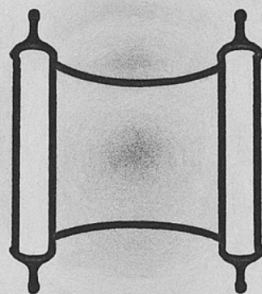


בס"ד

**Rebbe Elimelech
of Lizhensk
Parshas Lech Lecha**



Dedicated To:

טנייה מלכה בת דינה דבורה
דפואה שלמה

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מאמר א

And Hashem said to Avram, "Go for yourself," etc. It seems that a person must serve the blessed Creator through three successive levels.

The first is that one must break the power of physical desire that is ingrained in man by nature—such as for eating, drinking, and similar things—so that his eating will be in holiness and purity.

Through this he breaks the power of "other gods," for the word "Elokim" equals "Nature" (הטבע) in numerical value.

And after he breaks the power of the "other gods," he merits to reach the level of awe—fear of the living G-d.

Second, a person must break the base traits within him that have been with him since his birth.

There are people whose traits are more corrupt than those of others—for example, the trait of anger or similar—so that certain of their traits are worse than their fellow's by nature.

And after he breaks the force of those lowly and corrupt traits, he merits to attain love of the blessed Creator.

And after all this, he must reach the third level, which is beauty (תפארת), as explained above in Parashas Noach—meaning that all his deeds should be beautiful and splendid.

As the Tanna said: "That which is a glory to its doer and a glory to him from man."

This is the hint in "Go for yourself from your land," which alludes to the first level—the earthly, physical desires rooted in materiality, from which one must depart.

"And from your birthplace" alludes to the second level—those negative traits with which a person is born.

"And from your father's house" alludes to the third level—for the main source of base pride comes when one boasts of his ancestry, saying he is the son of great men.

ויאמר ה' אל אברהם לך-לך כו'. נ"ל דהנה צריך האדם לעבד הבורא ברוך הוא בשלש מדרגות זו אחר זו,

דהיינו [א] מתחלה צריך לשבור כח התאנה המטבע באדם מדרך הטבע כגון אכילה ושתיה וכיוצא בהם, שתהיה אכילתו בקדושה ובטהרה

ועל-ידי זה הוא משבר כח אלהים אחרים ד"אלהים" גימטריה "הטבע"

ואחר שמשבר כח אלהים אחרים, זוכה לבוא למדרגת יראה שהוא אלהים חיים

[ב] צריך האדם לשבור המידות השפלות שבו שהם, אצלו בתולדה מיום צאתו מרחם אמו

יש בני אדם שמידותיהם יותר גרועות משאר בני אדם במדה זו, דהיינו למשל מדת כעס וכדומה, ששאר מידותיו גרועות מחברו בתולדה

ואחר שמשבר כח המידות השפלות והגרועות הוא זוכה לבוא לאהבת הבורא ברוך הוא

[ג] ואחר כל זאת צריך לבוא למדרגה ג' שהיא התפארת, כמו שמבואר לעיל בפ' נח, שכל מעשיו יהיו יפים ומפוארים

כמו שאמר התנא "כל שהיא תפארת כו' ותפארת לו מן האדם"

וזהו רמז "לך-לך מארצך", רמז למדרגה ראשונה שהיא התאוות הארציות הגשמיות שהוא מטבע, בחמר וצריך לצאת ממנה

"וממולדתך" רמז למדרגה ב' שהם המידות, הגרועות הנולדים עם האדם

"ומבית אביך" רמז למדרגה ג', דהנה עיקר התפארת השפלות באים לאדם על-ידי שהוא מתגאה ומתפאר באבותיו שהוא בן גדולים

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One must depart from this corrupt pride and attain another kind of splendor—one that is good in the eyes of Hashem and of man, as mentioned above.

וְצָרִיךְ לְצַאת מִן הַמִּידָה הַגְּרוּעָה הַזֹּאת לְתַפְאֶרֶת אַחֶרֶת הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵי ה' וְאָדָם כַּנִּלְכָּד,

“To the land that I will show you” hints to the supernal land.

”אֶל הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֶרְאֶה” רָמַז לְאֶרֶץ עֲלִיוֹנָה.

And this is [the meaning of] “Bow to Hashem in the beauty of holiness”—to adorn and glorify holiness itself, which is the level of Tiferes.

וְזֶהוּ “הִשְׁתַּחֲוִי לֵה' בְּהִדְרַת קֹדֶשׁ”, פְּרוּשׁ לְהִדְרָה וּלְפָאָר בְּתַפְאֶרֶת אֶת הַקְּדוּשָׁה שֶׁהִיא מִדְרַגַּת הַתַּפְאֶרֶת.

And this is [the meaning of] “Your lips, O bride, drip honeycomb”—also hinting to these three levels.

וְזֶהוּ “נוֹפֶת תְּטוּפֶנָּה שִׁפְתוֹתֶיךָ כֶּלֶה כו'”, רָמַז גַּם-כֵּן, לְשֵׁלֶשׁ מִדְרַגּוֹת הַנִּלְכָּד,

“Dripping honeycomb” refers to the level of awe, for “dripping myrrh”—and our Sages expounded, “Do not read ‘myrrh’ (מור)...” [i.e., an allusion to awe].

”נוֹפֶת תְּטוּפֶנָּה” רָמַז לְמִדְרַגַּת יִרְאָה, “נוֹטְפוֹת מוֹר” וְדִרְשׁוּ חֲזו"ל “אֶל-תִּקְרִי מוֹר” כו'

And “Your lips, O bride,” alludes to the level of love—like a bride beloved to her groom.

וְ”שִׁפְתוֹתֶיךָ כֶּלֶה” רָמַז לְמִדְרַגַּת אֲהָבָה, כִּכְלָה הַקָּהָה וְיָבָה לְאָרוֹס שְׁלָה,

“Honey and milk are under your tongue” refers to the third level, that all his actions are as sweet as honey and admired by all people.

”דִּבְשׁ וְחֶלֶב תַּחַת לְשׁוֹנְךָ” רָמַז לְמִדְרַגָּה ג', שֶׁכָּל מַעֲשָׂיו הֵם כְּדִבְשׁ וּמְפֹאָרִים לְכָל אָדָם.

