

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Korach

Introduction

This discourse, authored by **Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok (also known as the "Pri HaAretz")**, explores the inner dynamic of *bittul* (self-nullification), divine illumination, and authentic deveikus (cleaving to G-d) through a mystical and psychological lens. Rabbi Menachem Mendel was a foremost disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch and the spiritual mentor of many early Chassidic leaders, including the Alter Rebbe. After the Maggid's passing, he led the Chassidim in Horodok and later immigrated to Eretz Yisrael, where he continued to teach and inspire. This discourse centers on the Zoharic imagery of fire, the structure of spiritual ascent, and the true meaning of a dispute "for the sake of Heaven," offering a profound map of the soul's journey toward G-d.

In Rashi, may his memory be a blessing, on the verse "And Korach took", it is written: "He took a bad acquisition for himself." Now our Sages of blessed memory said in Pirkei Avos: "Any argument that is for the sake of Heaven... and what is a dispute that is not for the sake of Heaven? This is the dispute of Korach and his congregation" (Avos 5:17).

ברש"י ז"ל ויקח קרח שלקח מקח רע לעצמו, הנה אָמְרוּ רַז"ל בְּאֲבוֹת "כָּל מַחְלֻקָּת כו', אִיזוּ מַחְלֻקָּת שֶׁהִיא לְשֵׁם שְׁמַיִם כו', וְאִיזוּ מַחְלֻקָּת כו', זוּ מַחְלֻקָּת (קֶרַח וְכָל עֲדָתוֹ) (אבות ה, יז)

The matter is as follows: It is known that the main purpose of the creation of the world is that it should descend through the chain of spiritual worlds to the place of choice between good and evil. For He created man upright, to know in his mind to despise evil and choose good.

הַעֲנֵנּוּ הוּא, יְדוּעַ שְׁעָקָר כְּנֶנֶת בְּרִיאַת הָעוֹלָם, הוּא עַד שֶׁיֵּגִיעַ בְּהַשְׁתַּלְשָׁלוֹת לְמָקוֹם הַבְּחִירָה בָּרַע אוֹ בְּטוֹב, אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֶת הָאָדָם יָשָׁר לְדַעְתּוֹ מֵאוֹס בָּרַע וּבָחֹר בְּטוֹב.

And the glory of Hashem fills all created beings, from the highest of the high to the smallest worm of the sea—even the kelipos (husks of impurity), as it is stated: "And You give life to them all" (Nechemiah 9:6), for the world has need of them.

וְכְבוֹד ה' מְלֵא כָּל הַנִּבְרָאִים מִגְּבוּהָ עַל גְּבוּהָ עַד הַשְׁלִשּׁוּל קֶטֶן שְׂבִיִּים אֲפִלּוּ הַקְּלִיפּוֹת, כְּמֵאמַר "וְאַתָּה מְחִיָּה אֶת כָּלָם" (נחמיה ט, ו), כִּי צוּרָה הָעוֹלָם בָּהֶם.

And the main task of man is to extract the precious from the vile, in the secret of "And His kingship rules over all" (Tehillim 103:19), to uproot the thorns and choose life. In all his ways he shall be wise and in all his paths he shall know Him.

וְעָקָר מַעֲשֵׂה הָאָדָם לְהוֹצִיא יָקָר מִזוּלָּל, בְּסוֹד "וּמַלְכוּתוֹ בְּכָל מְשָׁלָה" (תהלים קג, יט), לְהַכְרִית הַקּוֹצִים וּבָחֹר בְּחַיִּים בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר יִפְגֹּה יִשְׁכִּיל וּבְכָל דְּרָכָיו דַּעְהוּ.

[He should ask:] "What is this and why is this, that Hashem caused this to come before him?" "Who created these?" Is it not Hashem—the One Who brings all into being and gives them life, Who surrounds and fills them?

מַה זֶּה וְעַל מַה זֶּה כִּי הִקְרָה ה' לִפְנָיו, וּמִי בָרָא אֵלֶּה, הֲלוֹא ה' זֶה הַמַּהְנֶה כָּל הַחַיּוֹת וּמַחְיָה אוֹתָם, הַסּוֹבֵב וּמְמַלֵּא אוֹתָם.

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And who gave the rooster understanding—to distinguish in matters and to have counsel and knowledge of good and evil? And now, why should his heart turn to cling to evil? Let him exchange it and transform it—turn the evil into the good hidden within it, the good that gives it life, which is the Living of all life.	ומי נתן לשׂכוי בינה בין בדברים ועצה ודעת טוב ורע, ועתה למה ירע לבבו להדבק ברע, יחליפנו וימיר אותו רע בטוב הגנוז בתוכו המסיה אותו שהוא חי החיים.
And by this he returns the soul of his Master to its Owner—by extracting the precious from the vile, to bring a korban to Hashem, a fire-offering of pleasing aroma, a satisfaction before Him that His will was fulfilled.	ובזה נפש אדוניו ישיב לבועליו בהוציא יקר מזולל, להקריב קרבן להוי"ה אשה ריח ניחוח, נחת רוח לקניו שאמר ונעשה רצונו
For His desire in the creation of the world was specifically in the physical—that His glory should fill the whole earth, even in the place where there is free choice, to extract the precious from the vile, which are the kelipos.	פי רצונו בבריאת העולם הנה דוקא בגשמי, שיהיה מלא כל הארץ כבודו גם-כן במקום שיש בו בחירה, להוציא יקר מזולל שהם הקליפות
And this is “a fire-offering of pleasing aroma to Hashem” (Vayikra 1:9)—that it comes from the feminine realm (nukva) and from the kelipos. And this is what it means that “He said, and His will was done”—meaning that He said the Ten Utterances for the sake of the creation of such a material and coarse world.	וזהו "אשה ריח ניחוח להוי"ה" (ויקרא א, ט), שהוא מקום הנקבא והקליפות, וזהו שאמר ונעשה רצונו, פירוש שאמר עשרה מאמרות בשביל השתלשלות הגשמי וחומרי כזה
And yet, His will was fulfilled: “The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of Hashem like the waters cover the sea” (Yeshayahu 11:9). That is, the earth means the physical and the greatest contraction in the Infinite Light, blessed is He, to enliven the dust of the earth and its fullness, to surround it and to fill it.	ואף-על-פי-כן נעשה רצונו, "ומלאה הארץ דעה כמים כו'" (ישעיהו יא, ט), פירוש פי הארץ הוא הגשמי והוא הצמצום היותר גדול באור-אין-סוף פרוץ הוא, להחיות עפר הארץ ומלאה ולהיות סובב אותה ולמלות אותה
And this is “the earth shall be filled with knowledge,” like water—which is a symbol of expansion, as is known. Thus, the main purpose of the creation of the world was contraction. And this is what it means that “Hashem created the world with Torah.”	וזהו ומלאה הארץ דעה כמים שהם התפשטות כידוע, נמצא שעקר בריאת העולם הנה הצמצום, וזהו באוריתא ברא קוב"ה עלמא
And our Sages said: “He looked into the Torah and created the world,” as it is said: “Then I was by Him as a nursling” (Mishlei 8:30) (Bereishis Rabbah 1:2). For the Torah was given from the mouth of the Mighty One—that is, through contraction. And our Sages said: “It is black fire engraved on white fire” (Midrash Tanchuma, Bereishis 1).	ואמרו רז"ל "נסתפל בתורה וברא את העולם שנאמר 'ואהיה אצלו אמון'" (משלי ח, ל) (בראשית רבה א, ב), פי התורה מפי הגבורה ניתנה שהוא הצמצום, ואמרו רז"ל ל"ש"היא אש שחורה חרותה על אש (לבנה"ה) (מדרש תנחומא בראשית א

