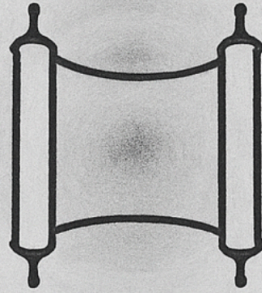


בס"ד

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel
of Horodak
Parshas Ki Teitzei**

מֵאֲמָרֵי



Dedicated To:

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Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Ki Teitzei

מאמר א

Introduction

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok (also called Horodoker) was one of the foremost disciples of the Maggid of Mezritch and a close colleague of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the Alter Rebbe. After the passing of the Maggid, he led a group of disciples to the Land of Israel and established the Chassidic community in Tiberias.

He was known for his fiery avodah, depth in Chassidus, and emphasis on elevating the physical into the spiritual. This discourse, beginning with the verse “כִּי תֵצֵא לְמִלְחָמָה עַל אוֹיְבֶיךָ – When you go out to war against your enemies” (Devarim 21:10), explores the spiritual war of man with his yetzer hara, the role of emotions and attributes (middos), the refinement of physicality, and the higher dimension of teshuvah.

When you go out to war against your enemies, and Hashem will deliver them... and you will capture... Our Sages explained: the Torah spoke only in relation to the evil inclination. The teacher opened: Behold, our Sages said that the ways of repentance are a change of deed, a change of name, and a change of place, as explained in the Zohar.

כִּי תֵצֵא לְמִלְחָמָה עַל אוֹיְבֶיךָ וּנְתַנוּ כּוֹי וְשִׁבִיתָ כּוֹי. פָּרְשׁוּ ז"ל לֹא דְבָרָה תּוֹרָה אֶלָּא כְּנֶגֶד יֵצֶר הָרַע. פָּתַח הָרַב הַנֶּה אֶרְזו"ל אוֹפְנֵי הַתְּשׁוּבָה שְׁנוּי מַעֲשֵׂה וְשְׁנוּי הַשֵּׁם וְשְׁנוּי מְקוֹם וּכְמוֹבֹאֵר בְּזוֹהַר

Behold, its meaning is according to the saying, “For a commandment is a lamp and the Torah is light” — they are the 248 commandments, lamps to ignite from the light of Torah. And they are the limbs of the Shechinah, to be clothed in all the limbs of the soul of man, to illuminate him by them, to lift him and raise him from the war of Hashem against Amalek from generation to generation.

הַנֶּה פְּרוּשׁ עֲנִינּוּ עַל דְּרָךְ הַיְדִיעָה מְאֹמֵר: כִּי נֵר מִצְוָה וְתוֹרָה אֹר — הֵם רַמ"ח פְּקוּדֵינֵי גְרוֹת לְאֲדָלְקָא מְאוּר תּוֹרָה, וְהֵם אֲבָרֵי הַשְּׂכִינָה לְהַתְּלַבֵּשׁ בְּכָל אֲבָרֵי נִשְׁמַת הָאָדָם לְהַאֲירוֹ עַל יְדֵיהֶם, לְנַטְלוֹ וּלְנִשְׂאוֹ מִמִּלְחָמַת ה' בְּעַמְלֵק מְדוּר דוּר

For it is the Satan, the evil inclination, that strengthens itself against man every day, and Hashem helps him through them, to shelter under His wings, and in the shadow of the Almighty he dwells. Hidden among all the hidden things of the world, judgment does not rule over him. As is known, blessing is only found in something hidden from the eye.

הוּא הַשֵּׁטָן, הוּא הַיֵּצֶר הָרַע, מְתַגְבֵּר עַל הָאָדָם בְּכָל יוֹם, וְהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עוֹזְרוֹ עַל יְדֵיהֶם, לְחַסוֹת בְּסֹתֵר כְּנַפְיָו, וּבְצֵל שְׂדֵי יְתְלוּנָן. וְטָמִיר בְּכָל טְמִירֵי דְעֻלְמָא, וְדִינָא לֹא שְׁלֵטָא בֵּיהּ. כִּידוּעַ שְׂאִין הַבְּרָכָה מְצוּיָה אֶלָּא בְּדָבָר הַסְמוּי מִן הָעֵינַי

In a place where the eye does not rule, “No eye has seen, O God, except You, what He will do for those who wait for Him.” For the essence of the dwelling of the kelipah and judgments is in revelation. The more revealed it is, the more it exists, like the first tablets given amidst noise and then broken.