[NOTE Summary

Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk explains that the Divine command “Go for yourself from your land” (Lech Lecha) is not only a call to Avraham, but to every person seeking true spiritual ascent. Each individual must leave behind three layers of selfhood that conceal holiness.

The first layer, “your land,” represents earthly passions and physical cravings that are part of human nature. One must refine his physical desires so that even eating and drinking are done with holiness and awareness of G-d. The second layer, “your birthplace,” refers to the negative traits a person is born with—such as anger, pride, or jealousy. Each soul has its unique flaws rooted in its spiritual origin, and through inner work these can be transformed into love of G-d. The third layer, “your father’s house,” alludes to the egoic pride that stems from ancestry or status. One must release this false glory and replace it with a higher “splendor”—a beauty that comes from humility and doing what is “a glory to G-d and to man.”

When a person refines these three levels, he reaches “the land that I will show you”—a state of higher consciousness and Divine revelation, called “Eretz Elyonah,” the Supernal Land. This corresponds to the attribute of **Tiferes** (Beauty), in which awe, love, and inner harmony unite into one radiant expression of holiness. The verse “Worship Hashem in the beauty of holiness” now takes on literal meaning: true service is

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when holiness itself becomes beautiful, balanced, and shining through one's refined character. Even the verse "Your lips, O bride, drip honeycomb; honey and milk are under your tongue" mirrors these stages. "Honeycomb" symbolizes awe, "lips of the bride" represent love, and "honey and milk" reflect the sweetness of perfected deeds that bring delight to both Heaven and earth.

Practical Takeaway

Spiritual growth requires more than inspiration—it demands refinement. Examine your habits, your temperament, and your pride. Transform physical pleasure into holiness, emotional turbulence into love, and self-centered pride into humility and inner beauty. The journey of "Lech Lecha" is an ongoing path of leaving behind layers of ego to reveal the splendor of your Divine essence.

Chassidic Story

Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk once told a disciple who fasted often: "Your body is a donkey—don't kill it, train it." He explained that holiness is not achieved by crushing the body, but by sanctifying its natural drives. When the student later ate a simple meal with intention and joy, Rebbe Elimelech smiled and said, "Now you have begun your Lech Lecha—you have left your land." **END NOTE]**

מאמר ב

Or it can be said regarding "Your lips, O bride, drip honeycomb," that when a person begins his service of the blessed and exalted Creator, he must begin with awe.

Since he is not yet fully refined, he sometimes speaks openly, without shame.

Later, when he ascends to a higher level, he becomes ashamed to speak or to reveal his deeds in his words—like a bride whose acts are done in privacy.

This is because "his fear is upon his face."

Afterward, when he rises to an even higher level, he becomes modest in all his deeds.

And this is "Your lips, O bride, drip honeycomb"—a hint that at the beginning of his service, he "drips" words, as mentioned above, for his awe is not yet complete.

Then "Your lips, O bride" means that his words are now spoken with modesty, and his deeds are done quietly like a bride.

And afterwards, "Honey and milk are under your tongue"—meaning that the sweet words, like honey and milk, remain under his tongue, symbolizing complete modesty.

או יאמר "נופת תטופנה", דהנה בהתחלת האדם לבוא בעבודתו יתברך ויתעלה, צריך להיות ביראה,

ומחמת שעדיין אינו מתוקן כל צורכו, לכן לפעמים מדבר דברים בגלוי בלא בושה,

ואח"כ כשעולה במדרגה יתירה, הרי הוא מתבייש מדבר לגלות את מעשיו בדבוריו כפלה שמעשיו בחשאי,

וזה הוא בעבור כי יראתו על פניו,

ואח"כ כשעולה למדרגה יתירה, הרי הוא צנוע בכל מעשיו,

ונה "נופת תטופנה" רמז שמתחיל בהתחלת עבודתו, אז הוא מטפטף דברים כפ"ל, כי עדיין אין יראתו שלמה,

ואח"כ "שפתותיה כלה", רצון לומר שדבריו נאמרים בבושה ומעשיו הן בחשאי כפלה,

ואח"כ "דבש וחלב", פרוש דברים המתוקים כדבש וחלב, הם "תחת לשונך", שהוא הצנע לכת לגמרי.

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[NOTE Summary

Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk teaches that spiritual growth unfolds through stages of refinement in one's expression and inner awareness. At the beginning of a person's avodah (Divine service), he serves G-d primarily through awe and fear. Since his inner self is not yet purified, he may speak openly and even boast of his spiritual deeds—his "lips drip honeycomb." These early words are sincere but unrefined, reflecting enthusiasm not yet tempered by humility.

As he matures spiritually, his awe deepens and he begins to feel shame in revealing his inner service. His words become fewer, his deeds more hidden, like a bride who conceals her actions in modesty—"Your lips, O bride." Finally, upon reaching a higher level, his sweetness of service is completely internalized—"Honey and milk are under your tongue." His words of holiness are no longer spoken aloud but rest beneath the tongue, representing complete modesty and inner refinement.

Practical Takeaway

True spiritual maturity is not measured by how much we speak about holiness, but by how deeply it lives within us. Early enthusiasm is good, but it must evolve into inner refinement and humility. Serve G-d quietly and sincerely—let your devotion be "under your tongue," known only to Him. **END NOTE]**

מאמר ג

Or it can be said regarding "Go for yourself" that it seems, by way of allusion, that a person must constantly examine, inquire, and seek to perceive the exaltedness of G-d in everything his eyes behold.

או יאמר "לך לך". ג"ל על דרך הרמז, שצריך
האדם לחקור ולדרוש ולחפש תמיד לראות רוממות
אל מכל דבר אשר יראו עיניו

Through this he will merit that the blessed Creator will grant him intellect and understanding to comprehend and perceive the upper worlds.

ועל ידי זה יזכה שיתן לו הש"ת שכל ובינה להבין
ולהשפיל בעולמות העליונים

And the way by which one can reach this level—to gaze upon the exaltedness of G-d—is that he must first rectify his character traits.

