. | ְוַנַצְשֶׂה מִן הַדָּלֶ״ת הֵ״א שֶׁהַיּוּ״ד שֶׁהָיָה שֶׁהִיא חָכְמָה בָּאָה לְתוֹכָהּ |
| And this is, "And he believed in Hashem," for "the righteous lives by his faith." | וְזֶהוּ "וְהָאֱמִין בַּה׳", כִּי "צַדִּיק בָּאֱמוּנָתוֹ יִחְיֶה". |
| Meaning that through the righteous man's belief that "there is no place devoid of Him," he brings divine comprehension into the world. | פֵירוּשׁ, בְּמַה שֶׁהַצַּדִּיק מַאֲמִין דְּלֵית אֲתַר פָּנוּי מִינֵּיה, עַל־יְדֵי כֵּן מֵבִיא הַשָּׂגוֹת אֱלֹהוּת בָּעוֹלָם. |
| And this is, "by his faith he lives," like "he gives life" — and this is, "And he believed in Hashem." | וְזֶהוּ "בֶּאֱמוּנָתוֹ יִחְיֶה", כְּמוֹ "יְחַיֶּה" שֶׁמְחַיֶּה, וְזֶהוּ ""וְהָאֱמִין בַּה׳. |
| And through this, "He considered it to him as righteousness," for at first it was "side" — meaning the sparks, called the "righteous one," the righteous of the world, a portion above, which was in poverty. | ְוַעַל־יְדֵי זֶה "וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ לוֹ צְדָקָה", שֶׁמִּתְּחִלֶּה הָיָה "צַד", פֵּירוּשׁ – הַנִּיצוֹצוֹת שֶׁנְקְרָאִים צַדִּיק, צַדִּיקוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, חֵלֶק עֶלְיוֹן מִמַּעְלָה הָיָה בְּדֵלוּת. |
| And when the righteous brings the revelation of wisdom into the world, the hei — that is, the yud enters into her — and then all the sparks are elevated to their source. | וּכְשֶׁהַצַּדִּיק מֵבִיא הָתְגַּלּוּת חָכְמָה בָּעוֹלֶם נַצְשֵׂית הַ״א שֶׁהַיּוּ״ד בָּאָה לְתוֹכָה, וְאָז נִתְעַלּוּ כָּל הַנִּיצוֹצוֹת לְשָׁרְשָׁן |
| And then the yud becomes kuf, for at first, when it was in dalet, the yud was small — ten. | וְאָז נַעֲשֶׂה מָן הַיּוּ״ד קוּ״ף, כִּי בַּתְּחַלֶּה כְּשֶׁהָיָה בְּדָלֶ״ת הָיָה הַיּוּ״ד מָ״ק – עֲשָׂרָה. |
| And when the sparks are elevated, there comes a great delight, and the yud becomes a great number — one hundred. | וּרְשֶׁנָתְעַלּוּ הַנִּיצוֹצוֹת בָּא לְתַעֲנוּג גָּדוֹל, וְנַעֲשֶׂה מַהַיּוּ״ד מִסְפָּר גָּדוֹל – מֵאָה. |
| And this is the meaning of "tzad kah" — that what was at first "tzad" becomes "tzad kah." | ּןזֶהוּ "צַד ק״ה", מַה שֶׁהָיָה בַּתְּחַלֶּה "צַד" נַצֲשָׂה "צַד ק״ה. |
| And being so, when the righteous elevates the sparks, he comes thereby to a great comprehension and also to great delight. | וּבִהְיוֹת כֵּן, כְּשֶׁהַצַּדִּיק מַעֲלֶה הַנִּיצוֹצוֹת בָּא עַל־יְדֵי־זֶה לְהַשָּׂגָה גְּדוֹלָה וְגַם תַּעֲנוּג גָּדוֹל. |
| And the sparks are to the righteous as a sukkah, from which he receives delight. | ָןהַנִּיצוֹצוֹת הֵם לַצַּדִּיק לְסֻכָּה שֶׁמְקַבֵּל תַּעֲנוּג מִזָּה. |

