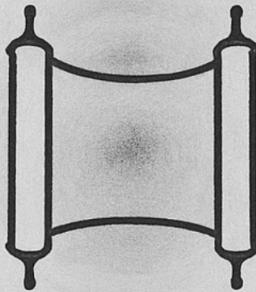


בס"ד

Rebbe Elimelech of Lizensk

Parshas Lech Lecha



Dedicated To:

טניה מלכה בת רינה דבורה
רפואה שלמה

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The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

Noam Elimelech

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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 Parshas 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 אברם לך לך כי. נ"ל זהנה ציריך האדם לעבד הבורא ברוך הוא בשלש מדרגות זו אפרזר

דבנינו [א] מתחילה ציריך לשבור פ"ח התאות הפתעה באדם מזרך הטעע בגון אכילה ושתיה וכיוצא בהם שתהיה אכילתו בקדושה ובטהרה ועל-ידי זה הוא משביר כ"א אלקים אמרים ד"א אלחים גימטריה הטעע

ואחר שמשבר כ"א אלקים אחרים, זוכה לבוא למדרגת יראה שהוא אלקים חיים

ב] ציריך האדם לשבור המידות השפלות שבו שם, אצלו בתולדה מיום צאתו מרחם אמו

יש בני אדם שמידותיהם יותר גרוות מאשר בני אדם במדה זו, דבנינו למשל מזת פעם וכדומה, שש"א מידותיו גרוות מ夸רו בתולדה

ואחר שמשבר כ"ח המידות השפלות והגראות הוא זוכה לבוא לאהבת הבורא ברוך הוא.

ג] ואחר כל זאת ציריך לבוא למדרגה ג' שהיא התפארת, כמו שמבואר לעיל בפרק שתנתן, שפל מעשיו ייהו יפים ומפוארים

כמו שאמור התנא כל שהיא תפארת כי ותפארת לו מן האדם

וזה רמזו “לך לך מארצך”, רמזו למדרגה ראשונה שהיא תפאות הארץ היפות שהוא מטבע בחומר וציריך ליצאת ממנה

ווממלכתך” רמזו למדרגה ב' שם המידות הגראות הנולדים עם האדם

וימביה אביך” רמזו למדרגה ג', זהנה עיקר התפארת השפלות באים לאדם על-ידי שהוא מתגאה ומתקPEAR באבותו 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.

ואךיך לאצאת מן הצעקה האריעה הזאת לתפארת
אחרת הטוב בעני ה' ואדם כב"ל

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

אל הארץ אשר אראה רמז לארץ עליונה
וזהו הנטה תפארת לה בהקרת קדש', פירוש לתדר
ולפאר בתפארת את הקדושה שהיא מדרגת
התפארת

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.

וזהו נזפת תפארת שפתותיה כליה כו', רמז גמרא
לשוש מדרגות הנ"ל

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

נזפת תפארת רמז למדרגת יראה, נזפת מורה
ונדרשו חז"ל אל-תקרי מורה כו'

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

ושפתותיה כליה רמז למדרגת אהבה, כליה
אהובה לאروس שליה

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

דבש ותלב מחת לשונך רמז למדרגה ג', שבל
מעשיו הם בדבש ומפוארים לכל אדם

“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.

[NOTE Summary

Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk 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 Lzhensk 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]**

מאמך 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 יאמך "נופת תפונת", דגנה בהתחלת הארץ, לבוא בעבורתו יתפרק ויתעללה, ארך לחיות ביראה

ומלחמת שעדרין אינו מתוון כל צורכו, لكن לפעמים, אזכיר דברים בגלי בלא בושה

ונא"כ כשלולה במרקגה יתירה, הרי הוא מתחיש מלדבר לנלוות את מעשיו בלבורי כלה שמעשיה בקחשי,

ונזה הוא בעבור כי יראתו על פניו

ונא"כ כשלולה למרקגה יתירה, הרי הוא אנווע בכל מעשיו,

ונזה "נופת תפונת" רמז שמתwil בהתחלת עבורתו, אז הוא מטפטר דברים פעל, כי עדין אין יראתו שלמה,

ונא"כ "שפחתה כלה", רצון לומר שברוי נאמרים, בבושה ומעשי הון בקשיי כלה

ונא"ז "זבש ותלב", פרוש דברים הפתוקים כקבש ותלב, הם "פתח לשונך", שהוא הצנע לכת לגמרי.

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[NOTE Summary

Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk 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.

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

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.

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.

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

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.