בְּמְקוֹם דְּלֹא שְׁלֵטָא בֵּיהּ עֵינַי, “עֵינַי לֹא רָאִתָּה אֱלֹקִים וּזְלוֹתָךְ יַעֲשֶׂה לְמַחְכָּה לּו'”. כִּי כָל עֵיקַר הַשְּׂרָאָת הַקְּלִיפָה וְהַדִּינֵינֵי הוּא הַהִתְגַּלּוּת. וְכָל הַיּוֹתוֹ יוֹתֵר — כְּעִנְיַן לּוֹחֹת הָרֵאשׁוֹנוֹת, נִתְּנוּ בְּרַעַשׁ וְנִשְׁבְּרוּ

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And this is, “Why do you show yourselves” — meaning: being seen. And this is, “And all flesh will see.” Therefore they are called chitzonim (external forces), for their being is only externality and revelation. But Hashem is called the Hidden One of the world, the inwardness of the private domain.

וְזֶהוּ “לְמַה תִּתְרָאוּ” — הַתְרָאוֹת. וְזֶהוּ “וְרָאוּ כָּל בְּשָׂר” וְלִכְּוֹן נִקְרְאוּ חִיצוֹנִים לְשׁוֹן חִיצוֹנִית וְהַתְגַּלוֹת. וְהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא נִקְרָא סֵתֵרוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, פְּנִימִית רַחֲמֵי”

And the Torah is called “The curves of your thighs” — just as the thigh is hidden, so too are words of Torah. And this is, “If the evil inclination meets you, drag him to the study hall,” which is the Torah, to shelter in the hidden.

וְהַתּוֹרָה נִקְרָאת “חֻמוֹקֵי יִרְכִיב” — מֵה יֵרֶף בְּסֵתֵר, אִף דְּבָרֵי תּוֹרָה. וְזֶהוּ “אִם פָּגַע בְּךָ כּוֹי מְשֻׁכְּהוּ לְבֵית הַמְדַרְשׁ” — שֶׁהִיא הַתּוֹרָה, לְחֲסוֹת בְּסֵתֵר

For the choicest of names is “Adam” and not “Ish.” Even though it is written “Hashem is a man of war” — this is at the time of battle, to break the kelipos with a voice of might and an outstretched arm, and revelation like them.

כִּי מִבְּחַר הַשְּׁמוֹת הוּא “אָדָם” וְלֹא “אִישׁ”. אִם אָמַנְם “הִ' אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה” כְּתוּב — זֶהוּ בְּשַׁעַת מִלְחָמָה, שֶׁהוּא לְשִׁבְרַת הַקְּלִיפּוֹת בְּקוֹל עֲנוֹת גְּבוּרָה וְזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה, וְהַתְגַּלוֹת כְּמוֹתָם

For from Him and by Him, one goes and strikes them with an axe. But it is forbidden to mention His Name upon them — His Name is in hiddenness. As our Sages said: “With thunder and wickedness the King does not come, but with stillness, in a thin silent voice the King comes.”

כִּי מִמֶּנּוּ וּבִיהַ לְיִזְיֵל וּלְשַׁדֵּי בֵּיהַ נִרְגָּא. הֵס — מִלְּהַזְכִּיר עֲלֵיהֶם שֵׁם ה'. שֵׁם בְּסֵתֵר. כְּאֲרֻזִּים: כִּי בְּרַעַם וְרִשָׁע לֹא אֵתִי מִלְכָּא, כִּי אִם בְּחֻשָּׁאֵי וְקוֹל דְּמָמָה דְקָה — תַּמָּן אֵתִי מִלְכָּא

And the kingship of earth is as the kingship of heaven. Therefore, understand without seeing the standing of the King there. Behold, it is known that even all the kelipos of the world, the most external, are dependent and standing upon the word of the King.