| And this is, "Blessed be Avram to the Most High G-d, Possessor of heaven and earth." | וְזֶהוּ "בָּרוּךְ אַבְרָם לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן קוֹנֵה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ". |
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| For it is stated in the Gemara: until Avraham came, the Holy One, blessed be He, was not called "Adon," for he brought divine comprehension into the worldliness — and this is the attribute of "Adonai." | דְאִיתָא בַּגְמָרָא, עַד שֶׁבָּא אַבְרָהָם וְקָרָא לַהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא "אָדוֹן", שֶׁהוּא הָיָה מֵבִיא הַשָּׂגוֹת אֱלֹהוּת בָּעוֹלָם בְּאַרְצִיּוּת, וְזֶהוּ מִדַּת "אָדוֹנִי". |
| As it is written, "Master of all the earth," which is the attribute of Malchus — and this is, "Possessor of heaven and earth." | ּכְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמֵר "אֲדוֹן כָּל הָאָרֶץ", שֶׁהִיא מִדַּת מַלְכוּת, "וְזֶהוּ "קוֹנֵה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ". |
| Meaning, within the earthly plane His mastery becomes recognized. | וֹפֵירוּשׁ – בְּאַרְצִיּוּת נָכָּר אֲדוֹנוּתוֹ . |
| "And blessed be the Most High G-d Who has delivered your enemies into your hand," meaning that by bringing divine comprehension into worldliness he broke the kelipos. | וּבָרוּהְ אֵל עֶלְיוֹן אֲשֶׁר מִגֵּן צָבֶיךּ, פֵּירוּשׁ – עַל־יְדֵי שָׁהָיָה מֵבִיא הַשָּׂגָה בְּאַרְצִיּוּת הָיָה מְשַׁבֵּר הַקְּלִיפּוֹת. |
| And this is, "Blessed," an expression of drawing down — "the Most High G-d," that divinity becomes grasped in the earthly, and then the kelipos and adversaries are shattered, as it is said, "A fire goes before Him and burns up His enemies round about," and they are elevated. | ְוֹזֶהוּ "וּבָרוּךּ" לְשׁוֹן הַמְשֶׁכָה, "אֵל עֶלְיוֹן" שֶׁנִּשְׂגָה אֱלֹהוּת בְּאַרְצִיּוּת, וְאָז נִשְׁבָּרוּ הַקְּלִיפּוֹת וְהַצָּרִים, כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "אֵשׁ לְפָנָיו תַּלֵדְ וּתְלַהֵט סָבִיב צָּרָיו", וְנִתְעַלֹּוּ |
| When one comes to the mikveh, he should intend that the mikveh corresponds to the Name of 151, that is, the Name Ehyeh (אָהְיֶה) when spelled in its milui of hei's, thus: אל"ף ה"ה יו"ד, which has the numerical value of 151, the same as mikveh (מָקְהֶה). | ּכְּשֶׁבָּא אֶל הַמָּקְנֶה יְכַנֵּן שֶׁהַמְּקְנֶה הוּא שֵׁם קנ״א דְּהַיְנוּ אֶהָיֶה בְּמִלּוּי הַהַ״ין כָּזֵּן אֱל״ף ה״ה יוּ״ד ה״ה גִּימַטְרִיָּא קנ״א כְּמִנְיַן מָקְנֶ״ה. |
| And the main intention should be that the lower mikveh in which we immerse is itself that same Name of 151 through the chain of descent. | וְעָקֶּר יְכַוּן שֶׁהַמִּקְנֶה הַתַּחְתּוֹנָה שֶׁאָנוּ טוֹבְלִים בּוֹ הוּא בְּעַצְמוֹ שֵׁם קנ״א עַל־יְדֵי הִשְׁתַּלְשְׁלוּת. |
| He should immerse once and intend the Name of 151 as above, while he is beneath the water. | וְיִטְבּל פַּעַם אַחַת וְיִכַוּן שֵׁם קנ״א כַּנַ״ל בְּשֶׁעָה שֶׁהוּא הַחַת הַמַּיִם. |
| Afterwards, he should intend the Name Agla (אג"ל"א), which is the Name of severities that comes from the initial letters of the verse "אַהָּה גָּבּוֹר לְעוֹלֶם אֲדֹנֶי," and immerse a second time, intending this Name. | וְאַחַר־כָּךְ יְכַנֵּן שֵׁם אַגְל״א שֶׁהוּא שֵׁם הַגְּבוּרוֹת הַיּוֹצֵא מֵרָ״ת הַפָּסוּק "אַתָּה גִּבּוֹר לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנָי", וְיִטְבּׁל פַּעַם בֵּית וְיִכַנֵּן הַשֵּׁם הַנִּ״ל. |
| Then he should intend the Name Elad (אל"ד) and immerse a third time, intending that Name. | וְאַחַר־כָּדְ יְכַוֵּן שֵׁם אֶל״ד וְיִטְבּּל פַּעַם ג׳ וְיִכַוֵּן הַשֵּׁם הַנִּ״ל. |