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And to explain the matter: Since it is known that the essence of creation is the contraction (<i>tzimtzum</i>)—which is the Shechinah in the lower realms—this is a “need above,” meaning the holy vitality within the lower beings is to be entirely elevated to Hashem.	ולבאר הענין הוא, אחר שידוע שעקר הבריאה הוא הצמצום שהוא שכינה בתחתונים צד גבוה, פירוש החיות הקדושה שבתחתונים להעלות בלה כליל לה' וצורך גבוה
As in the concept “Yisrael sustain their Father in Heaven” (Zohar III, 7b), as is known.	פענין "ישראל מפרנסין לאביהם שבשמים" (זהר חלק ג. ז, ב) פידוע
And this is what is said (Bereishis Rabbah 44:12): “Avram does not give birth, Avraham gives birth.” As is known, “Avram” represents expansion, and if there were only expansion and no contraction, birth would not be possible—as mentioned above.	ונהו "אברם אינו מוליד, אברהם מוליד" (בראשית רבה מ"ד, י"ב), פידוע שאברם הוא התפשטות, ואם היה רק התפשטות ולא היה שום צמצום, אי-אפשר להיות שום הולדה כנזכר-לעיל
But “Avraham” with the <i>hei</i> at the end of the Name—which represents the Shechinah in the lower worlds—this is what brings birth, by elevating her before the face of Hashem.	אבל אברהם שהוא בה' אחרונה שבשם, שהיא שכינה 'בתחתונים, הוא המוליד בהעלותו אותה אל מול פני ה'
As is known: All birth comes from receiving delight from below, through the preparation of the lower ones to be receptive.	פידוע שכל הולדה היא מקבלת תענוג מתחתונים, בהכנת התחתונים להיות מקבלים
This is the love of a man for his wife, which is called <i>hidden love</i> .	שהיא אהבת איש לאשתו הנקראת אהבה מסותרת
Whereas the love of brothers is the love of expansion; both are from one root, which is revealed love.	מה-שאין-כן מאהבת האחים שהיא אהבת ההתפשטות, שניהם משרש אחד שהיא אהבה מגלה
As it says: “Who would give you to be like a brother to me... I would kiss you and they would not scorn me” (Shir HaShirim 8:1).	כמאמר "מי יתנה כאח לי כי אמצאך בחוץ אשקך גם", (לא יבוזו לי" (שיר השירים ח, א
For constant pleasure is not pleasure; but in hidden love—which is the Shechinah in the lower worlds, which was distant and has come close—there is great delight.	כי תענוג תמיד אינו תענוג, מה-שאין-כן באהבה מסותרת שהיא שכינה בתחתונים, שהיה רחוק ונתקרב הוא התענוג הגדול
And this is what our Sages said (Gittin 6b): “These and those are the words of the Living God”—even though one prohibits and one permits.	ונהו אמרם רז"ל "אלו ואלו דברי אלקים חיים" (גיטין ו, ב), אף-על-פי שאלו אוסרין ואלו מתירין
The matter is like the “light of the seven days” (Zohar)—which are the middos (Divine attributes): five opposite five, five chassadim (kindnesses) and five gevuros (severities).	הענין הוא על-דרך אור שבבעת הימים, שהם המדות, חמשה מול חמשה, ה' חסדים וה' גבורות
And this is what the Sages said: “The Tablets had five [commandments] opposite five” (Yerushalmi Shekalim 6).	ונהו אמרו רז"ל "שהלכות היו ה' מול ה'" (ירושלמי שקלים ו
For every expansion requires contraction, until the Shechinah is revealed in the lower realms and reaches this lowly, physical world.	שכנגד כל התפשטות צריך להיות צמצום עד שתצא לאור שכינה בתחתונים והגיע עד עולם-הזה השפל והגופני

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And all of them are en clothed in physical bodies—even Torah and mitzvos in physical matters like sukkah and lulav and the like.	וכולם נתלבשו בגשמיות, אפלו התורה והמצוות בדברים גופנים כמו סכה ולולב וכיוצא בהם.
Just as with the ways of the middos—kindness spreads, and severity contracts—although they all stem from one Father and one God created them, and they all were given from one Shepherd, and He is en clothed within them, as is known.	וכמו שבדרכי המדות, החסדים להתפשט והגבורות לצמצם, הגם כי אב אחד לכולם ואל אחד בראם וכולם מרועה אחד נתנו, והוא מתלבש בתוכם פי'דוע
Without any change at all, Heaven forbid—rather, it is a chain of the Supernal Will bringing potential into actual.	בלי שום שנוי כלל חס ושלום, כי אם השתלשלות רצון העליון להוציא מכח אל הפועל
So too, after the descent and en clothement into bodies, “The Torah, the Holy One Blessed be He, and Yisrael are all one” (Zohar III, 73a), as is known—from the 600,000 letters and 600,000 souls, etc.	כן אחר ההשתלשלות והתלבשות בגשמיות, "ואורייתא וקודשא-בריך-הוא וישראל בלא חד" (זוהר חלק ג ע"ג, א), פי'דוע מששים רבוא אותיות ושישים ר'רבוא נשמות וכו'
Those from the world of chesed permit—to expand; and thus, from that as well, the glory of Hashem is revealed.	אשר מעולם החסד מתירים, גם בזה נגלה כבוד ה' ממנו גם-כן
And those from the world of gevurah prohibit—along the path of contraction and boundary: “Thus far you shall come” (cf. Iyov 38:11).	ואשר מעולם הגבורה אוסרים, על-דרך צמצום וגבול. נתן ה' עד פה תבוא
All this applies only to <i>lights</i> , but not to the <i>vessels (keilim)</i> —for the intention of both is only to make vessels, which are physical, to receive the lights.	וכל זה אינו אלא באורות, אבל לא בפלים, שהרי כל כונת שניהם אינו אלא לעשות פלים שהם גשמיות לקבל האורות
Therefore, they did not refrain from borrowing vessels from one another—even though these prohibit and those permit, etc. (Yevamos 13b).	ולכן לא נמנעו מלהלוות פלים זה לזה, אפלו שאלו (אוסרים ואלו מתירים וכו' (יבמות י"ג, ב
And the halachah is like Beis Hillel, because they are humble.	והלכה כבית הלל מפני שצנוגותנין הם
And the explanation of “halachah” is that it shares letters with <i>kallah</i> (bride), which is the Shechinah.	ופירוש הלכה שהיא אותיות הפלה שהיא השכינה
Like Beis Hillel, who are lenient—who correspond to the attribute of <i>chesed</i> (kindness), because she (the Shechinah) has nothing of her own.	כבית הלל שהם המקילין שהם החסדים, מפני דלית לה מגרמא פלום
As it is known, the moon does not shine except with the light of the sun that illuminates within her.	פי'דוע שאין הירח מאיר אלא מאור השמש המאיר בתוכה
And the meaning of “halachah” is also <i>halichah</i> —walking—that it shows them the path in which to walk toward Hashem.	ופירוש הלכה הוא הילוך, להורות להם הדרך אשר ילכו בה לה