וּמִלְכוּתָא דְאַרְעָא כְּמִלְכוּתָא דְרַקִּיעַ. לְכֹן הֲבֵן בְּלֹא רְאוּת מַעֲמַד הַמֶּלֶךְ עִישׁ. וְהִנֵּה יָדוּעַ שְׂאֵפְלוֹ כָּל הַקְּלִיפּוֹת שְׂבַעוּלָם הַיּוֹמֵר חִיצוֹנִים תְּלוּיִים וְעוֹמְדִים בְּמֵאֲרֻוֹ שֶׁל מֶלֶךְ

A thin ray of light from holiness shines to enliven them, in the secret of “And His kingship rules over all.” Therefore, their entire pursuit is to cling and unite with holiness, for the sake of their life-force. But after the refinement, the holy sparks taken from them, “Death will be swallowed forever.”

וּנְהִירוֹ דְקִיק מִן הַקְּדוּשׁ לְהַחְיּוֹתָם, בְּסוּד “וּמִלְכוּתוֹ בְּכָל מְשָׁלָה”. לְכֹן כָּל עֵיקַר רְדִיפָתָם לְהַדְבִּיק וּלְהַתְאַחַד בְּקְדוּשׁ עֲבוּר חַיּוּתָם. אֲבָל אַחֲרֵי הַבְּרוּר — נְצוּצֵי הַקְּדוּשָׁה מִמֶּנּוּ, “כִּלְעַת הַמּוֹת לְנִצְחַת

And behold, the Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, are entirely one. For so is the way of the Torah: its words and its letters indicate and arouse its inner essence. As with the matter of the word “good” — all the good of the world is hidden within it, in the letters of this word “good.”

וְהִנֵּה אוֹרֵייתָא וְקְדוּשָׁא בְּרִידֵיהּ הוּא בְּלֹא חֵד. שֶׁהִנֵּה בֵּן דְרַף הַתּוֹרָה: תִּיבּוּתֶיהָ וְאוֹתִיּוֹתֶיהָ מוֹרִים וּמְעוֹרְרִים פְּנִימִיּוֹתָהּ. כְּעֲנָנֵן הַטּוֹב — שֶׁכָּל הַטּוֹב שְׂבַעוּלָם גְּנוּז בְּגוֹהַ, בְּמִלַּת אוֹתִיּוֹת אֵלּוּ שֶׁל “טוֹב

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And so too with the word “joy” — within the letters of the word “joy.” And all seventy languages receive their life from the holy tongue, yet the language of Torah is unique, in the secret of “And His kingship rules over all.”

וכן השמחה במלת אותיות של “שמחה”. וכל השבעים לשון יש להם חיות מלשון הקדוש, ולשון “תורה לחוד, בסוד” ומלכותו בכל משלה.

As with the matter that in Greek they call “one” *hen* — this is its life-force from Torah. And so too with every language.

כענין שכן קורין בלשון יוני לאחת “הן” — זהו מקום חיותו מן התורה. וכן כל לשון. ולכן מתעוררים המדות, פי מעשי אלקים המה על-ידי הדבור בכל לשון.

Therefore the emotions are aroused, for the works of God are through speech in every language.

As with the joy that is aroused from good tidings, and grief from opposite speech, and anger from the speech opposite to it, and pride or glory from recounting praise before him.

כענין השמחה המתעוררת מבשורה טובה, וכן היגון מדבור הפכי, וכן הפעס מדבור שפגגדו, והתפארות הוד מספור שבחו בפניו.

And so too all matters of the emotions, for the emotions themselves have no image or grasp in the world, except in the letters of the word of that emotion, such as “chesed” in the letters of “chesed,” and so with all of them.

וכן כל ענייני המדות. אשר המדות בעצמן אין להם שום תמונה והשגה בעולם, במלות אותיות שם המדה — כמו “חסד” באותיות “חסד”, וכן בלם.