| Afterwards, he should immerse a fourth time; when his head is under the water, he should combine the two Names Ehyeh and Elad thus: אלף א ה ה ל יוד ד ה ה, and he should intend that the matter for which he is praying is contained within this Name. | וְאַחַר־כָּדְ יִטְבּּל פַּעַם ד׳, בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁיִּהְיֶה רֹאשׁוֹ תַּחַת הַמֵּיִם, יְשַׁלֵּב שְׁנֵי שֵׁמוֹת אֶהְיֶה וְאֶל״ד כָּזֶה אֱלֶף א ה ה ל יוּ״ד ד ה ה, וְיַכַנֵּן אֶת הַדָּבָר שֶׁמִּתְפַּלְּלִים עָלָיו שָׁהוּא בְּתוֹךְ הַשֵּׁם הַזָּה. |
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| It is then sweetened and elevated through it, as stated above. | הוא נִמְתָּק שֶׁיַעֲלֶה אוֹתוֹ כְּנִזְכֶּר לְעֵיל. |
| And he should immerse a fifth time, and combine the simple Name Ehyeh with the simple Name Elad thus: א ה לי ד ה, intending thereby to elevate the matter for which he prays to a higher level of Binah. | וְיִטְבֹּל פַּעַם ה׳ וְיַשְׁלֵב אֶת הַשֵּׁם אֶהְיֶה פָּשׁוּט עִם הַשֵּׁם אֶל״ד פָּשׁוּט כָּזָה א ה ל י ד ה, וְיִכַוַּן לְהַעֲלוֹת הַדְּבָר שָׁמִּתְפַּלֵל אֵלָיו לְמַדְרֵגָה עֶלְיוֹנָה שֶׁל הַבִּינָה. |
| Then everything becomes complete kindness and mercy. | ָוְאָז נַעֲשֶׂה הַכֹּל חֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים גְּמוּרִים. |
| Thus we have found the holy words of the aforementioned Rabbi Mahara, of blessed memory. | עַל כֵּן מָצָאנוּ דִּבְרֵי קָדְשׁוֹ שֶׁל הָרַב מְהָר״א הַנִּ״ל. |
| Our sages of blessed memory said: "From where do we know that circumcision is in that place? As it is said, 'Circumcise for yourselves every male,' — the place which is masculine, etc." | אָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זָכְרוֹנָם לְבְרָכָה, מִילָה בְּאוֹתוֹ מָקוֹם מִנַּיִן? שֶׁנֶּאֲמַר "הִמּוֹל לָכֶם כָּל זָכָר" מָקוֹם שֶׁהוּא זָכָר וָכוּ׳ |
| The matter is in the manner of the verse "And he believed in Hashem, and He considered it to him as righteousness." | הָעִנְיָן הוּא עַל־דֶּרֶךְ הַפָּסוּק "וְהֶאֱמִין בַּה׳ וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ לוֹ צְדָקָה. |
| And it is as our sages said: "A person should always arrange the praise of the Omnipresent and afterwards pray." | וְהוּא עַל־דֶּרֶךְ אָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זִכְרוֹנָם לְבָרֶכָה "לְעוֹלֶם "יְסַדֵּר אָדָם שִׁבְחוֹ שֶׁל מָקוֹם וְאַחַר־כָּךְ יִתְפַּלֵּל". |
| For the Shechinah is what is called "prayer," which is the true cleaving to the Supernal Will through faith without any reason. | כִּי הַשְּׁכִינָה הִיא הַנָּקְרֵאת מְפַלָּה, שֶׁהִיא הַדְּבֵקוּת הָאֲמִתִּית בָּרָצוֹן הָעֶלְיוֹן עַל־יְדֵי הָאֱמוּנָה בְּלִי שׁוּם טֵעַם. |
| And the subtlety of the matter will be explained further in what follows, in the verse, "All the rivers go to the sea, yet the sea is not full; to the place where the rivers go, there they return to go." | וְדַקּוּת הָעַנָּיָן יִתְבָּאֵר בְּהֶמְשֶׁךּ הַדְּבָרִים כְּמַאֲמַר "כָּל הַנְּחָלִים הֹלְכִים אֶל הַיָּם וְהַיָּם אֵינָנּוּ מֶלֵא אֶל־מָקוֹם "שֶׁהַנְּחָלִים הֹלְכִים שָׁם הֵם שָׁבִים לָלֶכֶת |
| For the Shechinah has nothing of her own except that which flows to her through the attributes, which are the praises of the Omnipresent, as is known. | ְרָהוּא כִּי הַשְּׁכִינָה לֵית לָהּ מִגַּרְמָהּ כְּלוּם, כִּי אָם הַנִּמְשָׁךְ אֵלֶיהָ דָּרֶךְ הַמִּדּוֹת שֶׁהֵם שִׁבְחוֹ שֶׁל מָקוֹם כַּיָּדוּעַ |
| Therefore, when a person wishes to cleave to Him, blessed be He, it is not possible except through prayer, which is the Shechinah, which is fear — "Through this shall he come into the Sanctuary." | לָכֵן כְּשֶׁהָאָדָם חָפֵץ לְדָבְקָה בּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְּ, אִי־אָפְשָׁר כִּי אָם עַל־יְדֵי תְּפָלָה שֶׁהִיא הַשְּׁכִינָה, שֶׁהִיא הַיִּרְאָה, ""בָּוֹאת יָבֹא אֶל הַקֹּדָשׁ. |