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For the Torah and mitzvos are 613 pieces of advice for walking before Hashem,	כִּי הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוֹת הֵם תַּרְנִ"ג עֵינִינן לְהַתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי ה' (זֶהֱרָה חֲלָק בִּפ"ב, ב
as it is said regarding Avraham: "Walk before Me" (Bereishis 17:1), as is known.	כְּאֶמּוֹר בְּאַבְרָהָם "הַתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי" (בְּרֵאשִׁית י"ז, א), כִּידוּעַ.
Zohar, Part I.	זֶהֱרָה חֲלָק א
For they correspond to the 248 limbs and 365 sinews—to purify and sanctify them, with each mitzvah corresponding to a particular limb.	שֶׁהֵם כְּנֶגֶד רמ"ח אֵיבָרִים וְשֶׁס"ה גִּידִים לְטַהֲרֵם וּלְקַדְּשֵׁם, בְּכָל מִצְוָה לְאַבְרָם הַמִּצְוָה אֵלָיו
To draw holiness upon himself, through binding the vitality and nullifying his self-perception entirely.	לְהַמְשִׁיךְ הַקְדָּשָׁה עַל עֲצָמוֹ בְּקוֹשֶׁר הַחַיּוּת וּבְטוֹל הַהֶרְגֶּשׁ מִמֶּנּוּ
And walking is done by foot, one step and then another—this is the meaning of <i>regel</i> (foot/step),	וְהַהֲלִיכָה הִיא עַל-יְדֵי הַרְגֵל פַּעַם וּשְׁתִּים, שֶׁהוּא לְשׁוֹן רֶגֶל
and he receives reward for every single step.	וּמִקְבָּל שְׂכָר עַל כָּל פְּסִיעָה וּפְסִיעָה
Until through habit it becomes a second nature— <i>teva sheini</i> —which is from the word <i>matbe'a</i> (coin/form),	עַד שֶׁמִּהְרָגֵל יַעֲשֶׂה טִבַּע שֵׁנִי, שֶׁהוּא מִלְשׁוֹן "מַטְבֵּעַ (שֶׁטִּבְעוּ חֲכָמִים" (בְּרֵכּוֹת מ', ב
meaning this is how his original formation was made.	שֶׁהוּא תַחֲלִיל בְּרִיאָתוֹ כִּךָּ הוּא
As in the verse: "And Elokim created..." (Bereishis 1:27), as is known.	כְּמֵאֲמַר "וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים" (בְּרֵאשִׁית א, כ"ז), כִּידוּעַ
For <i>Elokim</i> has the same gematria as <i>teva</i> (nature) and also the same as <i>kisei</i> (throne) (Zohar III, 223a).	שֶׁאֱלֹהִים בְּגִימַטְרִיא הֵטְבַּע וּבְגִימַטְרִיא הַכֶּסֶּף (זֶהֱרָה חֲלָק ג (רכ"ג, א
So the beginning of creation and nature is a "throne" prepared for the Supernal Will, to rest upon it the Mishkan of Hashem and the Eternal House.	לְהִיּוֹת תַּחֲלִיל הַבְּרִיאָה וְהַטִּבַּע, כֶּסֶף נָכוֹן אֶל רָצוֹן הָעֶלְיוֹן לְשִׁכּוֹן עָלָיו מִשְׁכַּן ה' וּבֵית עוֹלָמִים
These are the Upper Shechinah and Lower Shechinah, through the attachment of one's soul to them.	שֶׁהֵם שְׁכִינָה עֵלְיָאָה וּשְׁכִינָה תַתְּמָאָה עַל-יְדֵי הַתְקַשְּׁרוֹת בֵּינֵם
And it is known that the true attachment of one's soul with the Lower Shechinah, and its unification with her to become absorbed within her—	וְיָדוּעַ כִּי הַתְקַשְּׁרוֹת נִפְשׁוֹ בְּאַמְתָּה עִם הַשְּׁכִינָה תַתְּמָאָה, וְהַתְאָחָדוּ עִמָּה לְהַתְפַּלֵּל בָּהּ
this means that his intent should be solely to make his soul, spirit, and Neshamah into a vessel gathered toward Him—	וְהֵינּוּ שְׂלֵא תַהֲיֶה כְּנֶתֶת אֵלָּא לְהַעֲשׂוֹת כְּלִי בְּנִפְשׁוֹ רוּחוֹ, וּנְשָׁמָתוֹ אֵלָיו יֵאָסֵף
to receive the sun to illuminate his day, and to cleave to Hashem—which is the middos, as is known.	לְקַבֵּל הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לְאוֹר יוֹמָם וּלְהִדְבֵּק בָּהּ שֶׁהֵם הַמִּדּוֹת כִּידוּעַ
In any case, it is impossible to reach this unless he truly passes through the experience of death itself—	עַל-כֵּל-פָּנִים אִי-אֶפְשָׁר לְהִגִּיעַ לָזֶה כִּי-אִם מִיַּד עֲבָרוֹ, דֶּרֶךְ הַמָּוֶת מִמֶּנּוּ

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and he will be seized by terror and suffering of the pangs of death itself without any change—	וְאִתְּחוּזוּהוּ פְּלָצוֹת וַיִּסּוּרֵי בִידָקִי מִיָּתֶה מִמָּשׁ בְּלִי שׁוּם שְׁנוּי
as it is known that it is called in the Zohar “the Tree of Death” (Zohar III, 120).	כִּידוּעַ שְׁנִקְרָא בְּזֹהַר "אֵילָנָא דְּמוֹתָא" (זֹהַר חֵלֶק ג', (ק"כ).
And after he has passed through this path and given his soul to death and endured the pain of death—	וְאַחֲרֵי עָבְרוּ דְּרָדָּה הַלּוֹכָה זֶה, וְנָתַן אֶת נַפְשׁוֹ לְמוֹמְתִים, וַיִּסְבֵּל צַעַר מִיָּתֶה
if Hashem will shine His kindness and revive him after two days—	אִם יֵאָדָר ה' חֶסֶדוֹ וַיַּחְיֶהוּ מִיּוֹמָיִם
then his darkness will shine like the sun, to cleave to Hashem and His attributes,	אֲזַי יֵאָדָר כְּשֶׁמָּשׁ אֲפֵלְתוֹ לְהִדְבֵּק בֵּה' וּבְמִדּוֹתָיו
to love Him, and the fear of Hashem will be upon his face.	לְאַהֲבָה אוֹתוֹ וַיִּרְאֶת ה' עַל פָּנָיו
And all the nations of the earth will see that the Name of Hashem is called upon him, etc.—	וְיֵרְאוּ כָּל עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ כִּי שֵׁם ה' נִקְרָא עָלָיו וְכוּ
which refers to the Tetragrammaton itself, as is known.	שֶׁהוּא שֵׁם הו"ה בְּרוּךְ-הוּא בְּעֶצְמוֹ כִּידוּעַ
For “the heavens are the heavens of Hashem, and the earth He gave to mankind” (Tehillim 115:16),	כִּי "הַשָּׁמַיִם שֵׁמִים לַה', וְהָאָרֶץ נָתַן לִבְנֵי אָדָם" (תְּהִלִּים, (קטו, טז
and it is impossible to reach the heavens—which are the middos—except by the path of the earth.	וְאִי-אֲפָשָׁר לְהִגִּיעַ אֶל הַשָּׁמַיִם שֶׁהֵם הַמִּדּוֹת, אִם לֹא בְּדֶרֶךְ כָּל הָאָרֶץ
And this is what is called “going the way of all the earth”—which is death.	וְזֶהוּ הַנִּקְרָא הוֹלֵךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ כָּל הָאָרֶץ שֶׁהוּא הַמָּוֶת
And where does he go? To the heavens.	וְלִהְיוֹן הוֹלֵךְ? אֶל הַשָּׁמַיִם
For there is no other path to ascend to the heavens except through “man shall die in the tent” (Bamidbar 19:14),	שֶׁאֵין שׁוּם דְּרָדָּה אַחֵר שֶׁיַּעֲלֶה הַשָּׁמַיִם אִם-לֹא "אָדָם כִּי יָמוּת בְּאֹהֶל" (בְּמִדְבָּר י"ט, י"ד
which refers to the Mishkan, which is the Shechinah, the Land of Israel.	שֶׁהוּא מִשְׁכַּן שֶׁהוּא שְׁכִינָה אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל
And behold, it is known from the Zohar regarding the practice of “Nefilas Apayim” (falling on the face in supplication),	וְהִנֵּה יָדוּעַ הוּא בְּזֹהַר, בְּעֶנְיָן נְפִילַת אַפִּים
that it is the act of giving over one’s soul to that place, which is the Shechinah.	שֶׁהִיא מְסִירַת נַפְשׁ לְמָקוֹם הַזֶּה שֶׁהִיא הַשְּׁכִינָה
And it is written there that one needs great intention from his fellow in the point of the truth of the heart—	וְכָתוּב שָׁם שֶׁצָּרִיךְ רַעַי סִגִּי בְּנִקְיֻדַּת אֱמֶת הַלֵּב בְּדִבְקוּת, וְהַתְקַשְּׁרוּת חֶפֶץ וְרִצּוֹן גָּמוֹר
that if not, it is a danger to him.	שֶׁאִם-לֹא כֵן סִכָּנָה הִיא לְפָנָיו
For after he declared that he will give over himself to the place of death, and it is not done in complete sincerity—	שֶׁאַחֵר שֶׁאָמַר שֶׁיִּמְסֹר עַצְמוֹ לְמָקוֹם הַמָּוֶת, וְלֹא יִהְיֶה בְּשִׁלְמוּת גָּמוֹר