ואופן אשר יגיע למדרגה הנ"ל להסתפל ברוממות
אל, צריך האדם מקודם לתקן את מידותיו

For the blessed Creator created man with every kind of trait, and within each trait there is a side and portion that belongs to holiness—and conversely, to evil, Heaven forbid, as is known.

כי הש"ת ברוך הוא ברא את האדם בכל מיני
מידות, וכל מידה ומידה שפאדם יש צד וחלק באותה
מידה אל הקדושה, וכן להפך לרע ח"ו פידוע

Therefore a person must subdue himself by his own choice, to turn his traits only toward holiness.

וצריך האדם לשבור עצמו בבחירתו להפך את
המידות רק אל הקדושה לבדה

Then he will merit to understand and behold the exaltedness of G-d, and the blessed Creator will open for him fountains of wisdom to attain ever higher understanding beyond anything his mind has ever seen.

ואז יזכה להבין ולהסתפל ברוממות אל, והש"ת
ברוך הוא פותח לו מעינות החכמה להשיגו
ולהשפילו בכל פעם בשכל עליון יותר ויותר מה
שלא ראו עיני שכלו מעולם

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And this is “Go for yourself”—literally meaning “to yourself,” that one must constantly look within himself, to separate from the earthly traits within him and transform them for good as mentioned above.

וזהו “לך לך”, פרוש לעצמך בפשוטו, דהיינו שתסתכל על עצמך תמיד שתפרוש ממידות ארציות, שבה שתהפכם לטובה כנ”ל.

“From your land” means to bring them into holiness alone.

וזהו “מארצך”, ותביאם אל הקדושה לבדה.

“And from your birthplace” means that when a person behaves with corrupt traits, they give birth to further evil, for one trait gives birth to another—like “one transgression brings another.”

“וממולדתך”, פרוש דאדם שהוא מתנהג במידות מגונות, אז יצא ממנו תולדות רעות חלילה, שמידה אחת מולדת את חברתה על דרך “עבירה גוררת עבירה”.

This is “and from your birthplace.”

וזהו “וממולדתך”.

“And from your father’s house” means that sometimes a person’s nature includes certain traits inherited from his father, who instilled these tendencies in him.

“ומבית אביו”, פרוש דלפעמים מוטבע באדם מידות על פי טבעית הבאות לו מכח אביו שהכניס בו המידות האלו.

He must depart from them and draw them into holiness.

צריך לצאת מהם ולהכניסם אל הקדושה.

And this is “and from your father’s house.”

וזהו “ומבית אביו”.

Then you will merit “to the land that I will show you”—meaning that you will attain higher intellect and the supernal land that I will show you, which you have never seen before.

ואז תזכה “אל הארץ אשר אראך”, שתזכה לשכל העליון ולארץ העליונה שאראך אשר מעולם לא ראית.

And this is “Roll upon Hashem your way”—which means, as above, that “roll” implies revelation: that you should reveal your way and your traits, looking into them to ensure that they are all for Hashem.

וזהו “גול על ה’ דרכך”, פרושו גם כנ”ל, כי “גול” הוא לשון התגלות, שתגלה “דרכך” ומידותיה, שתסתכל בהם ותראה שיהיו כלם “לה”.

“And trust in Him” means that when a person gazes upon the exaltedness of G-d, this itself is called trust.

“ויבטח עליו”, פרוש מה שהאדם מסתכל ברוקמות, אל זה נקרא “בטחון”.

“And He will do” means that the blessed Creator will then make for you new creations—insights and revelations that you have never seen or understood before.

“והוא יעשה”, פרוש ואז יעשה לך השי”ת ברוך הוא עשיות חדשות מה שלא ראית מעולם ולא הבנת מעולם.

“And He will bring forth your righteousness as light.”

“והוציא פאור צדקך”. והבן.

Understand this well.

[NOTE Summary

Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk interprets “Go for yourself” (Lech Lecha) as an inner journey of self-awareness and spiritual transformation. Each person must continually investigate his thoughts, actions, and emotions to recognize the greatness of G-d in all that he sees. The ability to perceive Divinity in every detail of life depends upon refining one’s character traits.

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G-d created man with every type of middah (trait), each containing the potential for holiness or, conversely, for harm. Through conscious choice, one must direct each trait—anger, pride, desire, or joy—toward holiness alone. When one does so, Hashem opens “fountains of wisdom,” granting ever-deeper understanding of His greatness, insights previously beyond human grasp.

Thus, “Go for yourself” means: look within yourself. “From your land” refers to transforming earthly, material inclinations into tools for holiness. “From your birthplace” alludes to the chain of negative traits—how one flaw gives birth to another, as “sin brings sin.” “From your father’s house” points to inherited tendencies from one’s parents that must also be elevated. By refining all these levels, a person reaches “the land that I will show you”—a higher consciousness, the supernal realm where G-d reveals what was never seen before.

The verse “Roll your way upon Hashem, trust in Him, and He will act” complements this. “Roll” means to reveal—one must examine and make his ways transparent before G-d. When one lives with awareness of His greatness, that itself is true bitachon (trust). In response, Hashem performs “new deeds”—illuminating the person’s path with fresh Divine light and understanding.

Practical Takeaway

Self-reflection is the beginning of holiness. Rather than fighting your nature, reveal it, study it, and transform it. Every trait has a spark of holiness waiting to be turned toward good. When you examine your ways with honesty and direct them to serve Hashem, He responds by revealing deeper levels of wisdom, inspiration, and Divine light within you.

Chassidic Story

A disciple once asked Rebbe Elimelech how to recognize if his service of G-d was genuine. The Rebbe replied, “If every day you discover a new imperfection within yourself, you are walking the path of Lech Lecha.” Seeing the student’s confusion, he added softly, “Do not fear your flaws—each one you uncover is another gate to G-d.”

END NOTE]

מאמר ד

Or it can be said regarding “Go for yourself,” that concerning Adam the first man it is written, “From every tree of the garden you shall surely eat.” It is difficult to understand why He commanded them concerning what they should eat, for “you shall surely eat” is a language of command. Furthermore, at first it says, “From every tree of the garden,” which implies that he could also eat from the Tree of Life. What, then, is the reason that afterward, when they ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, they were forbidden to eat from the Tree of Life?