או ייאמר “לך לך”. נ”ל על זרף הרטמן, שאריך האדם לחזור ולקרוש ולחשוף תמיד לראות רוממותה, אל מפל דבר אשר יראו עיניו

ועל ידי זה יזכה שיטנו לו השיות שבל ובינה להבini ולחשביל בעולמות הعليונים

ואנו אשר גיעץ לזרעה הצעיל להסתכל ברוממותה, אל, אדריך האדם מקודם למן את מידותיו

כى השיות ברוך הוא ברא את האדם בכל מיני מידות, ובכל מידה ומידה שבאים יש צד וחלק באומה, מידה אל הקדושה, וכן להפלה לרע ח”ו פידוע

צריך האדם לשבור עצמו בבחירותו להפך את הميدות רק אל הקדושה לבירה

ואו יזכה להבini ולהסתכל ברוממות אל, והשיות ברוך הוא פותח לו מעינות החקמה להשיגו

ולחשכilio בכל פעם בשכל עליון יותר ויוטר מה שליא 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.

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

“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.”

This is “and from your birthplace.”

“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.

He must depart from them and draw them into holiness.

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

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.

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.

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

“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.

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

Understand this well.

[NOTE Summary]

Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk 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.

ונז'הו “לך לך”, פרוש לעצמך כפשותו, כיינו שחתסתכפל על עצמך פמייד שתפרקוש מ מידות הארץ, שבקה שחתפסכם לתוכה כנ"ל

ונז'הו “מארץ”, ותבאים אל הקדושה לך “וימולךך”, פרוש דאדם שהוא מתקנת ב מידות מגנות, אז יצא ממנה תולדות רעות חיללה, שמידה אחת מולצת את חברה על זהה עבירה גוררת, עבירה

ונז'הו “וימולךך” “ומבית אביך”, פרוש לדפעים מוטבע באדם מידות על פי טבעית הבאות לו מפה אביו שהניש בז, ה מידות הללו,

אריך ליצאת מכם ולהכניסם אל הקדושה “ונז'הו “וimbית אביך” “ואז תזכה אל הארץ אשר ארך”, שתקה לשכל העליון ולא רץ העליונה אשר ארך אשר מעולם לא ראה.

ונז'הו “גول על ה’ זרכך”, פרושו גם כנ"ל, כי “גול” הוא לישון התגלות, שתקלה זרכך ומידותיך, שחתסתכפל בהם ותראה שיהיו כלם “לה”

“יבטה עליון”, פרוש מה שהאדם מסתכל ברוגמות אל זה נקרא ‘בטחו’, “והוא יעצה”, פרוש ואז יעצה לך חשיות ברוך היא עשיות חקשות מה שלא ראת מעולם ולא הבנת מעולם, וזהו צדקה. וקנו

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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]

מאמרא

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’”, זהה באדם הראשון כתוב “מכל עץ הגן אכל תאכל”, קשיה למה צזה לךם מה שיאכלו, כי אכל תאכל הוא לשון צוווי, ועוד קרי מתקלה נאמר “מכל עץ הגן כו’”, משמע גם מעץ החיים יאכלו, ומה טעם אח”כ כשיאכלו מעץ הדעת טוב ורע נאסר لكم 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 lowness, 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.

ונראה לפ"ד, דמתהלה קיה לו מזרגה גדולה בעולם
העליוון הנקרוא עז הרים, ומזה הטעם צוהו ה"ש"ית
שפערץ הרים יאלל, כדי שיאשר באלתו לעוזם

ומען הדעת טוב ברע נצטוה שלא יאלל, שהם
עלמות הפתונותם כדי שלא יתגשם

ואם"כ בשאר כל מעין הדעת טוב ברע נפל מזרגה
העליוון ונחגשים, וכן צוהו ה"ש"ית שלא יאלל מעין
הרים, שפינו שכביר נחגשים וחייב בכם טוב ברע, ואין
ראוי לנgeo בعزيز הרים עד שיזלה מזרגה מחתוניה
לעליוון בקדרגה,

והיווא מזה שאחר חטא אדם קראשו ארייך האם
לעבוד לחש"ת בקדרגה, מזרגה מחתוניה לעליונה

ונזה פרוש נפסוק “לה לך מארץ”, פרוש “לה לך”,
ברצון לומר לשרשך העליון אשר ממש חצב

“מארץ”, פרוש ועיקר התחלה שתוכל לבוא לשרש
העליוון הוא הרכנעה, שתחשב את שפליתך כי עפר
אפתה כו’