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so that he could become a vessel to receive Hashem's eternal kindness—which are the middos—to revive him,	בְּכָדִי שְׂיוּכָל לְהַעֲשׂוֹת כְּלִי לְקַבֵּל חֶסֶד ה' מֵעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵם הַמִּדּוֹת לְהַחְיֹתוֹ,
he will remain there. And this is “they die, but not with wisdom” (Iyov 4:21).	), (יִשְׁאָר נֶפֶשׁ, וְזֶהוּ "יָמוּתוּ וְלֹא בְחֻכָּמָה" (אִיּוֹב ד', כ"א
That is, as it is known from the verse “Hashem founded the earth with wisdom” (Mishlei 3:19),	פִּירוּשׁ, כִּידוּעַ מִפְּסוּק "ה' בְּחֻכָּמָה יָסַד אֶרֶץ" (מִשְׁלֵי ג', י"ט),
for <i>Chochmah</i> (Wisdom) is the highest of the intellectual faculties and the point of truth and beginning of the root.	כִּי הַחֻכָּמָה הִיא הָעֲלִיּוֹנָה שֶׁבְּמוֹחִין וְהִיא נְקִידַת הָאֱמֶת וְהַתְחִלַת הַשָּׁרֵשׁ,
And if he does not insert this beginning of root and truth—which is <i>Chochmah</i> —to be absorbed into the Shechinah and to give himself over to Her, he will die.	וְאִם אֵינוֹ מְכַנִּיס הַתְחִלַת הַשָּׁרֵשׁ וְהָאֱמֶת שֶׁהִיא הַחֻכָּמָה לְהַתְפַּלֵּל בְּשִׁכְנָהּ וּלְמַסּוֹר עֲצָמוֹ אֵלֶיהָ—יָמוּת.
And if one should say: “What is this trouble to me, to pass through such a path? For it is awesome and dreadful”—	וְאִם אָמַר יֹאמֵר, מָה לִּי וּלְצָרָה זֹאת, לַעֲבוֹר בְּדֶרֶךְ זֶה, כִּי הוּא נוֹרָא וְאִים,
as it is said: “How awesome is this place” (Bereishis 28:17)—	), (כְּמֵאֲמַר "מָה נוֹרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה" (בְּרֵאשִׁית כ"ח, י"ז
behold, all the earth is before him, and the glory of Hashem is revealed in every particular and general thing in the world of space, time, and soul—	הֲלֹא כָל הָאֶרֶץ לִפְנֵינוּ וְנִגְלָה כְבוֹד ה' בְּכָל דָּבָר פְּרָטִי וְכָלְלִי בְּעוֹלָם שָׁנָה וָפֶשֶׁת,
which are the living forces of the seven days of creation, as it is said: “The world is built with kindness” (Tehillim 89:3),	שֶׁהֵם חַיּוֹת הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִזֵּי הַבְּנִיָּן, כְּמֵאֲמַר "עוֹלָם חֶסֶד", (יְכַנֶּה" (תְּהִלִּים פ"ט, ג')
and there is nothing in the world that is outside of “the seven eyes of Hashem that roam throughout all the earth” (Zechariah 4:10),	וְאִין לֹד דָּבָר בְּעוֹלָם שֶׁצֵּא מִכָּל "שִׁבְעָה עֵינֵי ה' (הַמְשׁוּטָטִים בְּכָל הָאֶרֶץ" (זְכַרְיָה ד', י
and in them and through them all of Torah and mitzvos are included, as is known, for this is the Written Torah.	וּמֵהֶם וּבֵהֶם נִכְלָלוּ כָּל הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוֹת כִּידוּעַ שֶׁהוּא תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּכָתֵב,
Therefore, through them “he ascends to the heights of heaven” (Iyov 20:6), to delight in the light of Hashem and to cleave to His attributes, His love and His fear.	לָכֵף עַל יְדֵיהֶם "יַעֲלֶה שָׁמַיִם שִׂיאוֹ" (אִיּוֹב כ', ו'), לְהִינּוֹת מֵאוֹר ה' וּלְהִדְבֵּק בְּמִדּוֹתָיו אֲהַבָתוֹ וְיִרְאָתוֹ.
Behold—let him not imagine in his soul to escape this way, for only “by the King’s road shall he go”;	הִנֵּה, אַל יִדְמָה בְּנַפְשׁוֹ לְהִמָּלֵט בְּאֶפְסוֹ זֶה, כִּי אִם דֶּרֶךְ הַמֶּלֶךְ לָלֶךְ,
for there is no other path. “This is the gate of Hashem—righteous ones shall enter it” (Tehillim 118:20),	כִּי אֵין מָקוֹם לַעֲבוֹר בְּדֶרֶךְ אֲחֵר, "זֶה הַשַּׁעַר לַה' (צְדִיקִים יָבוֹאוּ בּוֹ" (תְּהִלִּים קי"ח, כ'
and “with this shall he enter the Holy.”	וּבִזְאת יָבֹא אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ,
And it is impossible to reach the Written Torah except through the Oral Torah, which is the Shechinah, as is known.	וְאִי-אֶפְשָׁר לְהִגִּיעַ לְתּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּכָתֵב כִּי-אִם דֶּרֶךְ תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּעַל-פֶּה שֶׁהִיא שִׁכְנָה כִּידוּעַ,