או יאמר "לך לך כו'", דהנה באדם הראשון כתוב "מכל עץ הגן אכל תאכל", קשה למה צוה להם מה שיאכלו, כי אכל תאכלי הוא לשון צווי, ועוד הרי מתחלה נאמר "מכל עץ הגן כו'", משמע גם מעץ החיים יאכלו, ומה טעם אח"כ בשאכלו מעץ הדעת טוב ורע נאסר להם לאכול מעץ החיים.

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It seems that at first he possessed a lofty level in the upper world, which is called the Tree of Life. For this reason the blessed Creator commanded him to eat from the Tree of Life, so that he might remain in holiness forever.

And from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil he was commanded not to eat, for these represent the lower worlds, lest he become materialized.

But afterward, when he ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, he fell from his upper level and became materialized. Therefore the blessed Creator commanded him not to eat from the Tree of Life, for since he had already become physical and mixed with good and evil, he was no longer worthy to touch the Tree of Life until he would ascend again from the lower level to the higher one, step by step.

The conclusion from this is that after the sin of Adam the first man, one must serve the blessed Creator by ascending gradually—from lower to higher levels.

This is the meaning of “Go for yourself from your land”—that is, “Go for yourself,” meaning, return to your root above, from which your soul was hewn.

“From your land” means that the first step toward returning to the supernal root is humility—to recognize your lowliness, that you are dust and earth.

“And from your birthplace and from your father’s house” means that even those aspects of your nature and ancestry can be elevated when you include everything in the contemplation of the exaltedness of the blessed G-d.

Through this you will merit to come “to the land that I will show you,” meaning, to the supernal land.

And this is the meaning of “Happy are you who sow beside all waters,” for there are upper waters and lower waters; the lower are called “stormy waters” and also “many waters.”

This is the meaning of “Many waters cannot extinguish the love,” for a person must serve from below to above, elevating the lower waters—called “weeping waters,” which are from the side of impurity—to holiness.

וְנִרְאָה לְפָרֵשׁ, דְּמִתְחַלֵּה הֵינָה לוֹ מִדְּרָגָה גְּדוּלָּה בְּעוֹלָם הָעֲלִיּוֹן הַנִּקְרָא ‘עֵץ הַחַיִּים’, וּמִזֶּה הַטַּעַם צִוְּהוּ הַשֵּׁי”ת, שְׂמַעְיָן הַחַיִּים יֹאכֵל, כְּדִי שִׁישְׂאָר בְּקִדְשׁוֹ לְעוֹלָם

וּמַעְיָן הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרַע נִצָּטָה שְׁלֹא יֹאכֵל, שֶׁהֵם עוֹלָמוֹת הַתַּחְתּוֹנִים כְּדִי שְׁלֹא יִתְגַּשֵּׁם

וְאַחֲ”כ כְּשֶׁאֵכַל מַעְיָן הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרַע נָפַל מִמִּדְּרָגָה הָעֲלִיּוֹנָה וְנִתְגַּשֵּׁם, לָכֵן צִוְּהוּ הַשֵּׁי”ת שְׁלֹא יֹאכֵל מַעְיָן הַחַיִּים, שֶׁכִּינּוֹן שְׂכַבְר נִתְגַּשֵּׁם וְהָיוּ בָהֶם טוֹב וְרַע, וְאִין רָאוּי לִגְנוּעַ בְּעֵץ הַחַיִּים עַד שִׁיעֲלָה מִמִּדְּרָגָה תַּחְתּוֹנָה לְעֲלִיּוֹנָה בְּהִדְרָגָה

וְהַיּוֹצֵא מִזֶּה שֶׁאַחֵר חֲטָא אָדָם הִרְאִישׁוֹן צָרִיד הָאָדָם לַעֲבוֹד לַהֲשִׁי”ת בְּהִדְרָגָה, מִמִּדְּרָגָה תַּחְתּוֹנָה לְעֲלִיּוֹנָה

וְנִזְהוּ פְּרוּשׁ הַפְּסוּק “לָךְ לָךְ מֵאַרְצְךָ”, פְּרוּשׁ “לָךְ לָךְ”, בְּצִוּן לִזְמַר לְשִׁירְשׁוֹ הָעֲלִיּוֹן אֲשֶׁר מִשָּׁם חֲצַבְתָּ

”מֵאַרְצְךָ”, פְּרוּשׁ וְעִיָּקָר הַתַּחְלָה שְׁתוּכַל לְבוֹא לְשִׁרְשׁ הָעֲלִיּוֹן הוּא הַהִכָּנָעָה, שֶׁתַּחֲשֵׁב אֶת שְׁכֻלְוִתְךָ כִּי עָפָר אַתָּה כו’

”וּמִמּוֹלְדְּתְךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ”, פְּרוּשׁ גַּם מִמּוֹלְדְּתְךָ כו’, אִם תִּכְנִס הַכֹּל בְּמַחֲשַׁבְתָּ רוּחָמוֹת אֵל יִתְבָּרַךְ

עַל יְדֵי זֶה תִּזְכֶּה שְׁתוּכַל לְבוֹא “אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאֶךָ” דְּהֵינּוּ לְאָרֶץ עֲלִיּוֹנָה

וְנִזְהוּ “אֲשִׁירִיכֶם זֶרְעִי עַל כָּל מַיִם”, כִּי יֵשׁ מַיִם עֲלִיּוֹנִים וּמַיִם תַּחְתּוֹנִים וְהֵם נִקְרָאִים ‘מַיִם הַיְדוּדִים’, וְגַם נִקְרָאִים ‘מַיִם רַבִּים’

וְנִזְהוּ פְּרוּשׁ “מַיִם רַבִּים לֹא יוּכְלוּ לְכַבּוֹת אֶת הָאֵהָבָה”, וְצָרִיד הָאָדָם לַעֲבוֹד מִתַּתָּ לְעֵילָא, לְהַעֲלוֹת הַמַּיִם הַתַּחְתּוֹנִים הַנִּקְרָאִים ‘מַיִם בּוֹכִים’ שֶׁהֵם מְסֻטָּרָא דְקָלִיפָה, לְהַעֲלוֹת אֶל הַקְּדוּשָׁה

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And the hint in “Blessed is the glory of Hashem from His place” (Baruch Kevod Hashem Mimkomo)—the initial letters spell “Bochim” (weeping).