| But since she has nothing of her own, it is necessary first to | אָבָל מִדְּלֵית לָה מִגַּרְמָה כְּלוּם, צָרִיךְ הְּחָלָה לְסַדֵּר |
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| arrange the praises of the Omnipresent, as stated above, in order to awaken her. | יַּשְׁבָחוֹ שֶׁל מֶקוֹם כַּנַּ״ל כְּדֵי לְעוֹרְרָה. שָׁבְחוֹ שֶׁל מֶקוֹם כַּנַּ״ל כְּדֵי לְעוֹרְרָה. |
| And the Shechinah says, "See with what I was created before You." | ןהַשְּׁכִינָה אוֹמֶרֶת "חֲזִי בְּמֵאי בְּרָאתַנִי לְקָמֶךְ". |
| And when one reaches the state of cleaving, he will understand this through his faith, for he has not yet attained any taste or scent of comprehension — but a mere glimmer, the faintest edge. | וּכְשֶׁמַּגִּיעַ אֶל הַדְּבֵקוּת, יָבִין אֶת זֹאת בֶּאֱמוּנָתוֹ, כִּי עֲדַיִן לֹא הָשִּׂיג לֹא טַעַם וְלֹא רֵיחַ בְּהַשָּׂנָה שֶׁמֶץ מִנֵּהוּ וָאֶפֶס קְצֵהוּ. |
| And he has not entered it at all, and his honor is only his faith— to cleave to Him, blessed be He, through faith after all the contemplation and intellect he has attained. | וְלֹא נִכְנַס בָּהּ כְּלָל, וְכָבוֹדוֹ הִיא אֱמוּנָתוֹ לְבַד, לְהִתְדַּבֵּק בּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ עַל־יְדֵי הָאֱמוּנָה אַחַר כָּל הָעִיוּנִים וְהַשְּׁכָלִים שֶׁהִשִּׁיג. |
| For all his attainments cannot reach Him, blessed be He, for He is infinite, blessed be He. | שֶׁכָּל הַשָּׂגוֹתָיו אֵינָם יְכוֹלִים בּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ, שֶׁהְרֵי הוּא אֵין־סוֹף בָּרוּךְ הוּא. |
| But all of his attainments are only the action of strengthening faith — and the fortitude of faith increases and illuminates the arrangement of His praise more. | אֲבֶל כָּל הַשָּׂגוֹתָיו אֵינָם רַק פְּעוּלֵת הָתְחַוְּקוּת הָאֱמוּנָה, וְחֹזֶק הָאֱמוּנָה מַגְדִּיל מְנַהֵיר וּמַזְהִיר סִדּוּר שָׁבָחוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ יוֹתֵר. |
| For behold, she has nothing of her own — and the greater the arrangement of praise for the Omnipresent in that which is wondrous beyond comprehension, the more it brings one to cleaving and deeper prayer. | שֶׁהָרֵי לֵית לָה מִגַּרְמָה כְּלוּם, וּגְדֵלַת סִדּוּר שָׁבְחוֹ שֶׁל מָקוֹם בַּמֵּפְלָא מִמֶּנוּ יוֹתֵר מְבִיאוֹ אֶל הַדְּבֵקוּת וּתְפִּלָּה יְתִירָה. |
| "And the earth stands forever" — this is faith, without any comprehension of Him, blessed be He. | ְוָהָאָרֶץ לְעוֹלָם עֹמֶדָת" – שֶׁהִיא אֱמוּנָה בְּלִי שׁוּם" הַשָּׂגָה בּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ. |
| "And he believed in Hashem," as mentioned above, and so it is forever — and this is, "A person should always arrange the praise of the Omnipresent." | ְוָהֶאֱמִין בַּה'" כַּנַ״ל, וְכֵן הוּא לְעוֹלָם, וְזֶהוּ "לְעוֹלָם" ייְסַדֵּר אָדָם שִׁבְחוֹ שֶׁל מֶקוֹם. |
| And this is, "All the rivers go to the sea, etc., to the place where the rivers go, there they return to go," as mentioned above. | וְזֶהוּ "כָּל הַנְּחָלִים הֹלְכִים אֶל הַיָּם וְכוּ׳ אֶת מֶקוֹם שֶׁהַנְּחָלִים הֹלְכִים שָׁם הֵם שָׁבִים לָלֶכֶת" כַּנַּ״ל. |
| And behold, it is stated in the Midrash that the difference between Noach and Avraham is explained by a parable: | וְהַנֵּה אִיתָא בַּמִּדְרָשׁ הַחִלּוּק שֶׁבֵּין נֹחַ לְאַבְרָהָם הוּא עַל־פִּי מָשָׁל. |
| Noach is compared to the king's beloved who sits in darkness, and the king comes and illuminates for him. | נֹחַ דּוֹמֶה לְאוֹהֲבוֹ שֶׁל מֶלֶךְ שֶׁיוֹשֵׁב בַּאֲפֵלָה וְהַמֶּלֶךְ בָּא וּמֵאִיר לוֹ. |
| But Avraham is compared to the beloved who comes to illuminate for the king. | ַוְאַבְרָהָם דּוֹמֶה לְאוֹהֵב שֶׁבָּא לְהָאִיר לַמֶּלֶךְ. |
| And the king said to him, "Before you illuminate in the darkness, go and illuminate in the place of light," as the Midrash uses this refined expression. | וְאָמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ "עַד שֶׁאַתָּה מֵאִיר בַּאֲפֵלָה, תַּלֵדְ וְתָאִיר בִּמְקוֹם אוֹר", עַ"שׁ הַלָּשוֹן צַחַה. |