”וממלכתך ומביית אביך”, פרוש גם ממולכת כו’,
אם תבנис הכל במחשבת רוממות אל יתברך

על ידי זה תזכה שתוכל לבוא אל הארץ אשר
ארך” דהיינו לארץ עליונה

ונזה “אשריכם ורשי על כל מים”, כי יש מים
עלונים וממים מחתונים מהם נקראים ‘מים הרים’,
ונם נקראים ‘מים רבבים’

ונזה פרוש “מים רבבים לא יקלו לכבות את האבה”,
וארייך האם לעבוד מתקא לעילא, להעלוות המים
החתונים הנקראים ‘מים בוכים’ שהם מסתרא
דקליפה, להעלוות אל הקדושה

The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

Noam Elimelech

Parshas Lech Lecha

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

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.

[NOTE Summary

Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk 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]

מאמךך

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 יאמךך “לך לך כו”, זהה יש שהוא צדיק מטעם זכות אבותיו או מטעם שהוא תמיד בין הצדיקים

The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

Noam Elimelech

Parshas Lech Lecha

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

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.

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

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.”

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

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

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.

“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.

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.

[NOTE Summary]

Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk 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

אֲכָל בְּאַפָּתָח אֶרְיךָ הַאֲדָם שֶׁלֹּא לְהַשְׁגִּיחַ עַל זֶה

הַן הַצְדִּיק בֶּן צְדִיק לֹא יִשְׁגִּיחַ עַל זְכוֹת אֲבוֹתָיו לְאָמֵר
שְׁזָכוֹת אֲבוֹת יַעֲמֹד לוֹ וְלֹא יִתְאַמֵּץ בַּעֲבוּדַת הַבָּנוֹת
מִקְהַמָּת זֶה, לֹא יִשְׁגִּיחַ עַל זֶה

רַק אֶרְיךָ אִימֹוץ וְחִזּוֹק גָּדוֹל בַּעֲבוּדָתוֹ יַתְּפִירֶךָ

וְהַן הַצְדִּיק שַׁאֲנֵנוּ בֶּן צְדִיק אֶל יִנְאָשׁ עַצְמוֹ לְאָמֵר
מַאֲכָר שָׁאַיָּן לוֹ זְכוֹת אֲבוֹת לְסַעַע לֹא יוּכֶל לְהַגִּיעַ
לַעֲבוּדַת הַבָּנוֹת יַתְּפִירֶךָ

אֶל יָמֵר בֶּן, רַק יַעֲבֹד הַשִּׁירַת בְּאַמְתָּה הַבָּא לְשָׁהָר
אֲסִיעַן לוֹ מִן הַשְּׁפָמִים

רַק לְחַשְׁבֵּן שְׁהַשִּׁירַת עַזְּזָה לוֹ כֹּל זֹאת שְׁמַסְיָע לוֹ

וְזֶהוּ “לֹא לְקַח מִאַרְצָךְ כּוֹ”, פְּרוֹשׁ שֶׁלֹּא מִשְׁגִּיחַ עַל
אַרְצָךְ וְעַל בֵּית אָבִיךָ, וְתַלְךָ לְשַׁרְשָׁךָ “אֵל הַאֲרִין”
הַעֲלִיּוֹנָה,

“אֲשֶׁר אַרְאָךְ” רְצֹן לְזֹמֶר כְּנָיל, שֶׁלֹּא תַּחֲשֵׁב רַק
שְׁאַנֵּי מִרְאָה אַוְתָּךְ כָּל זֹאת, שְׁהַכְּלָה הוּא מִהְבּוֹרָא
יַתְּפִירֶךָ.

וְזֶהוּ “טֹב עֲשִׂית עַמּוּדְךָ”, רְצֹן לְזֹמֶר הַטּוֹב
שְׁעַשְׂתָּךְ עַמּוּדְךָ שֶׁהָאָצְדִּיק נִקְרָא טּוֹב
“הַ קְּבָרָךְ”, רְצֹן לְזֹמֶר שָׁאַיָּן זֶה כִּי אִם עַל יְדֵי
דָּבָרָךְ, שְׁהַכְּלָה הוּא מִפְּךָ.

The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

Noam Elimelech

Parshas Lech Lecha

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.

וְאַנְשָׁה לְגֹוי גָּדוֹל כֹּוי וְהַיָּה בָּרָכָה, וְאַבְרָכָה
מִבָּרָכִים וְאַקְלָלָה אָאָר. וַיַּאֲזֹרָה יְשׁוּעָה קָדְשָׁךְ דָּאָל
הָבָרָכָה נָאָמָר וְאַבְרָכָה כֹּוי וְאַאֲלָל הָאַקְלָלָה נָאָמָר
הַמְּלֹוֹת בַּהֲיפָה, וְהַיָּה לוֹ לִזְמָר גַּמְדָּן וְאַאֲרָרָר
? מְאַקְלָלָךְ?