וְרָמָז 'כְּרוּךְ כְּבוֹד ה' מִמְּקוֹמוֹ' ר"ת בּוֹכִים.

This is “Happy are you who sow,” for “sowing” represents thought, which is called by the name “sowing.” Happy are those who sow whose thoughts are “upon all waters”—meaning, even upon the lower waters, to bring them into holiness.

וְזֶהוּ “אַשְׁרֵיכֶם זֹרְעֵי כו", ד'זְרִיעָה' הִיא הַמַּחְשְׁבָה הַנִּקְרֵאת בְּשֵׁם 'זְרִיעָה', וְאַשְׁרֵי לְזוֹרְעִים אֲשֶׁר מַחְשַׁבְתָּם "עַל כָּל מַיִם", רְצוֹן לִזְמַר גַּם עַל הַמַּיִם הַתַּחְתּוֹנִים לְהַכְנִיסָם אֶל הַקְּדוּשָׁה.

[NOTE Summary

Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk reveals that “Go for yourself” (Lech Lecha) reflects humanity’s journey to return to the level lost through Adam’s sin. Originally, Adam lived on the lofty plane of the “Tree of Life,” pure and spiritual. He was commanded to eat from it to remain forever in holiness, and to avoid the “Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil,” representing lower, physical realms. When he disobeyed and became materialized, he could no longer touch the Tree of Life until he ascended again step by step—from the physical back to the spiritual.

This gradual ascent defines our service of G-d. The verse “Go for yourself from your land” teaches: return to your source above, but begin from humility—recognizing your smallness, that “you are dust and earth.” Only through this self-nullification can one climb back to his Divine root. “From your land” symbolizes humility; “from your birthplace” refers to purifying natural habits and traits; “from your father’s house” means refining inherited tendencies. By elevating every level of one’s nature to holiness, one reaches “the land that I will show you,” the supernal awareness of G-dliness.

Rebbe Elimelech connects this to “Happy are you who sow beside all waters.” Just as water flows from high to low, there are upper and lower waters—the lower representing confusion and impurity. Man’s task is to elevate even these “weeping waters” (the broken emotions of the soul) and return them to holiness. Thus, one must sow thoughts of sanctity “upon all waters,” transforming even the lowliest impulses into vessels of Divine light.

Practical Takeaway

Spiritual ascent begins with humility and gradual transformation. Don’t rush to perfection—start by sanctifying what is near: your habits, emotions, and inherited tendencies. Even your struggles and tears can become “weeping waters” that rise upward when offered to G-d. Every thought turned heavenward plants seeds of holiness that will one day bloom into light.

END NOTE]

מאמר ה

Or it can be said regarding “Go for yourself,” that there are those who are righteous due to the merit of their ancestors, or because they are always among the righteous.

או יאמר "לך לך כו", דהנה יש שהוא צדיק ממחמת זכות אבותיו או ממחמת שהוא תמיד בין הצדיקים.

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But in truth, a person must not pay attention to this.

אבל באמת צריך האדם שלא להשגיח על זה

Whether a righteous man who is the son of a righteous man, he should not rely on the merit of his forefathers, saying that their merit will stand for him, and therefore not exert himself in the service of the Creator—he must not think so.

הן הצדיק בן צדיק לא ישגיח על זכות אבותיו לאמר שזכות אבות יעמד לו ולא יתאמץ בעבודת הבורא, מחמת זה, לא ישגיח על זה

Rather, he must be strong and greatly strengthened in his service of the blessed Creator.

רק צריך אימוץ וחזיון גדול בעבודתו יתברך

And if he is a righteous man who is not the son of a righteous man, he should not despair and say, “Since I have no ancestral merit to assist me, I cannot reach Divine service.”

והן הצדיק שאינו בן צדיק אל ייאוש עצמו לאמר מאחר שאין לו זכות אבות לסייע לא יוכל להגיע לעבודת הבורא יתברך

He should not say this, but rather serve the blessed Creator sincerely, for one who comes to purify himself is assisted from Heaven.

אל יאמר בן, רק יעבוד השי"ת באמת והבא לטהר, מסייעין לו מן השמים

He should think only that the blessed Creator is doing all this for him and assisting him.

רק לחשב שהשי"ת עושה לו כל זאת שמסייע לו

And this is the meaning of “Go for yourself from your land,” that you should not pay attention to your land or to your father’s house, but go to your root—“to the land,” the supernal land.

וזהו "לך לך מארצך כו", פרוש שלא תשגיח על ארצך ועל בית אביך, ותלך לשורשך "אל הארץ" העליונה

“Which I will show you” means, as stated above, that you should think only that “I am showing you all this”—that everything comes from the blessed Creator.

"אשר אראך" רצון לומר כנ"ל, שלא תחשב רק שאני מראה אותך כל זאת, שהכל הוא מהבורא יתברך

And this is the meaning of “You have dealt well with Your servant, Hashem, according to Your word,” meaning that the good which You have done with Your servant, who is the righteous one (for the righteous is called good), is “Hashem, according to Your word”—that it is only through Your speech, that everything is from You.

וזהו "טוב עשית עם עבדך", רצון לומר הטוב שעשית עם עבדך שהוא צדיק, שהצדיק נקרא טוב, "ה' כדברך", רצון לומר שאין זה כי אם על ידי דבורך, שהכל הוא ממך

[NOTE Summary

Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk teaches that the call “Go for yourself” (Lech Lecha) is a message to every soul: do not rely on external factors for your spiritual standing—neither the merit of your ancestors nor the influence of your surroundings.

There are two types of righteous people: one who is righteous because he was born into holiness, surrounded by tzaddikim and supported by ancestral merit; and another who has no such background, yet strives to cleave to G-d through his own effort. Rebbe Elimelech cautions both. The one born into righteousness must not become complacent, thinking that his lineage or environment guarantees his spiritual status. He must still labor in

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Divine service with strength and sincerity. The one without righteous lineage must not despair, thinking he cannot reach holiness without inherited merit. For Heaven assists all who strive to purify themselves, as it is said, “One who comes to purify himself is assisted from above.”