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And this is the parable our Sages said (Shabbos 31b): “They gave him the inner keys, but not the outer ones—how will he enter?”	והוא מִשַּׁל שְׁאֲמְרוּ רַז"ל "שֶׁמָסְרוּ לוֹ הַמִּפְתָּחוֹת הַפְּנִימִיִּים וְהַמִּפְתָּחוֹת הַחִיצוֹנִיִּים לֹא מָסְרוּ לוֹ, בְּהִי (עֵייל?) (שְׁבֹת ל"א, ב
For this is not the path by which he shall ascend, enter, and reach attachment to Hashem, His love and awe—but rather, he will descend lower and lower.	כִּי לֹא זֶה הַדֶּרֶךְ שֶׁיַּעֲלֶה וַיֵּבֵא וַיִּגִּיעַ אֶל הַדְּבָקוֹת, אֲהָבָת וַיִּרְאָת ה' אֲלֵא יֵרֵד מִטָּה מִטָּה
And this is what is said: “One who makes use of the crown shall perish” (Avos 4:5)—	(וְזֶהוּ "וְדֹאשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בְּתִגָּא חֲלָף" (אָבוֹת ד, ה
meaning the crown of the Written Torah itself.	, שֶׁהוּא כֹתֵר שֶׁל תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּכָתֹב בְּעֶצְמוֹ
As our Sages said (Avos 3:17): “Because his wisdom is greater than his deeds... it overturns him upon his face.”	כְּאֲמָרָם רַז"ל "עַל שֶׁחֲכָמְתּוֹ מְרֻבָּה מִמַּעֲשָׂיו כו', (וְהוֹפְכֵתּוֹ עַל פָּנָיו" (אָבוֹת ג, י"ז
For what advantage is there for a person in all his actions that he does beneath the sun in revealed things,	כִּי מֵה יִתְרוֹן לְאָדָם בְּכָל הַמַּעֲשִׂים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ בְּהַגְלוֹת נִגְלוֹת
if his heart is not whole? “Prepare to meet your God, O Israel” (Amos 4:12),	אִם אֵין לְבָבוֹ שָׁלֵם, "הִכּוֹן לִקְרַאת אֱלֹהֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל" (עָמוֹס ד, י"ב
for “Hashem desires the heart” (Zohar II 162b).	, (כִּי רַחֲמָנָא לְבָא בְּעֵי (זֶהר חֲלָק ב קס"ב, ב
And it is in no way possible for the awe of exaltedness to rest upon him, unless he has already passed through fear of total nullification—	וְאִי-אֶפְשָׁר בְּשׁוּם אֶפֶן שֶׁתַּחֲזֹל עָלָיו יִרְאָת הִרְוּמָמוֹת, כִּי אִם אַחֵר שֶׁיַּעֲבוֹר יִרְאָת הֶעָדְרוֹ מַעֲיָקָרוֹ
which is death and self-sacrifice, as mentioned above.	. שֶׁהוּא הַמָּוֶת וּמִסִּירַת נַפְשׁ כַּ"ל
And all the love and awe of Hashem that a person imagines within himself—	, וְכָל הָאֲהָבָוֹת וַיִּרְאָת ה' אֲשֶׁר יִדְמֶה הָאָדָם בְּנַפְשׁוֹ
without having passed through this passage—he certainly speaks falsehood to his own soul.	בְּלִמְיָ עֲבָרוֹ הַמַּעֲבָר הַלָּזֶה, בּוֹדָאֵי שֶׁקֶר עֲנֵה בְּנַפְשׁוֹ בְּעֶצְמוֹ
And these are imagined acquisitions in his soul, aroused from his physical middos, for they are in evil—	וְקַנְיָנִים הַמְדוּמִיִּים הֵם בְּנַפְשׁוֹ מֵהִתְעוֹרְרוֹת מְדוּתָיו הַגִּשְׁמִיִּים כִּי בָרַע הוּא
from the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil—and he is far from Hashem.	. 'מַעֲזַן הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרַע וְרַחוּק הוּא מֵה
And all his fulfillment of mitzvos is nothing but arrogance—to gain himself a name and praise and to receive reward.	וְכָל מַעֲשֵׂה הַמִּצְוֹת הַכֹּל הוּא אֵינוֹ אֲלֵא גְדֻלוֹת, לְהִיּוֹת לוֹ לִשְׁם וּלְתִהְיֶה וּלְקַבֵּל פָּרָס
As an analogy: someone who possesses “a quality” is surely far from the king.	עַל דֶּרֶךְ מִשַּׁל מִי שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ מַעֲלָה, בּוֹדָאֵי רַחוּק הוּא מִהַמֶּלֶךְ
For anyone who is with the king lacks nothing and needs nothing.	מִפְּנֵי שֶׁכָּל מִי שֶׁהוּא עִם הַמֶּלֶךְ יַחַד, כָּלוּם חָסֵר לוֹ וְאֵין צָרִיק לוֹ שׁוּם דְּבָר

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For example—what need has he for wealth? Is anything lacking?	וְדָרָךְ מִשָּׁל עֲשִׂירוֹת לָמָּה לוֹ? כָּלוּם חָסֵר? וְכוּ
Strong fortresses and high-level protection—what does he need them for?	תְּחִבּוּלוֹת עָרֵי בְצוּרוֹת וְשִׁמְיָהָ מַעֲלָה, לָמָּה לוֹ? הֲרֵי לְשִׁמּוֹר הוּא
Wisdom or craft—why would he need them, as above.	חֲכָמָה מְלָאכָה לָמָּה לוֹ כֵּן"ל
Thus, it is necessarily understood: anyone who possesses a “quality,” that quality itself shows he is far from the King—	נִמְצָא מִמֵּילָא מְכָרָח וּמִכֵּן, מִי שֶׁהוּא בֹעֵל מַעֲלָה שְׂיִישׁ לוֹ אוֹתוֹ מַעֲלָה, בְּוֹדָאֵי רְחוּק הוּא מִן הַמֶּלֶךְ
for the quality is called “a quality” in relation to him, because he “has” it.	וְשֶׁהַמַּעֲלָה נִקְרְאת מַעֲלָה אֲצֵלוֹ וְיֵישׁ לוֹ
But as he draws close to the King in truth—he would no longer possess that quality, for why would he need it.	כִּי בְּהִתְקָרְבוֹ אֶל הַמֶּלֶךְ מִמֶּשׁ, אֵין לוֹ אוֹתוֹ מַעֲלָה, כִּי לָמָּה הֵיא לוֹ
However, this is a great danger: perhaps he will not nullify his will swiftly to fulfill the will of the King—	אָבֵל סִפְנָה עֲצוּמָה הִיא, כֵּן וְאוֹלֵי לֹא יִבְטֵל רְצוֹנוֹ חֵישׁ וּמִהֵרָ לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן הַמֶּלֶךְ
and he will forfeit his life, unless he knows himself and the truth of his heart is whole, with total will and self-sacrifice—	וְיִתְחַיֵּב בְּנַפְשׁוֹ, אִם לֹא שִׂידַע בְּעַצְמוֹ וְאֶמֶת לְבוֹ שָׁלֵם, בְּרִצּוֹן גָּמוֹר וּמִסִּירַת נַפְשׁוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן הַמֶּלֶךְ
to act immediately, hitting the mark precisely and not erring.	תִּיכָף, קוֹלַע אֶל הַשְּׂעֵרָה וְלֹא יִחְטֵא
Then he can be with the King always—in His joy and in His dread—	אֲזִי יָכוֹל לִהְיוֹת עִמּוֹ תָּמִיד בְּעֵת שִׂמְחָתוֹ וּפְחָדָתוֹ
for he is secure in himself.	כִּי בְטוּחַ הוּא בְּעַצְמוֹ
And to such a person, the King reveals His hidden things and all His matters.	וְלֵאשׁוֹ אֲשֶׁר אֵלָּה לוֹ, מְגִלָּה לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ מִסְתוּרָיו וְכָל עֲנִינָיו
And behold, in the Zohar on the verse “And the woman saw that the tree was good...” (Bereishis 3:6), which is recorded next to the verse “Therefore shall a man leave...” (Bereishis 2:24)—	וְהִנֵּה בִּזְהַר עַל פֶּסוּק "וַתֵּרָא הָאִשָּׁה כִּי טוֹב הָעֵץ" (בְּרֵאשִׁית ג, ו), הִרְשׁוּם אֲצֵל פֶּסוּק "עַל כֵּן יַעֲזֹב אִישׁ" (בְּרֵאשִׁית ב, כ"ד)
(Zohar I, 3b), see there the entire passage. And at the end of the passage it states:	זֶהֱרַח לֵקֵךְ א ג, ב), עֵינֵי-שָׁם כָּל הַמַּאֲמָר, וּבְסוֹף הַמַּאֲמָר
“Come and see: For Hashem your G-d is a consuming fire... whoever seeks [to enter]... in the flame that ascends there are two lights: one white and one black or dark blue.	תָּא חֲזִי כִּי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵשׁ אוֹכֵלָה הוּא כו', מֵאֵן דְּבַעֲי" כו', בְּשִׁלְהוּבָא דְסִלְקִין אֵית תְּרִין נְהוּרִין, חַד חִינּוּרָא וְחַד אוּבְמָא אוֹ תְּכֵלָא
That dark or blue light—which is below—is a throne that is precious to the white one... and therefore the secret of <i>techeiles</i> ...	הַהוּא נְהוּרָא אוּבְמָא אוֹ תְּכֵלָא דְאִיהוּ לְתַתָּא הוּא כְּרִסְיָא, יְקָר לְהַהוּא חִינּוּרָא כו', וְעַל דָּא רְזָא דְתְּכֵלָתָא כו'
And this one is bound to two sides... and this one always consumes and throws to that one...	וְהֵאֵי אֵתְמַחַד לְתִרְיָן סְטָרִין כו', וְדָא אֲכָלָא תְּדִיר וּשְׂצִי, לְהֵאֵי כו'