Each one according to the hidden aspect, and the secret of Hashem, to draw down the emotion in the language of Torah and its letters, and from it to every language.

כל-אחד על-דרך הנסתר וסוד ה' — להמשיך המדה בלשון תורה ואותיותיה, וממנה לכל לשון.

And this is “And Hashem saw that it was good” — for “seeing” is a term of drawing down, as the saying: “And all the nations will flow to Him,” which is the expression of light, which is the light of the eye.

וזהו “וירא ה' כי-טוב”, כי הראיה היא לשון המשכה. כמאמר: “ויהיו אליו כל הגוים” — שהוא לשון נהירא, שהוא אור עין.

And this is the eye of the intellect, the “eye of the heart,” as it is said: “And my heart saw much wisdom.” And this is what is said regarding emission — three sightings, two sightings, which is the drawing forth of emission.

וזהו עין השכל — “עינא דליבא”. כמאמר: “ולבי ראה הרבה חכמה”. וזהו הנאמר בזוב: ג' ראיות, ב' ראיות — שהיא המשכת זוב.

And behold, like finds its kind and is aroused. If a person is coarse and material, his emotions are not aroused except through the grasp of physicality, and in their root, such as silver and gold and abundant delights.

והנה מצא מין את מינו ונתעורר. אם אדם גס הוא ומגושם — אינו מתעוררים מדותיו כי אם בהשגת גשמיות. ובשורשם — כמו כסף וזהב ומגדנות לרוב.

And the pleasures of human beings — even though the things and objects are thick and material substance, still the emotions are aroused in him, which are without form, in the secret of “And His kingship rules over all.”

ותענוגות בני-אדם — אף-על-פי שהדברים והתפצים הם עבים וגולם חומרי, מתעוררים בו “המדות שבלי תמונה, בסוד” ומלכותו בכל משלה.

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But they are not grasped except through the power of the material mentioned.

And according to its nature, so too is the way of the attribute — it is weak and not enduring. As it is said: when the matter is nullified, the love is nullified. Not so the love of Hashem, for “love is strong as death, many waters cannot extinguish it, and if a man were to give all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised.”

Therefore, “it is not the study that is primary but the deed.” For the letters are in the secret of action, while the crowns, vowels, and cantillation are thought. They are nefesh, ruach, neshamah.

And this is “With the Torah the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world.” For “in six days Hashem made” — and on the seventh day, which are seven letters and fifteen letters — and this is the entirety of man.

Therefore man was created to grasp the emotions and to make use of them through the letters of the Torah and the lamp of a commandment. For when he attains one mitzvah that comes to his hand, his joy is aroused as when he attains his physical desire.

As in the matter of “He rejoices in mitzvos” and as in the matter of “laughter did not cease from his mouth the entire day.” For the essence is to cleave to His attributes, and they are through the attainment of the mitzvos.

For without the limit of the mitzvah, the attribute is infinite and without boundary, for behold the attributes are emanations from Him, may He be blessed.

For He is infinite, and an infinite matter cannot be grasped. Therefore the tzimtzum was necessary. Afterwards, the light of the attribute shines through the line of the attribute and its boundary, without spreading within it too much, so that the vessel not be nullified from its place — which is the first tzimtzum.

אבל אינה משיגה כי אם על-ידי כח החומר הנזכר.

וכפי ענינו לכן כן דרך המדה — שהיא חלשה ואינה קיימת. כמאמר: בטל דבר — בטלה אהבה. מלאין כן אהבת ה', כי “עזה כמות אהבה, ומים רבים לא יוכלו לכבות, ואם יתן איש את כל הון ביתו — בוז יבזו לו”.

לכן זהו “לא המדרש הוא העקר אלא המעשה”. כי האותיות הם בסוד המעשה, והתגין נקודות וטעמים — מחשבה. נפש-רוח-נשמה

ונהו “באורייתא ברא קודשא-ברייהו הוא עלמא”. כי “ישות ימים עשה ה'”, וביום השביעי — שהם ז' אותיות וט"ו אותיות. וזה כל אדם.