Thus, “Go for yourself from your land” means: detach from both “your land”—the comfort and familiarity of your environment—and “your father’s house”—your inherited status or background. Go to “the land that I will show you,” the supernal level of holiness, recognizing that every step of spiritual progress comes solely from Hashem’s kindness. The verse “You have dealt well with Your servant, Hashem, according to Your word” now means: the good shown to the righteous is entirely by G-d’s word; it is His gift, not their own doing.

Practical Takeaway

Never depend on privilege, background, or spiritual inheritance. Each day, renew your own effort in serving Hashem with strength and sincerity. And if you lack spiritual advantages, take heart—Divine assistance is drawn to anyone who strives honestly. True righteousness is not inherited; it is chosen, earned, and sustained by humility and perseverance.

Chassidic Story

A man once came to Rebbe Elimelech boasting that his father and grandfather had been great tzaddikim. The Rebbe smiled gently and asked, “And what will your grandchildren say?” The man was silent. Rebbe Elimelech continued, “Do not live on your fathers’ light. Light your own candle, so it can guide those who come after you.”

END NOTE]

מאמר 1

“And I will make you into a great nation... and you shall be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you, and those who curse you I will curse.” At first glance, it is puzzling: regarding blessing it says “I will bless those who bless you,” but regarding cursing it reverses the order of the words. It should have said likewise, “and I will curse those who curse you.”

It seems that when a tzaddik sanctifies and purifies himself, he himself becomes a “blessing,” meaning a supernal pool through which flow blessings to all.

But those who wish to receive blessing through the tzaddik must be in agreement with him; then they are automatically blessed with great abundance.

However, one who disagrees with the tzaddik cannot possibly receive any influence through him.

ואעשה לגוי גדול כו' והנה ברכה, ואברכה
מברכה ומקללה אאר. ולכאורה יש לדקדק דאצל
הברכה נאמר ואברכה כו' ואצל הקללה נאמר
המלות בהיפוך, והנה לו לומר גם כן 'ואארוך
מקללה'

ונראה לפרש דהנה הצדיק אשר מקדש ומטהר עצמו,
נעשה הוא בעצמו 'ברכה', דהיינו בריכה עליונה
להשפיע לכל,

אבל אותם הרוצים לקבל השפעה על ידי הצדיק,
צריכים להסכים עם הצדיק ואז הם ממילא מתברכים
בשפע רב

אבל מי שאינו מסכים עם הצדיק, בודאי לזה בלתי
אפשרי שיושפע לו ההשפעה על ידי הצדיק

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This is the meaning of “And you shall be a blessing”—that you yourself will be a pool of blessing to give forth influence.

וְהָיוּ "וְהָיָה בְּרַכָּה", דְּהֵינּוּ שְׂאֵתָהּ בְּעֶצְמָהּ תִּהְיֶה
בְּרִיכָה לְהַשְׁפִּיעַ

“And I will bless those who bless you” means that whoever agrees with you, I will bless him immediately, for everything is already prepared—as the tzaddik himself is the source of blessing.

"וְאֶבְרַכֶּה מְבָרְכֶיךָ", רָצוֹן לוֹמַר מִי שְׂיִסְכִּים עִמָּךְ
אֶבְרַךְ אוֹתוֹ מִיָּד, כִּי הַכֹּל הוּא מוּכָן כַּנ"ל לְשִׁחְצִיק
הוּא הַבְּרָכָה יַעֲצָמָה

“And those who curse you I will curse” means that the curse does not come automatically like the blessing—it comes only after an act, when I Myself curse him after he curses you.

"וְיִמְקְלָךְ אָאֵר", פֶּרוֹשׁ אֲבָל הַקְלָלָה אֵינָה בָּאָה
מִמִּילָא כִּמוֹ הַבְּרָכָה, רַק אַחֵר מַעֲשֵׂה עַד שְׂאֵאֵר אוֹתוֹ
אַחֵר קָלָלָתָהּ

And this is “You have dealt well with Your servant,” meaning the goodness—the flow of blessings—You have placed in the hands of Your servant, who is the source of blessing for the world.

וְהָיוּ "טוֹב עָשִׂיתָ עִם עַבְדְּךָ", פֶּרוֹשׁ הַטוֹב, דְּהֵינּוּ
הַהַשְׁפָּעוֹת, נִתְּנָה בְּיַד עַבְדְּךָ שֶׁהוּא הַמַּשְׁפִּיעַ לְכָל
הָעוֹלָם כַּנ"ל

But this happens only in the manner of “Hashem, according to Your word”—that all must agree with the tzaddik and affirm that Hashem agrees with him; then all receive abundant blessing through him.

רַק בְּאִפְסוֹ "ה' בְּדִבְרְךָ", דְּהֵינּוּ שְׂיִסְכִּימוּ עִמּוֹ הַכֹּל
וְיֹאמְרוּ בְּלִמּוֹ עַל הַצְדִּיק שֶׁה' מְסַכֵּם בְּדִבְרְךָ, וְאִזּוּ בְּלִמּוֹ
נִשְׁפָּעִים עַל יְדֵי הַצְדִּיק בְּשִׁפְעַת רַב וּבְרָכָה

[NOTE Summary

Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk explains the verse “I will make you into a great nation... and you shall be a blessing” as revealing the nature of a true tzaddik. When a righteous person sanctifies and purifies himself, he becomes not merely one who *receives* blessing, but a *source* of it—a living “pool of blessing” through which Divine influence flows into the world.

Those who align themselves with the tzaddik, agreeing with his path and recognizing the holiness within him, are naturally blessed, for they open themselves to the flow of Divine shefa (abundance) that streams through him. Yet one who rejects or opposes the tzaddik cuts himself off from this flow and cannot receive blessing through him. This explains why the Torah says, “I will bless those who bless you,” but changes the order with “those who curse you I will curse”—the blessing comes immediately and automatically through the tzaddik’s very presence, while the curse occurs only after an act of rejection.