| And this is the meaning of what was said to him, "Lech lecha." | ָן זֶהוּ שֶׁאָמַר לוֹ "לֶךְ לְךָּ". |
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| The idea is that Noach was righteous in his faith, without any intellectual comprehension, and was perfect in his deeds — and the Holy One, blessed be He, illuminated for him. | וְהָעִנְיָן הוּא כִּי נֹחַ הָיָה צַדִּיק בֶּאֱמוּנָתוֹ בְּלִי שׁוּם הַשָּׂגָה עִיוּנִית, וְהָיָה תָּמִים בְּמַעֲשָׂיו, וְהַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרֵךְ הֵאִיר לוֹ. |
| But Avraham, at the age of three years, recognized his Creator through contemplation and meditation. | אֲבָל אַבְרָהָם בֶּן שֶׁלוֹשׁ שָׁנִים הָכִּיר אֶת בּוֹרְאוֹ עַל־פִּי עִיוּן וְהִתְבּוֹנְנוּת. |
| And he continued growing in knowledge, understanding, and intellect, and after all this, he was perfect in his deeds — which is faith alone. | וְהָיָה הוֹלֵךּ וְגָדֵל בְּדַעַת בִּינָה וְהַשְּׁכֵּל, וְאַחַר כָּל זֶה הָיָה תָּמִים בְּמַעֲשָׂיו – שֶׁהִיא הָאֱמוּנָה לְבַדָּה. |
| As it is said, "Walk before Me," meaning above the attributes, and afterwards "and be perfect." | ּכְמַאֲמֶר "הָתְהַלֵּךְ לְפָנַי", שֶׁהוּא לְמַעְלָה מִן הַמִּדּוֹת, וָהָיָה מָּמִים אַחַר־כָּךְ. |
| For comprehension of Him, blessed be He, is infinite, and the true connection and cleaving to Him, blessed be He, is only through this faith alone. | פָּי הַהַשָּׂנָה בּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ הִיא אֵין־סוֹף, וְהַהִתְקַשְּׁרוּת וְהַדְּבֵקוּת הָאֲמִתִּית בּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ הִיא עַל־יְדֵי אֱמוּנָה זוֹ לְבַדָּה |
| In the manner of a parable — the connection of all the worlds to each other is also through faith. | עַל־דֶּרֶךְ מָשָׁל, הִתְקַשְּׁרוּת כָּל הָעוֹלָמוֹת זֶה בָּזֶה הֵם גַם־כֵּן עַל־יְדֵי אֱמוּנָה. |
| Even in the lowly world, for example, a person has pleasure when his young son recognizes that he is his father, even before the child knows any intellect — yet he has delight. | וַאָפָלוּ בָּעוֹלָם הַשָּׁפָל, דּוּגְמָה – אָדָם יֵשׁ לוֹ נַחַת רוּחַ כְּשֶׁבְּנוֹ הַקָּטָן מַכִּיר שֶׁהוּא אָבִיו בְּטֶרֶם שֶׁיֵדַע הַנַּעַר שׁוּם שֵׂכֶל, אַף־עַל־פִּי־כֵן יֵשׁ לוֹ נַחַת. |
| And similarly was the creation of all the worlds — as it is said, "In the beginning, G-d created," for the sake of Israel, who are called "the beginning." | ְרֵן עַד־זֶה הָיְתָה בְּרִיאַת כָּל הָעוֹלֶמוֹת כֵּלֶם, כְּמַאֲמֶר בָראשִׁית בָּרָא", בִּשְׁבִיל יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁנִּקְרְאוּ רַאשִׁית". |
| That they should know to glorify their Creator, to call before Him, "Our Father, our King." | שֶׁיֵּדְעוּ לְפָאֵר לְיוֹצְרָם, יִקְרָאוּ לְפָנָיו "אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ". |
| And this is, "All His delights, blessed be He," as in the saying, "More than the calf wishes to suck, the cow wishes to nurse." | וְזֶהוּ כָּל שַׁצֲשׁוּעָיו יִתְבָּרֵךְ, כְּמַאֲמָר "יוֹתֵר מִמַּה שָׁהָעֵגֶל רוֹצֶה לִינוֹק פָּרָה רוֹצָה לְהָנִיק. |
| And this is the connection between each world and the next — that every higher one than its fellow desires to bestow to the one beneath it. | וְזֶהוּ הַהִּתְקַשְּׁרוּת שֶׁבֵּין כָּל עוֹלֶם לְעוֹלֶם, שֶׁכָּל הַגָּדוֹל מֵחֲבֵירוֹ רוֹצֶה לְהַשְׁפִּיעַ לְשֶׁתַּחְתָּיוּ. |
| And in his bestowal he receives more delight than the lower one receives in his receiving. | וּבְהַשְׁפָּעָתוֹ מְקַבֵּל תַּעֲנוּג יוֹתֵר מִן הַתַּחְתוֹן בְּקַבָּלָתוֹ. |
| But the parable is not at all comparable to the subject, for all these were created in such an order and nature of creation — that connection exists among them. | אֲבָל אֵין הַמָּשָׁל דּוֹמֶה לַנִּמְשָׁל כְּלָל, שֶׁהֲרֵי כָּל אֵלֶּה נִבְרָאוּ בְּאֹפֶן וְסַדֶּר זֶה, וְטֶבַע הַבְּרִיאָה הִיא הִתְקַשְׁרוּת .זֶה |