לכך נברא האדם להשיג המדות ולהשתמש עמיהם על-ידי אותיות התורה ונר מצוה. כי בהשיג מצוה אחת הבאה לידו — יתעורר שמחתו כבהשיג חפצו הגשמי.

בענין “שמח במצות הוא”. וכענין “לא פסיק חובא מפמיה כולי יומא”. כי העקר להדבק במדותיו, והם על-ידי השגת המצוות.

כי בלתי גבול המצוה — המדה אין סוף וגבול, שהרי המדות אצולות מאתו יתברך.

שהוא אין-סוף, ודבר אין-סוף אין לו השגה. לכן הצרף הצמצום, ואחר-כך מאיר אור המדה דרך קו המדה וגבול, בלי התפשטות בו יתר מדי — שלא יתבטל הפלי מהיכנו, שהוא הצמצום הראשון.

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Only in balanced measure to make it into a vessel. Then it is possible to grasp this attribute through the revelation of the tzimtzum, vessel, and boundary.

כי אם במזג השווה לעשותה כלי — אז אפשרית ההשגה במדה זו, על-ידי התגלות הצמצום כלי וגבול.

And therefore all the tzimtzumim are only for the revelation of His glory, and compassion on deficiency — afterwards it is revealed.

ולכן כל הצמצומים הם אינם רק בשביל התגלות כבודו והרחמנות על החסרון — אחר-כך מתגלה

And so is the way of every miracle — it is revealed from within the trial. And this is, “From within distress He brought forth redemption.”

וכן דרך כל גם — המתגלה מתוך הנסיון. וזהו: “מתוך צרה המציא פדות”.

And the essence of the contraction of the mitzvah into physical action is a lamp to attain the light of Torah that shines within it, which is the joy of mitzvah.

וכל עיקר צמצום המצוה בגשם מעשי — הוא נר להשיג אור תורה המאיר בתוכו, שהוא השמחה של המצוה.

And so too with every attribute. For without the boundary it cannot be attained, for the attribute is infinite.

וכן כל מדה ומדה. כי בלתי הגבול — אין להשיגו, שהמדה אינסוף.

And everything is according to the person. If he is physical, then the boundary and vessel of the arousal of his emotions are physical desires.

והכל לפי מה שהוא אדם. אם גשמי הוא — הגבול וכלי התעוררות מדותיו הם חפצי גשמיים.

And if he is a tzaddik, he loves righteousness. Therefore, “In the place where penitents stand, even complete tzaddikim cannot stand.” For the mitzvah of teshuvah is higher and more inward than all the mitzvos.

ואם צדיק — צדקות אהב. ולכן: “במקום שבועלי תשובה עומדים — אין צדיקים גמורים יכולים לעמוד.” כי מצות התשובה היא יותר עליונה ופנימית מכל המצוות.

For after the baal teshuvah has already used his attributes and attained them in their physical aspect, whether in matters of the permitted or of prohibition.

אחרי שהבעל תשובה כבר השתמש במדותיו והשיגם בענינם הגשמיים — אם היו בדברי הרשות או אסור.

In any case, he attained a little from the emotions that were aroused through using them. And now he is aroused in loftier emotions through the mitzvah of teshuvah — which is to return from the grasp of his initial emotions.

על-כל-פנים השיג מעט מן המדות שנתעורר בהשתמשם, ועתה מתעורר במדות היותר עליונים במצות התשובה — שהיא לשוב מהשגתו מדותיו שבתחלה.

Not so with all other mitzvos, whose actions are physical, and the arousal of the emotions through them is too small to contain the arousal of the attribute of the baal teshuvah in the mitzvah of teshuvah.

משאין בן כל המצוות המעשיות — הם גשמיים, והתעוררות המדות על-ידיהם היא קטנה מלהכיל התעוררות מדת הבעל-תשובה במצות התשובה.

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Ki Teitzei

מאמר א

And behold, after he has truly returned, which is to strengthen his emotions not to use them in physicality, nor to rejoice or be saddened by them, for “his table is greater than theirs” — therefore the physical things no longer act upon his emotions at all.