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for in it hangs the destruction of all—death of all,” etc. Behold, our words are an explanation of this.	דָּהָא בִּיה תְּלִיָא שְׁחִיצָא דְּכָלָא מוֹתָא דְּכּוֹלָא כּו", הָרִי דְּבִרְיָנוּ בְּפִירוּשׁ הַנִּזְכָּר
And in order to explain the reason behind this, it is explained in the book <i>Likkutei Amarim</i> that it is impossible to create change in the world unless the matter is elevated to its root.	וּכְדִי לְבָאָר טַעַם לְדָבָר, מְבּוֹאָר בְּסֵפֶר לְקוּטִי אֲמָרִים, שְׂאִי-אֶפְשָׁר לַעֲשׂוֹת הַשְׁתַּנּוּת בְּעוֹלָם, אִם-לֹא בְּהַעֲלוֹת הַדָּבָר אֶל שָׁרְשׁוֹ
The analogy is that of planting wheat in order that it increase—	וְהַמָּשֶׁל בְּזֶה, הַזְרִיעָה שְׂזוֹרְעִין חֲטִים כְּדִי שְׂיִתְּוֹסְפוּ
but it cannot grow unless the planted wheat decomposes in the earth and becomes like the dust of the earth, as is known.	וְאִי-אֶפְשָׁר לְגַדֵּל אֲלֵא אִם-כֵּן הַחֲטִים הַזְּרוּעִים מִתְּבַלִּין בְּעֶפֶר וְנִעֲשִׂים עֶפֶר הָאֶרֶץ כִּידוּעַ
And so too the seed of man in the woman.	וְכֵן זֶרַע אָדָם בְּאִשָּׁה
The matter is that the power of growth is in the earth.	וְהַעֲנִין הוּא כִּי כֹחַ הַצִּמּוּחַ הוּא בְּאֶרֶץ
And if you ask: if so, let the earth produce without any planting—	וְאִם תֹּאמַר, אִם-כֵּן תִּצְמַח הָאֶרֶץ בְּלִי שׂוּם וְזִרְעָה
the matter is that the earth and the power of growth rooted within it is essentially infinite compared to that thing.	הַעֲנִין הוּא כִּי הָאֶרֶץ וְכֹחַ הַצִּמּוּחַ הַמְּשֻׁרָשׁ בְּתוֹכָהּ הוּא מִמֶּשׁ אֵין-סוֹף בְּעֶרְךָ הַהוּא
Therefore, it is impossible for anything to expand unless when some species is planted and decomposes into soil—	עַל כֵּן אִי-אֶפְשָׁר לְהִתְפַּשֵּׁט שׂוּם דָּבָר אֲלֵא אִם-כֵּן בְּשְׂזוֹרְעִים אֵיזָה מִין וְחוֹזֵר לְעֶפֶר
then that species is aroused to sprout, for its decay in the dust reaches its root.	אִזּוֹ אוֹתוֹ הַמִּין מִתְּעוֹרֵר לְצֵאתוֹ, וּמִכֵּן שֶׁהִגִּיעַ בְּהִתְבַּלּוּתוֹ בְּעֶפֶר אֶל שָׁרְשׁוֹ
The vegetative power has the capacity to increase greatly.	כֹּחַ הַצִּמּוּחַ יֵשׁ בּוֹ כֹּחַ לְהוֹסִיף הֶרְבֵּה
And the root is an intermediary between the branches and the higher powers from which it descends,	וְהַשָּׂרֵשׁ הוּא מְמוּצָע בֵּין הָעִנְפִים וּבֵין הַכּוֹחוֹת הָעֲלִיוֹנִים, מִמֶּנּוּ בִּדְרוֹךְ הַשְׁתַּלְשְׁלוֹת
as it is known that one cannot transition from one level to another unless through an intermediary—and that is the root, as above.	כִּידוּעַ שְׂאִי-אֶפְשָׁר לְהִשְׁתַּלֵּשֵׁל מִדְּרָגָא אֶחָדָא אֶתְרָת אֲלֵא עַל-יְדֵי מְמוּצָע, וְהוּא הַשָּׂרֵשׁ כִּנ"ל
For that root includes all the upper powers and from it extend other branches—	כִּי הַשָּׂרֵשׁ הַהוּא הוּא הַכֹּלֵל אֶת כָּל הַכּוֹחוֹת הָעֲלִיוֹנִים, וּמִמֶּנּוּ מִתְפַּשְׁטִים עִנְפִים אֲחֵרִים
but the root itself is only a preparation and not an entity of its own.	אָבֵל הַשָּׂרֵשׁ בְּעֵצְמוֹ אֵינוֹ אֲלֵא הִכְנָה וְלֹא שׂוּם דָּבָר בְּכַנְיָ-עֵצְמוֹ
For relative to the higher realms it is the inclusive whole, and relative to the lower, it is the root of all.	כִּי נֶגֶד עֲלִיוֹנִים הוּא כָּלְלוֹת הַכֹּל, וְנֶגֶד הַתַּחְתּוֹנִים הוּא שָׂרֵשׁ הַכֹּל
Therefore, our words are necessary: that it is impossible to ascend to the place of Hashem unless through the Shechinah,	לְכֵן מְחִיבִים דְּבִרְיָנוּ, שְׂאִי-אֶפְשָׁר לַעֲבוֹר אֶל מְקוֹם ה' שְׁמָהּ, אֲלֵא אִם-כֵּן דְּרוֹךְ הַשְׁכִּינָה
and to taste the taste of death itself—to be nullified into Her completely.	וּלְטַעַם טַעַם מִיתָה מִמֶּשׁ, לְהִתְבַּטֵּל בְּתוֹכָהּ מִמֶּשׁ