Thus, “You have dealt well with Your servant” means that G-d entrusts His “goodness”—the power of blessing—to His servant, the tzaddik, who channels it to all. But this occurs only “Hashem, according to Your word”—that is, when people acknowledge that the tzaddik’s words and G-d’s will are one. Then all who connect to him receive abundant Divine blessing.

Practical Takeaway

Attach yourself to holiness and to those who embody it. When you honor and align with the tzaddik’s vision and ways, you connect to the Divine channel of blessing itself. Recognize that all good that flows from a tzaddik is not from him personally, but from G-d working through him. Blessing comes not from proximity, but

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from unity of heart and intention with holiness.

END NOTE]

מאמר ז

“And there was a famine in the land,” etc. It seems, in the manner of moral teaching, as the verse says: “Not a hunger for bread nor a thirst for water, but to hear the word of Hashem.”

We find that this is the essential famine—if, Heaven forbid, the people of Israel do not conduct themselves properly and follow the waywardness of their hearts.

Through this they also cause the perfectly righteous person to descend from his lofty and holy level.

This is what the verse says: “And there was a famine in the land,” as mentioned above, “and Avram went down to Egypt,” meaning that through this, the tzaddik—called Avram—descends from his level.

Yet even when he falls, he is not cast down completely, Heaven forbid; rather, he descends to “Mitzraymah,” which is an acronym for “meitzar yam” (“narrow sea”).

It becomes narrow and constricted for him in his lofty holiness that he once possessed; “sea” is a hint to the supernal holiness—the upper sea.

And all this the blessed Creator does not bring upon the tzaddik for him to fall from his level because of the wicked, but rather for his benefit.

That is, “to sojourn there”—for if he had not descended somewhat, perhaps his heart would have grown proud from his holiness and greatness.

Now that the tzaddik sees he has fallen from his level, he becomes greatly ashamed and broken-hearted, and he considers himself only as a stranger in the land—meaning that he views himself as a sojourner in this world and in the next.

“And it came to pass when he came near to enter into Egypt,” meaning that after the tzaddik sees that he is close to the level called “Mitzraymah,”

וַיְהִי רָעָב בְּאֶרֶץ כּוֹי'. נִרְאָה לְעַל דָּרָךְ הַמוֹסָר כְּמֵאֲמַר הַפְּתוּב "לֹא רָעָב לִלְחָם וְלֹא צָמָא לַמַּיִם כּוֹי' כִּי אִם לְשִׁמוּעַ דְּבַר ה'"

וְנִמְצָא זֶה עֶקֶר הָרָעָב אִם ח"ו עִם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵינָם מִתְנַהֲגִים כְּשׁוֹרָה וְהוֹלְכִים שׁוֹכֵב בְּדָרָךְ לִבָּם ח"ו

וְעַל יְדֵי זֶה הֵם גּוֹרְמִים גַּם לְצַדִּיק הַשְּׁלֵם כְּמַעֲשֵׂיו לְשִׁירָד מִמִּדְרָגָתוֹ הַגְּדוֹלָה הַקְּדוּשָׁה

וְזֶהוּ שֶׁאֲמַר הַפְּתוּב "וַיְהִי רָעָב בְּאֶרֶץ" כַּנִּל, "וַיֵּרֶד אֲבְרָם מִצְרָיְמָה", פְּרוּשׁ עַל יְדֵי זֶה יוֹרֵד הַצַּדִּיק הַנִּקְרָא בְּשֵׁם 'אֲבְרָם', יוֹרֵד מִמִּדְרָגָתוֹ

וְאֵף עַל פִּי כֵן כִּי יְפוּל לֹא יוֹטֵל לְגַמְרֵי ח"ו, רַק שִׁירָד 'מִצְרָיְמָה' דִּהְיִינוּ נוֹטְרִיקוֹן 'מֵיִצָּר גַּם'

שֶׁנֶּעֱשֶׂה לוֹ צָר וְדוּחַק בְּקִדּוּשְׁתּוֹ הָעֲלִיוֹנָה שֶׁהִיָּתָה לוֹ מִקֵּדָם, 'גַּם' רָמַז לְקִדּוּשָׁה עֲלִיוֹנָה, גַּם הָעֲלִיוֹן

וְכָל זֹאת אֵינוֹ עוֹשֶׂה הַשֵּׁי"ת כְּרוּךְ הוּא לְצַדִּיק שֶׁיְפוּל מִמִּדְרָגָתוֹ מִחֲמַת רִשְׁעַת הָרָשָׁעִים, רַק גַּם זֶה לְטוֹבָתוֹ

דִּהְיִינוּ "לְגוֹר שָׁם", דְּאֵלּוּלֵי זֹאת שֶׁיְפוּל מִמִּדְרָגָתוֹ קָצֵת, אֲפָשָׁר שֶׁיִּגְבֶּה לְבוֹ קָצֵת לְהִתְגַּדֵּל בְּמִדְרָגָתוֹ וְקִדּוּשְׁתּוֹ

וְעַתָּה עַל יְדֵי שְׁרוּאָה הַצַּדִּיק שֶׁנִּפְל מִמִּדְרָגָתוֹ, הוּא מִתְבַּיֵּשׁ מְאֹד וּמִתְחַרֵּט וְאֵינוֹ מַחֲזִיק עֲצָמוֹ רַק כְּגַר בְּאֶרֶץ, דִּהְיִינוּ שֶׁמַּחֲזִיק עֲצָמוֹ שֶׁהוּא גַר בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וּבְעוֹלָם הַבָּא מֵאַחֵר שֶׁנִּפְל מִמִּדְרָגָתוֹ

"וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר הִקְרִיב לְבוֹא מִצְרָיְמָה", פְּרוּשׁ אַחֵר שְׁרוּאָה הַצַּדִּיק כִּי קָרוֹב הוּא אֶל הַמִּדְרָגָה הַנִּקְרָאת 'מִצְרָיְמָה',

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“He said to Sarai his wife.” There are two paths in the tzaddik’s service: one, the path of spiritual refinement; the other, sanctifying and purifying himself exceedingly even within physicality.

The aspect of spiritual service is called “Avram,” representing the masculine side, and the aspect of physical sanctification is called “Sarah.”

And this is “He said to Sarai his wife”—meaning, to the feminine aspect. “Behold, now I know that you are a beautiful woman,” meaning that since I now see that I know you are beautiful, this shows that I have descended.