והנה אחריו שובו באמת, שהוא להגביר מדותיו שלא להשתמש בגשמיות, ולא לשמוח ולהעצב בהם, כי שלחנו גדול משלחנם — לכן אין הגשמיים פועלים במדותיו כלום.

Only the love of Hashem and doing kindness. This is called “a change of deed” with certainty. And also “a change of place” — for he has gone out from the public domain into the private domain.

כי אם אהבת ה' ועשות חסד. זהו הנקרא “שנוי מעשה” בנדאי. וגם “שנוי מקום” — שיצא מרשות הרבים לרשות היחיד.

And also “a change of name” — for surely the combination of names is not the same in his emotions now as compared to before. For now he uses the holy tongue, and is moved through “a lamp of mitzvah and Torah is light.”

וגם “שנוי השם” — שבנדאי אין צירוף השמות שוין במדותיו דהשתא לקודמים. כי עכשיו משתמש בלשון הקדש, ומתפעל על-ידי “נר מצוה ותורה אור”.

But at first he used one of the seventy languages, as mentioned. And this is the meaning of “In that chapter, in that place, with that woman.” And this is the concept of “world, year, soul.”

ותחלה היה משתמש בשם אחד מהשבעים לשון בפזוק. וזהו “באותו פרק, באותו מקום, באותו אשה”. והוא ענין “עולם-שנה-נפש”.

For the change of deed extends from the concept of the change of times, and their root is this. And this is “When you go out” — meaning from the private domain to the public domain, which is the revelation of the emotions.

כי השתנות המעשה נמשך מענין חלופי הזמנים, ושורשם הוא. וזהו “כי תצא” — שהוא מרשות היחיד לרשות הרבים, שהוא התגלות המדות.

Indeed, it is to war — “against your enemies” — for the kelipah chases after holiness in the place where the eye rules.

בנדאי למלקמה — “על אויביך”, שהקליפה רודפת אחרי הקדושה היכא דשלטא ביה עינא.

And if not for Hashem helping him — this is the revelation of the Shechinah against them: “Hashem is a man of war.”

ואלמלא הקדוש-ברוך-הוא עוזרו — זהו גלוי שכינה “כנגדם: ה' איש מלקמה”.

And this is, “Pray for the welfare of the kingdom” — which is the Shechinah. For if not for its awe, people would swallow one another alive.

וזהו “הוי מתפלל בשלומה של מלכות” — שהיא שכינה. שאלמלא מוראה — איש את רעהו חיים בלעו.

And this is, “And Hashem your God will deliver them into your hand, and you shall take captives.” These are the emotions that he had first used.

וזהו: “ונתנו ה' אלקיך בידך, ושביית שביו” — הם המדות שהשתמש עמם תחלה.

“And you saw among the captives” — an expression of drawing. The “beautiful woman” is in reference to *mayin nukvin* (feminine waters). For the attribute with which he first used is now made into *mayin nukvin* and an arousal to return from it.

וראית בשכינה” — לשון המשכה. “אשת יפת-תאר” הוא על-שם המין. כי המדה שהשתמש עמה תחלה — געשית עכשיו מין והתעוררות לשוב ממנה.

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Ki Teitzei

מאמר א

And this is, “And you shall take her to yourself as a wife” — he makes it into a vessel, a measure, and a boundary, to reveal his higher emotions from it.

וזהו: “ולקחתה לך לאשה” — שעושה אותה כלי, מדדה וגבול, להתגלות מדותיו העליונים ממנה.

And surely the complete person does not need all this. But everything is according to the person, for there is no one path to attain his emotions — whether through physical boundaries or through more spiritual ones, which are not so limited.

ובודאי אין האדם השלם צריך לכל זה. אבל הכל לפי מה שהוא אדם. כי אין דרך השגת מדותיו על-ידי גבולים גשמיים או יותר רוחניים שאינם מגבילים כל-כך.

For “like the strength of a man is his might, to stand in the bonds of war, to arouse his emotions heavenward.” And thus, “The Torah spoke only against the evil inclination.”