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And afterwards, he is aroused and awakened.	וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן חוֹזֵר וְנִיעוֹר.
And therefore the Shechinah has nothing of her own—only what reaches her from the light of the middos.	וְלִכְּנֵן הַשְׁכִּינָה לִית לָהּ מִגִּרְמָה כְּלוּם רַק מֵה שְׁמַגִּיעַ, אֲלֵיָהּ מֵאוֹר הַמִּדּוֹת
And it is known that the vitality runs with <i>ratzo v'shov</i> (ebb and return).	וְיָדוּעַ כִּי הַחַיּוּת רָצוּא וְשׁוֹב
Therefore, one who is absorbed into the Shechinah gives over himself to death itself.	וְלִכְּנֵן מִי שֶׁנִּכְלָל בַּשְׁכִּינָה מוֹסֵר עַצְמוֹ לְמִיתָה מִמֶּשׁ
And therefore she is only called a <i>kli</i> (vessel)—in the language of inclusion—	וְלִכְּנֵן נִקְרָאת רַק כְּלִי לְשׁוֹן כְּלָלוּת
for she includes within her the reception of all upper powers, and consumes the lower ones that are absorbed into her.	שֶׁכּוֹלֶלֶת קַבְּלַת כָּל הַכּוּחוֹת הָעֲלִיּוֹנִים וּמְכַלָּה הַתַּחְתּוֹנִים. שֶׁנִּכְלָלִים בְּתוֹכָהּ
And these are the words of our Sages, of blessed memory, on the verse: “And to cleave to Him” (Devarim 11:22):	וְזֶה דְּבָרֵי רַז"ל עַל פְּסוּק "וּלְדַבְּקָהּ בּוֹ" (דְּבָרִים י"א, (כ"ב):
Is it possible to cleave to the Shechinah? But is it not a consuming fire?	"וְכִי אֶפְשָׁר לְהִדְבֵּק בַּשְׁכִּינָה, וְהִלָּא אֵשׁ אֹכֶלֶת הוּא?"
Rather, cleave to His attributes.	אֲלָא הִדְבֵּק בְּמִדּוֹתָיו
The explanation is that after he is absorbed into the Shechinah and completely nullified within her,	פִּירוּשׁ, אַחֲרֵי שֶׁנִּכְלָל בַּשְׁכִּינָה וְנִתְבַּטֵּל לְגִמְרֵי בְּתוֹכָהּ,
he is then reawakened through <i>deveikus</i> (cleaving),	אַחֲרֵי כֵן חוֹזֵר וְנִיעוֹר עַל־יְדֵי דְבִקּוֹת
as it is known that the Shechinah also receives through the <i>middos</i> of <i>deveikus</i> and attachment, which is called <i>Yesod</i> ,	כִּידוּעַ שֶׁגַּם הַשְׁכִּינָה מְקַבֶּלֶת עַל־יְדֵי מִדּוֹת הַדְּבִקּוֹת, וְהַתְקַשְׁרוֹת שֶׁנִּקְרָא יְסוֹד
and she receives from the light of the <i>middos</i> .	וּמְקַבֶּלֶת מֵאוֹר הַמִּדּוֹת
And this is “cleave to His attributes”—for with <i>middos</i> cleaving is applicable,	וְזֶהוּ "הִדְבֵּק בְּמִדּוֹתָיו", כִּי בְּמִדּוֹת שְׂיִיף דְבִקּוֹת
whereas with the Shechinah [itself], not so—as is explained in the Zohar on Bereishis referenced earlier.	מֵה־שְׂאִינ־כֵּן בַּשְׁכִּינָה, כְּמוֹ שֶׁמְבּוֹאֵר בְּזֹהַר בְּרֵאשִׁית הַנִּזְכָּר
For the <i>middos</i> are “white fire” that does not burn,	כִּי הַמִּדּוֹת הֵם אֵשׁ חִיּוּרָא שְׂאִינּוֹ שׁוֹרֶף
and rides upon <i>blue fire</i> , as is explained there.	וְרוֹכֵב עַל אֵשׁ דְּתַכְלֵתָא כְּמַבּוֹאֵר שָׁם
Therefore, Moshe, whose place was “it pants, it shines there” (Koheles 1:5),	לְכֵן מֹשֶׁה שֶׁהָיָה מְקוֹמוֹ "שׂוֹאֵף זֹרֶחַ הוּא שָׁם" (קֹהֵלֶת (א, ה
spoke face to face with Him without any weakness.	פָּנִים אֶל פָּנִים דְּבָר בּוֹ כְּלִי שׁוּם חֲלִישׁוֹת
The general principle is: in every Jew are included all the <i>middos</i> ,	כְּלָלָא דְּמִלְתָּא: הָרִי בְּכָל אָדָם מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל כְּלוּלִים כָּל הַמִּדּוֹת,

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and the root of his soul is a limb from the Shechinah and Knesses Yisrael, which is called “the Name of Heaven.”	וְשָׁרֵשׁ נִשְׁמָתוֹ אֶבֶר מִן הַשְּׂכִינָה וּכְנֶסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנִּקְרָאת לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם
For the <i>middos</i> are called “heaven,” and the Shechinah is called “the Name of Heaven,”	כִּי הַמְדוּת נִקְרָאִים שָׁמַיִם וְהַשְּׂכִינָה נִקְרָאת לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם
for the “name” is the totality of the thing, and not a thing unto itself.	כִּי הַשֵּׁם הוּא כָּלִיּוֹת הַדָּבָר וְלֹא דָבָר בְּפָנָי עֲצָמוֹ
And this is [the meaning of] “any dispute that is for the sake of Heaven”—	וְזֶהוּ כָּל מַחְלָקָת שֶׁהִיא לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם
it means a dispute within his own <i>middos</i> , as mentioned:	פִּירוּשׁ מַחְלָקָת מְדוּתָיו כַּנִּזְכָּר
how to conduct himself with <i>chesed</i> or with <i>gevurah</i> , permitted or forbidden, even in matters of Torah and awe.	אִיךָ יִתְנַהֵג בְּחֶסֶד אוֹ בְּגְבוּרָה, מִתֵּר אוֹ אָסוּר, אֶפְלוּ בְּדָבָר תּוֹרָה וְיִרְאָה
The main thing is that his intention should be to include himself in “the Name of Heaven,”	הַעֲקָר צָרִיךְ שֶׁתְּהִיָּה כּוֹנֵנוֹ לְכָלֵּל עֲצָמוֹ בְּשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם
which is the root of his soul, which is the Shechinah,	שֶׁהוּא שָׁרֵשׁ נִשְׁמָתוֹ שֶׁהִיא הַשְּׂכִינָה
and that all the matters of his disputes be how to be absorbed into the Shechinah,	וְכָל עֲנִינֵי מַחְלָקוֹתָיו הֵם אִיךָ לְהִתְכַּלֵּל בַּשְּׂכִינָה
and how to nullify himself within her before Hashem, blessed be He.	וְאִיךָ לְהִתְבַּטֵּל בְּתוֹכָהּ נֶגֶד הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ
And the concept of <i>bittul</i> (self-nullification) can be explained through the verse: “This is the day that Hashem has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it ” (Tehillim 118:24),	וְעִנְיָן הַבְּטוּל אֶפְשָׁר לִהְיוֹת עַל דֶּרֶךְ הַפְּסוּק "זֶה הַיּוֹם (עֲשֵׂה ה' נִגִּילָה וְנִשְׁמְחָה בּוֹ) (תְּהִלִּים קי"ח, כ"ד)
and our Sages said: “One might think he should rejoice in the day—therefore it says <i>‘rejoice in Him’</i> , that he should rejoice in Hashem” (Shir HaShirim Rabbah 1:32).	וְאָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתָיו: "יֻכַּל יִשְׂמַח בַּיּוֹם, ת'ל: 'נִגִּילָה וְנִשְׁמְחָה (בּוֹ) – שִׁישְׂמַח בּוֹ" (שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים רַבָּה א, ל"ב)
And the explanation is that any illumination that comes to a person is called a “day,” from whatever <i>middah</i> it may be,	וְהַפִּירוּשׁ הוּא, כִּי אֵיזָה הָאֵרָה שֶׁבָּאָה לְאָדָם נִקְרָאת יוֹם, מֵאִיזוֹ מִדָּה שֶׁתְּהִיָּה
for it is a light from Hashem, blessed be He.	כִּי הִיא הָאֵרָה מִהַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ
One might think he should rejoice in the day, meaning, in the illumination, in the <i>middah</i> with which He measures to him.	יֻכַּל שִׁישְׂמַח בַּיּוֹם, פִּירוּשׁ בְּהָאֵרָה, בְּמִדָּה שֶׁהוּא מוֹדֵד לוֹ
Therefore it says “ <i>in Him</i> ”—he should rejoice in Hashem.	ת'ל בּוֹ – שִׁישְׂמַח בּוֹ
That is, he should understand that the illumination is the Essence of Hashem, as is known—	פִּירוּשׁ, שֶׁיִּבִּין שֶׁהָאֵרָה הִיא עֲצָמוֹת הַשֵּׁם כִּידוּעַ
for the <i>middos</i> are the secret called “Essence.”	כִּי הַמְדוּת הֵם הַסּוּד הַנִּקְרָא עֲצָמוֹת