ונראה לפירוש דהננה הצדיק אשר מקודש ומטהר עצמו,
נעשרה והוא בעצמו ברכה, דהנין בריכה עליונה
, להשפיע לפכל

אָבָל אָוֹתָם קָרוֹצִים לְקַבֵּל הַשְׁפָעָה עַל יְדֵי הַצדִיק,
אֲרִיכִים לְהַסְכִּים עִם הַצדִיק וְאֵז הם מִפְיָלָא מִתְבָּרְכִים
בְשִׁפְעָ רַב

אָבָל מֵשָׁאַיְנוּ מִסְכִּים עִם הַצדִיק, בָּנוֹזָאי לְזָה בְּלֹתִי
אֲפָשָׁר שִׁיוֹשָׁפָע לוֹ הַהַשְׁפָעָה עַל יְדֵי הַצדִיק.

The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lizensk

Noam Elimelech

Parshas Lech Lecha

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

“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.

“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.

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.

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.

NOTE Summary

Rebbe Elimelech of Lizensk 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

וניהו “וְהִי בָּרוּךְ”, דְּהִי נוֹשָׁאָתָה בְּעַצְמָה תְּהִנָּה
בריכָה לְהַשְׁפִיעַ

”אָבָרְכָה מִבְּרִכִּיךְ”, רְצֹן לֹוֹמֶר מֵשִׁיסְכִּים עַמָּךְ
אָבְרָךְ אָוֹתָו מֵיךְ, כִּי כָל הָוָא מִוּן פָּנַי שְׁהַצְדִּיק
הָוָא כְּבָרָכָה עַצְמָה

”וַיִּמְקְלָל אָאָרָר”, פְּרוֹשׁ אָבָל הַקְלָלָה אִינָה בָּאָה
מִפְּרִילָא כִּמוֹ כְּבָרָכָה, רַק אַחֲרָ מִעְשָׁה עַד שָׁאָר אָוֹתָ
אָמָר קָלְלָתָךְ

וניהו “טוֹב עֲשִׂית עִם עֲבָדֶךָ”, פְּרוֹשׁ הַטוֹּב, דְּהִי נוֹ
הַהַשְׁפָעָות, נִמְתָּח בַּיַּד עֲבָדֶךָ שֶׁהָוָא הַמְשִׁפְיעַ לְכָל
גָּעוֹלָם פָּנַי

רַק בְּאָפָו “הִי כְּבָרָכָה”, דְּהִי נוֹשָׁאָתָה עַמּוֹ הַכָּל
וַיֹּאמְרוּ גָּלְם עַל הַצְדִּיק שְׁהִ מִסְכִּים כְּבָרָכָה, וְאָז גָּלְם
גַּשְׁפָעִים עַל יָדֵי הַצְדִּיק בְּשֻׁפֵּעַ רַב וּבָרָכָה

The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

Noam Elimelech

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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,”

ויהי רעב בארץ כו. נראה לעל דרך המוסר במאמר הכתוב “לא רעב ללקם ולא אמא לפיהם כו כי אם לשבוע דבר ה”

ונמצוא זה ערך הרעב אם ח”ו עם בני ישראל איהם מתנאים פשורה והולכים שוכב בקדש לבקם ח”ו

ועל ידי זה הם גורמים גם לצדיק השלם במעשיהם שירד מפִזְרָגָתוֹ נִדְוָלה הַקְדָּשָׁה.

ונזהו שאמר הכתוב “ויהי רעב בארץ” בפ”ל, “וירד אברהם מארימה”, פרוש על ידי זה יורד הצדיק הנקרא בשם ‘אברהם’, יורד מפִזְרָגָתוֹ

ונא על פי כן כי יפול לא יוטל לנאר ח”ו, רק שירד מארימה דקיננו נוטריקון מיצר ים

שנעשה לו צר וודעך בקדושתו הצלונה שהיתה לו, מקדם, ים רם לקדושה עליונה, ים קעלין

ונכל זאת אין עשו השיית ברוך הוא לצדיק שיפול מפִזְרָגָתוֹ מחתמת רשות הרשעים, רק גם זה לטובתו