| But He, blessed be He, is the Cause of all causes, Infinite, blessed be He — the Creator of everything. | מַה שֶׁאֵין כֵּן הוּא יִתְבָּרֵךְ, עִילַּת כָּל הָעִלּוֹת, אֵין־סוֹף בָּרוּךְ הוּא, הַבּוֹרֵא אֶת הַכֹּל. |
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| And even this nature of creation cannot apply to Him at all, nor any delight or connection as described above. | וְגַם טֶבַע הַבְּרִיאָה הַנִּזְכָּר אֵין שַׁיָּךְ בּוֹ שׁוּם תַּעֲנוּג וְהִתְקַשְּׁרוּת הַנִּזְכָּר כְּלָל. |
| For He created nature and sustains it at every moment, for if His will for its existence were not renewed each moment, it would be as if it never existed, and thus it is nullified. | שֶׁהָרֵי הוּא בָּרָא הַטֶּבַע וּמְקַיֵּם אוֹתָהּ בְּכָל רֶגַע, כִּי בִּלְתִּי חָפֵץ קִיּוּמָה בְּכָל רֶגַע בִּרְצוֹנוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ – כְּאִלוּ לֹא הָיְתָה, וּמִמֵּילָא בְּטֵלָה. |
| Therefore, what is the connection from Him, blessed be He, to bestow? It is only a simple desire and will. | אָם־כֵּן מַה־הִיא הַהִּתְקַשְּׁרוּת מֵאִתּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ לְהַשְׁפִּיעַ? זֶה אֵינוֹ כִּי אָם חֵפֶץ וְרָצוֹן פָּשׁוּט. |
| As it is said, "When it arose in His will," meaning that in His will He first created, and in His will He sustains and bestows continually, and delights. | ּכְּמַאֲמֶר "כְּשֶׁעָלָה בָּרְצוֹנוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ", הַמֵּזְכָּר, בִּרְצוֹנוֹ בָּרָא הְחִלָּה, וּבִרְצוֹנוֹ מְקַיֵּם וּמֵשְׁפִּיעַ תָּמִיד, וּמִתְעַנֵּג. |
| But no comprehension can grasp this connection at all. | אָבָל אֵין שׁוּם הַשָּׁנָה יְכוֹלָה לְהַתְקַשְׁרוּת זֹאת כְּלָל. |
| And behold, the Rambam of blessed memory wrote a reason for the commandment of circumcision — to weaken the power of lust. | וְהָנֵּה הָרַמְבַּ"ם זִכְרוֹנוֹ לִבְרָכָה כָּתַב טַעַם לְמִצְוַת מִילָה הַלְּהָתִישׁ כֹּחַ הַתַּצְוָה – לְהַתִּישׁ כֹּחַ הַתַּצְוָה. |
| And the truth is that his holy mouth uttered words of truth standing at the height of the world, even though he did not intend them so. | ְרָהֱמֶת כִּי הוּא זָכְרוֹנוֹ לְבְרָכָה הוֹצִיא מִפִּיו הַקָּדוֹשׁ דְּבָרִים אֱמֶתִּיִים הָעוֹמְדִים בְּרוּמוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלֶם אַף־עַל־פִּי שָׁלֹא כִּוַן בָּהֶם. |
| And just as the intention and reason in cutting the foreskin of the circumcision is so, the same applies to the vineyard's orlah and the commandments of the first fruits. | וּכְמוֹ שֶׁהַכַּוָנָה וְהַטַּעַם בְּחָתּוּךְ עָרְלַת הַמִּילָה, כֵּן הוּא בְּכֶרֶם עָרְלָה תְּחָלָּה וּמִצְוַת בִּכּוּרִים. |
| And the matter is as in the saying, "Like the first-ripe fruit before the summer," etc., for the beginning and the first is something beloved. | וְהָעִנְיָן כְּמַאֲמֶר "כְּבִכּוּרָה בְּטֶרֶם קָוִץ" וְכוּ׳, כִּי הָרֵאשִׁית וְהַתְּחָלָּה הוּא דָּבָר חָבִיב. |
| And the belovedness is only because it is the beginning alone, for so is the way of every beginning — to be beloved and very dear. | וְהַחֲבִיבוּת הוּא רַק מִפְּנֵי הֶיוֹתוֹ רֵאשִׁית לְבַד, שֶׁכֵּן דָּרָךְ לְכָל רֵאשִׁית לִהְיוֹתוֹ חָבִיב וְאָהוּב מְאֹד. |
| This is the delight and connection between each world and the one above it: from the beginning to that which follows it, and from it to that which follows after it — it is called "beginning," and so it continues forever. | שֶׁהוּא הַתַּעֲנוּג וְהַהָּתְקַשְּׁרוּת שֶׁבֵּין עוֹלָם לְעוֹלָם, מִן הָרֵאשִׁית אֶל שֶׁל אֲחֲרָיו וּמִפֶּנוּ אֶל שֶׁל אַחֲרָיו, נִקְרָא הוּא רֵאשִׁית, וְכֵן לְעוֹלָם. |
| But the essence of the service and connection to Him, blessed be He, to attain true cleaving — is that after all attainments, the connection is not comprehension of Him. | אֲבֶל עִיפֵּר הָעֲבוֹדָה וְהַהָּתְקַשְּׁרוּת בּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ, לְהַשִּׁיג הַדְּבֵקוּת הָאֲמִתִּית – שֶׁאַחַר כָּל הַשָּׁגוֹת, אֵין הַהָּתְקַשְׁרוּת הַשָּׂגָה בּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ. |