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And if so, when the King suddenly comes to lodge with him, he must surrender to Him his entire house and all his belongings.	וְאִם כֵּן, כְּשֶׁהַמֶּלֶךְ בָּא פֶתְאִם לְהִתְאַכֵּסן אֵצֶלָּו, צָרִיךְ לְהַנִּיחַ לוֹ כָּל בֵּיתוֹ וְכָל כְּלָיו.
And if he does give over to the King his entire house and all his belongings—	וְאִם הוּא מַנִּיחַ לַמֶּלֶךְ כָּל בֵּיתוֹ וְכָל כְּלָיו
then he is as one who is entirely as nothing—	נִמְצָא מְמִילָא נֶעֱשֶׂה הוּא כְּמִי שְׂאִינוּ כָּלֵל
for the King is not a corporeal being, Heaven forbid, in any bodily power, Heaven forbid.	שֶׁהַרִי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵינוֹ גֶּשֶׁם חָס וְשָׁלוֹם בְּשׁוּם כֹּחַ גִּשְׁמִי חָס וְשָׁלוֹם.
And if he has become a house for the King—what is he? Then he is included in the Shechinah.	וְאִם הוּא נֶעֱשֶׂה בֵּית לַמֶּלֶךְ, מָה הוּא? אֵז נִכְלָל בְּשִׁכְיָנָה.
And this is: What is a dispute for the sake of Heaven? This is the dispute of Hillel and Shammai—who represent the <i>middos</i> .	וְזֶהוּ: אֵיזוֹ הִיא מַחְלָקַת לְשֵׁם שְׁמַיִם? זֶה הִיא מַחְלָקַת הַלֵּל וְשַׁמַּי – שְׁנֵיהֶם הַמִּדּוֹת
And a dispute for the sake of Heaven means: for the sake of <i>halachah</i> , as we said above.	וּמַחְלָקַת לְשֵׁם שְׁמַיִם – פִּירוּשׁ: לְשֵׁם הַלָּכָה, כְּדַבְּרֵינוּ וְכַנְזָכָר לְעֵיל
Not so with Korach and his assembly, who disputed with Moshe and said: “For the entire assembly are holy”—	מֵה־שְׂאִי־כֵן קָרַח וְעֵדְתוֹ, שֶׁחֲלָקוּ עַל מֹשֶׁה וְאָמְרוּ: "כִּי כָּל הָעֵדָה כֻּלָּם קֳדָשִׁים
meaning he grasped onto something higher than the Shechinah—which is the <i>middos</i> ,	כְּמוֹתוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱחָז לְמַעְלָה מִהַשְׁכִּינָה שֶׁהִן הַמִּדּוֹת
as explained in the aforementioned Zohar.	כְּמוֹ שְׂמִבּוֹאֵר בְּזֵהָר הַנִּזְכָּר
And it is known that that place is the place of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil—and from there one can become separated, Heaven forbid.	וְיָדוּעַ הוּא שֶׁהוּא מְקוֹם עֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וָרָע, וּמִשָּׁם יִפָּרֵד חָס וְשָׁלוֹם
Therefore, when they tried to draw near through the incense—	וְלָכֵן, כְּשֶׁרָצוּ לְהִתְקָרֵב עַל־יְדֵי הַקְטָרֶת
at the moment of their passing—“a consuming fire devoured them.”	מִדֵּי עֲבָרָם, אֵשׁ אֲכָלָה אֹכְלֵתָם
And this is what our Sages said: “For the Torah is black fire upon white fire”—	וְזֶהוּ דְּבָרֵי רַז"ל: "כִּי הַתּוֹרָה אֵשׁ שְׁחוּרָה עַל גְּבִי אֵשׁ", "לְבָנָה
and this is the path by which a person enters into Torah—through the black fire, which is the Shechinah. Then he will succeed.	וְהוּא דֶּרֶךְ הַלְיוּכּוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם אֶל הַתּוֹרָה – דֶּרֶךְ אֵשׁ שְׁחוּרָה, שֶׁהִיא הַשְׁכִּינָה – אֵז יִצְלִיחַ

[NOTE Summary:

The discourse begins with a teaching on the verse "*And to cleave to Him*" (Devarim 11:22), with the Talmudic question: How can a human cleave to G-d, who is a “consuming fire”? The answer: cleave to His *middos* (Divine attributes), which serve as the accessible conduit. Rabbi Menachem Mendel expands this further: One must first become fully *batel* (nullified) into the *Shechinah*, the feminine Divine Presence, which itself receives from the *middos*. Only afterward can one be reawakened through deveikus.

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He describes this process using imagery from the Zohar: the two fires—white and blue/black. The white fire (*middos*) is gentle, non-consuming; the blue fire (*Shechinah*) consumes and absorbs. Just as the Shechinah is only a *kli* (vessel) for receiving Divine flow and nullifying lower forms, the soul too must become this vessel, emptied of ego. Only then can the light of the *middos* shine within the person in a way that leads to true deveikus.

The discourse then explores the metaphor of joy: when G-d shines a particular *middah* (a divine mode), it is a “day.” One might think to rejoice in the experience of illumination, but the verse says “*rejoice in Him*”—not in the attribute, but in the essence that shines through it. Joy becomes a test of bittul: does the person hold onto the “day,” or allow themselves to disappear in the “King” who came to dwell within?

The climax of the discourse revolves around the nature of a “dispute for the sake of Heaven.” True inner struggle is not between people, but between one’s own attributes—how to act with chessed or gevurah, how to direct fear or love. If this inner debate is rooted in cleaving to the Shechinah and surrendering to G-d’s will, it is holy. But if it is rooted in ego—as with Korach, who sought to leap over the Shechinah and grasp at “holy” status—it leads to separation and destruction.

Thus, to approach Torah itself, one must enter through the *black fire*—the Shechinah, the consuming aspect of G-d that nullifies the lower self. Only then can the white fire—the light of Torah and Divine kindness—reside in him safely.

Practical Takeaway

This discourse demands a radical reorientation of spiritual focus:

- True **cleaving to G-d** is not emotional uplift or personal inspiration. It begins with a real inner death—the surrender of the ego into the consuming fire of the Shechinah.
- **Joy**, even in spiritual highs, must be directed “in Him,” not in the experience. Otherwise, one clings to the attribute and not its source.
- **Inner conflict**, when grounded in the yearning to align the self with Divine will, is sacred. But if it’s driven by spiritual pride or the desire to bypass process, it becomes like the rebellion of Korach.
- **Spiritual growth** requires entering through the “black fire”—the humility, fear, and submission of the Shechinah—before the “white fire” of Torah can shine.

A person must ask themselves: *Do I rejoice in the light I feel, or in the One who gives it? Do I debate within to know G-d’s will—or to affirm my spiritual self-image? Am I willing to become a vessel emptied of all that is mine so that I may host the King?*

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Chassidic Story

When Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok arrived in Eretz Yisrael after a long and dangerous journey, he faced extreme poverty. One of his chassidim, shocked by the tzaddik's living conditions, asked: "Rebbe, why didn't you remain in Russia where your influence and comfort were so great?"

He replied: "There, I had a name. A Rebbe. Here, I am no one. And that is what I sought—to be nothing, so the King could dwell."

Another time, a follower approached him, beaming with spiritual joy after an intense davening. "Rebbe," he exclaimed, "my soul soared to the heavens!"

The Horodoker responded gently, "The question is not how high you soared, but whether you brought anything back down."

That—his students later explained—is *bittul*. To dissolve into G-d's fire not to escape, but to become a vessel that carries Him into the world. **END NOTE]**