כי כאיש גבורתו לעמוד בקשרי המלחמה לערור מדותיו לשמים. והוא “לא דברה תורה אלא כנגד יצר הרע”.

For speech is the contraction and strengthening of the letters within the voice, in order to draw the voice and its revelation — even within this contraction. For it is the drawing of His being, blessed be He, within the speech, as is known.

כי הדבור הוא הצמצום והתחזקות האותיות בתוך הקול, בכדי להמשיך הקול והתגלותו — אפלו בצמצום זה. שהוא המשכת היותו יתברך בתוך הדבור, פי' דוע.

For speech and voice are the union of the Holy One, blessed be He, and His Shechinah. And this is, “The Torah spoke” — meaning that He does not need the contraction, except against the evil inclination.

כי הדבור והקול הוא יחוד קודשא-בריך-הוא ושכינתיה. וזהו “לא דברה תורה” — שאינו צריך הצמצום אלא כנגד יצר הרע.

For if he cannot overcome it with a light contraction, he contracts further into physicality. As in the matter, “If he goes — good; and if not, let him recall for himself the day...” until “Death will be swallowed forever.”

שאם אין יכול לו בצמצום קל — מצמצם יותר בגשמיות. כענין: “אי אזיל — מוטב, ואי לאו — יזכור לו יום כו'” עד “בלע המות לנצח”.

[NOTE Summary

The discourse explains that “going out to war” refers to the inner struggle against the yetzer hara. Torah and mitzvos are compared to lamps and light — they provide the spiritual energy that clothes the soul’s faculties and raise them from battle. The kelipah thrives on revelation and externality, while holiness is hidden and inward. Thus, true connection to Hashem lies in “secrecy,” drawing the yetzer hara into Torah study and mitzvos.

The teachings emphasize that letters and words of Torah are not mere forms but vessels for Divine attributes. Each middah (emotion) is expressed and drawn down through words and language. Even mundane languages ultimately derive vitality from lashon hakodesh, yet only Torah itself reveals the essence. Therefore, the mitzvos, bound in letters and action, become the vessels through which man can access infinite attributes of Hashem in a measured, attainable form.

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Ki Teitzei

מאמר 8

Teshuvah is revealed to be higher than all other mitzvos. While most mitzvos engage the physical as a vessel, teshuvah transforms the very middos once misused in gashmiyus into catalysts of higher holiness. The baal teshuvah, having already used and tested his emotions in the physical realm, now redirects them entirely to Hashem. This is the meaning of the “beautiful woman taken captive” — the attribute first misused becomes transformed into a vessel for higher emotions of holiness.

Ultimately, the discourse teaches that all tzimtzumim (contractions) exist not to conceal but to reveal Hashem’s compassion and light in a way the world can contain. Even the descent into physical temptation or failure becomes the springboard for a higher teshuvah. Thus, the battle against the yetzer hara itself becomes the tool to achieve the deepest revelation of Divine unity.

Practical Takeaway

A person must recognize that every struggle with the yetzer hara — every “battle” — contains within it the potential to uncover a higher level of Divine connection. Instead of despairing from the fall or from emotions once misused, we can elevate them and redirect them into love of Hashem, joy in mitzvos, and acts of kindness. Teshuvah, more than any other mitzvah, allows one to transform failures into new vessels of holiness. The key is constancy: to channel our passions, joy, and even our struggles into mitzvos, Torah, and connection with Hashem. In this way, our “enemies” become the very source of our elevation.

Chassidic Story

It is told that when Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok was in Tiberias, a wealthy man once visited him, troubled that his heart was constantly drawn to worldly pleasures and he felt unworthy of spiritual service. Rabbi Menachem Mendel listened and replied: “Even your desires are sparks of holiness, only clothed in coarse garments. Your task is not to crush them but to transform them. Just as a soldier takes the enemy’s weapons and turns them to his advantage, so too you must redirect your desires — let your joy be in Torah, your longing be in prayer, your passion in doing kindness. Then the yetzer hara itself will become your ally.” This teaching comforted the man, and he later became a devoted chassid who transformed his energy from indulgence into mitzvah observance.

END NOTE]