| For He, blessed be He, is beyond all creations, and beyond all belovedness and love, and beyond the nature of connection mentioned above — for He is the Creator of all. | שֶׁהַרֵי הוּא יִתְבָּרֵדְ חוּץ מִכֶּל הַנִּבְרָאִים, וְחוּץ מִכֶּל הַחֲבִיבוּת וְהָאַהְבוֹת, וְחוּץ מִטֶּבַע הַהִּתְקַשְּׁרוּת הַנִּזְכָּר לְצֵיל, שֶׁהֲרֵי הוּא הַבּוֹרֵא אֶת הַכֹּל. |
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| But cleaving to Him is through faith alone, without any taste, love, affection, or desire. | אֲבָל הַדְּבֵקוּת בּוֹ הִיא בֶּאֱמוּנָה לְבַד, בְּלִי שׁוּם טַעַם, אַהַבָה, חִבָּה וְתַאֲנָה. |
| And this is what is meant by "to weaken the power of lust." | וְזָהוּ שֶׁאָמֵר "לְהַתִּישׁ כֹּחַ הַמְּתְאַנָּה". |
| For the commandment of circumcision, with which we are sealed on the organ that gives birth and brings forth souls — which is the aspect of cleaving — must be to weaken the power of lust, that it be only through faith. | כִּי מִצְוַת מִילָה שֶׁאָנוּ חֲתוּמִים בָּה בָּאֵבֶר הַמּוֹלִיד וּמוֹצִיא נְשָׁמוֹת – שֶׁהוּא הַדְּבֵקוּת – צְרִיכָה לִהְיוֹת לְהַתִּישׁ כֹּחַ הַמִּתְאַנֶּה, כִּי אִם עַל־יְדֵי הָאֱמוּנָה לְבַד. |
| And in the commandment of circumcision, by which the power of lust is weakened, we are sealed with truth and faith in Him, blessed be He, to cleave to Him without any perceptible comprehension. | וּבְמִצְוַת מִילָה שֶׁהִתִּישׁ כֹּחַ הַמִּתְאַנֶּה, חוֹתָמֵי אֱמֶת וָאֱמוּנָה בּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךּ, לְדָבְקָה בּוֹ בְּלִי שׁוּם הַשָּׁגַת טוֹעֵם. |
| Unlike the way all the worlds are connected — cause to effect — by the natural delight of influence, as mentioned above. | כְּדֶרֶךְ הַהִּתְקַשְּׁרוּת כָּל הָעוֹלֶמוֹת מֵעִלָּה לְעָלוּל מִחְמַת טֶבַע תַּעֲנוּג הַהַשְׁפָּעָה כַּנַ״ל. |
| For the Infinite One, blessed be He, is the Master of nature, and the nature of delight mentioned above does not apply to Him. | שֶׁהָרֵי אֵין־סוֹף הוּא יִתְבָּרֵךְ אֲדוֹן הַשֶּׁבַע, וְלֹא שֵׁיָּךְ בּוֹ טֶבַע תַּצְנוּג הַנִּזְכָּר לְעֵיל. |
| But the cleaving and connection of His influence, blessed be He, from Himself, is only through faith in His simple will to bestow — without any reason. | אֲבָל הַדְּבֵקוּת וְהַהִתְקַשְּׁרוּת הַשְּׁפָּעָתוֹ יִתְבָּרֵדְ מֵאָתּוֹ אֵינוֹ כִּי אָם הָאֱמוּנָה בִּרְצוֹנוֹ הַפָּשׁוּט לְהַשְׁפִּיעַ בְּלִי שׁוּם טַעַם. |
| And this is the difference between Him, blessed be He, and all created beings that bestow — for all who bestow receive in their bestowal delight from being bestowers, as is the nature of creation. | וְזֶהוּ הַחִלּוּק שֶׁבֵּינוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ לְכָל הַנִּבְרָאִים הַמַּשְׁפִּיעִים, שֶׁהֲרֵי כָּל הַמַּשְׁפִּיעִים מְקַבְּלִים בְּהַשְׁפָּעָתָם הַתַּעֲנוּג הֵיוֹתָם מַשְׁפִּיעִים, כְּטָבַע הַבְּרִיאָה. |
| But He, blessed be He, the Master of nature, does not receive at all — only bestows. | מַה שֶׁאֵין כֵּן הוּא יִתְבָּרֵךּ, אֲדוֹן הַטֶּבַע, אֵינוֹ מְקַבֵּל כְּלָל, רַק מַשְׁפִּיעַ. |
| And this is what they said: "Circumcise for yourselves every male" — from the place which is male, that is, only a bestower and does not receive at all. | וְזֶהוּ שֶׁאָמְרוּ "הָמּוֹל לָכֶם כָּל זָכָר" – מִמְּקוֹם שֶׁהוּא זָכָר, רַק מַשְׁפִּיעַ וְאֵינוֹ מְקַבֵּל כְּלָל. |
| In weakening the power of lust and the pleasure of influence altogether, without any reason at all, thereby he connects to the supernal wisdom, which is the yud. | בְּהָתְעַיֵּשׁ כּּחַ הַמִּתְאַנֶּה וְתַעֲנוּג הַהַשְׁפָּעָה כְּלָל, בְּלִי שׁוּם טַעַם כְּלָל, וּבָזֶה הוּא מִתְקַשֵּׁר בַּחָכְמָה עֶלְיוֹנָה שָׁהִיא יוּ״ד. |
| As it is said, "Wisdom shall be found from nothing," meaning that it is from nothingness and nullity, without any reason. | וּרְמַאֲמָר "וְהַחָּרְמָה מֵאַיִן חָּמָּצֵא", שֶׁהִיא מֵאַיִן וְאֶפֶס בְּלִי שׁוּם טַעַם. |
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| And the circumcision of males such as this is the seal of truth and faith. | וּמִילַת זְכָרִים כָּזֶה הֵם חוֹתָמוֹ אֱמֶת וָאֱמוּנָה. |
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| And this is what is said, "And he believed in Hashem, and He considered it to him as righteousness," that all the faith he attained after all the contemplation and intellect, he did not regard as any comprehension — only as the lowest level, which is faith, righteousness. | וְזֶהוּ שֶׁאָמַר "וְהֶאֱמִין בַּה׳ וַיִּחְשְׁבֶהָ לוֹ צְדָקָה", שֶׁכָּל הָאֱמוּנָה שֶׁהִשִּׁיג אַחַר כָּל הָעִיוּנִים וְהַשְּׁכָלִים לֹא חָשַׁב לְשׁוּם הַשָּׂגָה, כִּי אִם לַמַּדְרַגָּה הַתַּחְתוֹנָה שֶׁהִיא אֱמוּנָה, צְדָקָה. |
| For all the attainments are nothing in comparison to Him, blessed be He. | שֶהָרֵי כָּל הַשָּׂגוֹת בְּלִים כְּנָגְדּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ. |
| And what he attained afterwards is what he said, "And I am dust and ashes." | וּוֹמַה שֶׁהָשִּׂיג אַחַר כָּךְ הוּא שֶׁאָמַר "וְאָנֹכִי עָפָר וָאֵפֶר". |
| That is, the connection to supernal wisdom, which is humility—as nothing and naught—as it is said, "And wisdom shall be found from nothing." | שֶׁהוּא הַהִּתְקַשְׁרוּת בַּחָכָמָה עֶלְיוֹנָה שֶׁהִיא הַשִּׁפְלוּת נְאָיָן, כְּמַאֲמָר "וְהַחָּכְמָה מֵאַיִן הִּמָּצֵא". |
| And such great faith, attained after all intellect and contemplation and comprehension of cleaving — that he should believe in truth and faith because of his own lowliness, being in his own eyes dust and ashes. | ְוָהַשָּׂגַת אֱמוּנָה גְּדוֹלָה כָּזוֹ, שֶׁאַחַר כָּל הַשְּׂכָלִים וְהָעִיוּנִים וְהַשָּׂגוֹת הַדְּבֵקוּת, יַאֲמִין בָּאֱמֶת וָאֱמוּנָה מָחֲמֵת שִׁפְלוּת עַצְמוֹ, לְהִיוֹתוֹ בְּעֵינָיו עָפָר וָאֵפֶר. |
| Surely, all his attainments have in them neither taste nor scent nor any cleaving at all; and by his faith he lives, to cleave to Him, blessed be He. | בְּוַדַּאי כָּל הַשָּׂגוֹתָיו אֵין בָּהֶן לֹא טַעַם וְלֹא רֵיחַ וְלֹא שׁוּם דְּבֵקוּת כְּלָל, וּבָאֱמוּנָתוֹ יִחָיֶה לְדָבְקָה בּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵדְּ. |
| This faith is what is called "faith (emunah), my sister, the daughter of my father she is, but not the daughter of my mother." | אֱמוּנָה זוֹ הִיא הַנָּקְרֵאת "אֱמֻנָה אֲחוֹתִי כַּת אָבִי הִיא, צְּךְ לֹא בַּת אָמִי. |
| For this faith is not transmitted except from Him, blessed be He, Himself, without any intermediary worlds which receive delight from their influence. | כִּי אֱמוּנָה זוֹ אֵינָה נִשְׁפַעַת כִּי אָם מֵאָתוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ בְּעַצְמוֹ, בָּלִי שׁוּם עוֹלָמוֹת אֶמְצָעִיִּים שֶׁמְקַבְּלִים תַּעֲנוּג בָּהַשְׁפָּעָתָם |
| As in the saying, "More than the calf wishes to suck," as mentioned above. | לְּמַאֲמָר "יוֹתַר מִמַּה שֶּׁהָעֵגֶל רוֹצֶה" כַּנַּ״ל. |
| And the one who understands will understand. Therefore, in this faith is the cleaving to Him, blessed be He. | וְהַמֵּבִין יָבִין, וְלָבֵן בֶּאֱמוּנָה זוֹ הוּא הַדְּבֵקוּת בּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵדְ. |
| Therefore, the levels are mentioned in the Torah in this order: first, the verse "And He considered it to him as righteousness"; afterwards, "And I am dust and ashes"; and afterwards, the verse "And she is truly my sister, the daughter of my father," etc. | ְוָלֶכֵן מֻזְפָּרִים בַּתּוֹרָה הַמַּדְרֵגוֹת כַּסֵּדֶר: תְּחִלֶּה פָּסוּק "וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ לוֹ צְדָקָה", וְאַחַר־כָּךְּ "אָנֹכִי עָפָר וָאֵפֶּר", וְאַחַר־כָּךְ פָּסוּק "וְגַם אֲמְנָה אֲחוֹתִי בַּת אָבִי הִיא" .עַ"שׁ |