דקיננו “לגור שם”, דאלול זאת שיפול מפִזְרָגָתוֹ קצת, אפשר שיאבה לבו קצת להתגדל בקדושתו, וקדושתו

ועתה על ידי שרוואה הצדיק שנפל מפִזְרָגָתוֹ, הוא מתחביש מאי ומתקרט ואינו מפסיק עצמו רק בוגר הארץ, דקיננו שמחזיק עצמו שהוא גור בעולם הזה ובעולם הבא מאחר שנפל מפִזְרָגָתוֹ

ויהי באשר הזכיר לבוא מארימה, פרוש אחר שרוואה הצדיק כי קרוב הוא אל הפקרגה הנקראת ‘מארימה’

The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

Noam Elimelech

Parshas Lech Lecha

“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.

NOTE Summary

Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk 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

“וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל שְׂרֵי אֲשֶׁתֽׁוֹ”, דְּהַבָּה שְׁנֵי גְּנוּנוּמִים יִשְׁבְּעַבְדָּת הַצְדִּיק, דְּהַיְנֵנוּ ذָרָךְ אֶחָד לְעַבְדָּד בְּרוּתָנִיות, וְذָרָךְ שְׁנֵי גָם בְּהַגְּשָׁמִיות אֲרִיךְ לְהַתְּקִדְשָׁשׁ וְלְהַעֲלָה, עַצְמָוּ מְאָד בָּאָד,

וְהַבְּחִינָה שֶׁל עַבְדָּת הַרוּתָנִיות נִקְרָאת בְּשֵׁם 'אַבְרָם', דְּהַיְנֵנוּ מִצְדָּצָרָא, וּבְחִינָת עַבְדָּת הַגְּשָׁמִיות נִקְרָאת בְּשֵׁם 'שָׂרָה', בְּשֵׁם 'שָׂרָה'

וְזֶהוּ “וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל שְׂרֵי אֲשֶׁתֽׁוֹ”, דְּהַיְנֵנוּ הַצְדִּיק הַקָּדוֹשָׁה נִקְרָא אֲשֶׁר, וְאָמָר לְהָ “הַנְּהָ נָא יַדְעַתִּי כִּי אֲשֶׁר יְהָ מְרָאָה”, רְצֹן לֹמֶר מַאֲחָר שְׁאָנִי רֹאֶה שְׁאָנִי יוֹדֵעַ, שְׁאָשָׁה יִפְתְּחָ מְרָאָה [אָתָּה],

וְאַלּו קִיְמִתִּי בְּקָדוֹשָׁה עַלְיוֹנָה הַאִיךְ קִיְמִתִּי יוֹקֵעַ זֹאת, וְהַיְהָ פִּי כָּרִי וְהַרְגָּזָה אֲמִתִּי כּוֹ”, רְצֹן לֹמֶר אָם לְאָ נִשְׁגָּה עַל עַצְמָנוּ לְהַתְּגִּבָּר בְּקָדוֹשָׁה, אֹז חִזְוֹן וְהַרְגָּזָה, אֲתָּי דְּהַיְנֵנוּ כַּח הַרוּתָנִיות,

וְיַאֲתָּה יְחִינִי”, דְּהַיְנֵנוּ כַּח הַגְּשָׁמִיות יַתְּגַבֵּר

לְכָן “אָמְרִי נָא אֲחֹתִי אָתָּה”, פִּרְוּש הַתְּגִבָּרִי מִאָד בְּקָדוֹשָׁה וּבְדָבָרָה גָּדוֹל בְּתוֹךְ הַקָּדוֹשָׁה עַל ذָרָךְ, אָמָר לְחַכְמָה אֲחֹתִי אָתָּה”,

לְמַעַן יִטְבֶּל לִי”, רְצֹן לֹמֶר עַל יְדֵי זֶה יִוְטֶב לִי, בְּקָדוֹשָׁה עַלְיוֹנָה שִׁיחָגָבָר כַּח הַרוּתָנִיות

וְגַם זֹאת וְחִימָה נְפָשִׁי בְּגַלְלָה”, לְשׁוֹן גָּלְלִים, עַל ذָרָךְ “כִּאֲשֶׁר יָבֹעֵר הַגָּלֵל”, רְצֹן לֹמֶר שִׁיבָּוָא חַיָּות קָדוֹשָׁה גָּם בְּגָלְלִים דְּהַיְנֵנוּ בְּהַגְּשָׁמִיות. וְקַל

The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk

Noam Elimelech

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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 “Sarah his wife,” symbolizing the physical aspect of his service. Avram represents the spiritual, Sarah 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]