For if I were still on the highest holiness, how could I know this? “And it shall come to pass... that they will kill me,” meaning, if we do not strengthen ourselves in holiness, then “they will kill me”—the power of spirituality—

“And you they will keep alive,” meaning that the power of physicality will overpower.

Therefore, “Say, please, you are my sister,” meaning, strengthen yourself greatly in holiness and in deep attachment to the holy Torah, as in “Say to wisdom: you are my sister.”

“So that it may go well with me,” meaning, through this, my holiness will be elevated again and the spiritual power will prevail.

“And my soul shall live because of you”—the word “because” (biglalech) hints to “gallalim” (waste), as in “when he shall remove the dung,” meaning that life and holiness will reach even the lowest physicality.

“וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ”, דִּהְיֶה שְׁנֵי גִּוּוֹנִים יֵשׁ בְּעִבּוּדַת הַצַּדִּיק, דִּהְיִינוּ דָּרָךְ אֶחָד לְעִבּוּד בְּרוּחָנִיּוּת, וְדָרָךְ הַשְׁנִי גַם בְּהַגְשָׁמִיּוּת צָרִיךְ לְהִתְקַדֵּשׁ וּלְהִטָּהַר, עֲצֻמוֹ מְאֹד מְאֹד,

וְהַבְחִינָה שֶׁל עִבּוּדַת הַרוּחָנִיּוּת נִקְרָאת בְּשֵׁם ‘אַבְרָם’, דִּהְיִינוּ מִצַּד דּוּכָרָא, וּבְחִינַת עִבּוּדַת הַגְּשָׁמִיּוּת נִקְרָאת בְּשֵׁם ‘שָׂרָה’,

וְזֶהוּ “וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ”, דִּהְיִינוּ הִצַּד הַנְּקוּבָה נִקְרָא ‘אִשָּׁה’, וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ “הִנֵּה נָא יָדַעְתִּי כִּי אִשָּׁה יִפֶּת מֶרְאֶה”, רְצוֹן לומר מֵאַחֵר שֶׁאֲנִי רוֹאָה שְׂאֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ [שֶׁאִשָּׁה יִפֶּת מֶרְאֶה אֶת],

וְאִלוֹ הֵייתִי בְּקִדּוּשָׁה עֲלִיוֹנָה הָאִיךְ הֵייתִי יוֹדֵעַ זֹאת, “וְהִנֵּה כִּי כו’ וְהִרְגוּ אֹתִי כו’”, רְצוֹן לומר אִם לֹא נִשְׁגָּחִים עַל עֲצֻמָּנוּ לְהִתְגַּבֵּר בְּקִדּוּשָׁה, אֲזַי חו’ וְהִרְגוּ אֹתִי דִּהְיִינוּ כֹּחַ הַרוּחָנִיּוּת,

, “וְאִתָּךְ יִחְיֶיךָ”, דִּהְיִינוּ כֹּחַ הַגְּשָׁמִיּוּת יִתְגַּבֵּר

לְכֹן “אֶמְרִי נָא אֲחוֹתִי אָתָּה”, פְּרוּשׁ הַתְּגַבְּרִי מְאֹד בְּקִדּוּשָׁה וּבְדַבְּקוּת גָּדוֹל בְּתוֹרַת הַקִּדּוּשָׁה עַל דָּרָךְ “אֶמּוֹר לְחֶכְמָה אֲחוֹתִי אָתָּה”

“לִמְעַן יֵיטֵב לִי”, רְצוֹן לומר עַל יְדֵי זֶה יוֹטֵב לִי בְּקִדּוּשָׁה עֲלִיוֹנָה שֶׁיִּתְגַּבֵּר כֹּחַ הַרוּחָנִיּוּת

וְגַם זֹאת “וְחִיְתָה נַפְשִׁי בְּגִלְלוֹךְ”, לְשׁוֹן גִּלְלִים, עַל דָּרָךְ “כַּאֲשֶׁר יִבְעַר הַגִּלְלִי”, רְצוֹן לומר שֶׁיִּבּוֹא חֵיוֹת קִדּוּשָׁה גַם בְּגִלְלִים דִּהְיִינוּ בְּהַגְשָׁמִיּוּת. וְכ”ל

[NOTE Summary

Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk interprets “And there was a famine in the land” as describing not only physical hunger but spiritual emptiness—“not a hunger for bread nor a thirst for water, but to hear the word of Hashem.” When the people of Israel stray from righteous conduct, this causes a famine of holiness in the world. Even the tzaddik, who draws down Divine vitality, can be affected—his spiritual influence becomes constricted because the people are not ready to receive it.

This is the inner meaning of “And Avram went down to Egypt.” The tzaddik, called Avram, descends into “Mitzrayim”—from the phrase “meitzar yam,” a constricted sea—meaning a narrowing of his spiritual

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expansiveness. Yet this descent is not a punishment; it is for his own good. Through the constriction, the tzaddik avoids spiritual pride and becomes humble once more, considering himself a mere “stranger in the land.” In this way, his fall becomes an ascent, awakening deeper humility and connection.

When the tzaddik senses that he is approaching “Mitzrayim”—a state of spiritual limitation—he turns to “Sarai his wife,” symbolizing the physical aspect of his service. Avram represents the spiritual, Sarai the physical. He says, “Behold, now I know that you are beautiful,” realizing that his awareness of physical beauty signals a lessening of his former purity. To prevent further spiritual decline, he tells her, “Say, you are my sister,” meaning, attach yourself to wisdom—“Say to wisdom: you are my sister”—so that the physical be elevated and united with holiness. Thus, “it will go well with me,” for the spiritual will again dominate, and “my soul will live because of you,” meaning Divine vitality will even illuminate the lowly physical realm, the “dung,” transforming it into holiness.

Practical Takeaway

When spiritual vitality feels distant and holiness seems constricted, do not despair. Descent can be for the sake of ascent. Recognize that spiritual “famine” may come to awaken humility and renewal. Strengthen yourself in holiness—bring sanctity even into physical acts—and G-d will transform the constriction itself into a channel of Divine life and light.

END NOTE]