NOTE Summary

Faith (*emunah*) is not a stage before intellect but the culmination of all spiritual attainment. When Avraham attained the loftiest understanding of the Divine, he recognized that comprehension itself separates the knower from the Infinite. The more one grasps, the more one perceives G-d's utter unknowability. Thus, true deveikus begins where intellect ends — in the simplicity of faith.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel teaches that while all created beings find joy in bestowing influence — for this is the natural pleasure embedded in creation — G-d, the **Master of nature**, transcends this structure. He bestows purely out of His will, without desire or reason, without receiving any pleasure from the act of giving. This is symbolized by **bris milah**, circumcision: the covenant engraved in the very source of desire, transforming passion into faith. By weakening the physical and spiritual "pleasure of influence," the Jew binds himself to the **supernal wisdom** (חכמה) — the letter *yud*, the source of existence emerging from *ayin* (nothingness).

Avraham's spiritual progression reflects three ascending stages of this inner transformation:

- 1. "יַּהְשְּׁבֶּהָ לוֹ צְּדָקָה" he understood that faith itself is righteousness, greater than any intellectual or emotional attainment.
- 2. "אָנֹכִי עָפָּר וְאֵבֶּר" he reached the state of utter humility and self-nullification, recognizing his nothingness before the Infinite.
- 3. "אַב אָמְנָה אֲחוֹתִי בַּת אָבי הִיא" he achieved the purest emunah, a faith unmediated by the worlds or intellect, drawn directly from the Essence of G-d Himself.

In this way, the Horodoker Rebbe explains, the **seal of faith and truth** that G-d engraved upon Israel through milah is the eternal covenant of simple attachment. Just as G-d bestows without self-interest, the tzaddik serves without reason or reward. And the highest wisdom — "ההכמה מאין תמצא" — is found precisely in this *ayin*, in faith that has transcended every trace of understanding.

Practical Takeaway

When a person prays, learns, or does a mitzvah, the goal is not to "feel" spiritual but to be faithful — to do so from a place beyond intellect and beyond emotional gratification. The truest deveikus is not the joy of understanding but the calm humility of believing. Each time we silence the need to grasp and instead act from quiet trust, we mirror Avraham's inner journey: to find the Infinite not through comprehension, but through surrender.

Chassidic Story

When Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok and his Chassidim first arrived in Eretz Yisrael, they faced hunger, disease, and constant hardship. Yet he forbade anyone to complain. Once, a visitor found the Rebbe standing at

his window in Tzfas, whispering the words of Tehillim, his face radiant with joy. "Rebbe," the man said, "you have nothing — no food, no comfort, no strength. From where this joy?"

The Horodoker answered softly, "Here in this land, one can finally serve Hashem without taste or reason — only in faith. And that faith itself feeds the soul."

END NOTE