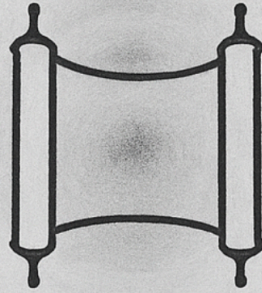


בס"ד

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel
of Horodak
Parshas Re'eh**



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Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Re'eh

Introduction

This discourse by **Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok** explores the essence of divine service through physicality, the true nature of reward and blessing, and the elevation of material desires when aligned with Hashem's will. Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok (d. 1788) was a senior disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch and an early leader of Chassidus in White Russia and later in Eretz Yisrael. He led a large aliyah of Chassidim to Tiberias and authored *P'ri HaAretz*, a foundational Chassidic text. This discourse, centered around the verse "רָאָה אֲנֹכִי נוֹתֵן לְפָנֶיכֶם הַיּוֹם בְּרָכָה וְקִלְלָה", analyzes the concept of berachah (blessing) from its mystical roots through its practical implications in mitzvos, middos, and even bodily function.

On their statement of blessed memory: “One who does not have earth to cover [blood], he grinds a gold dinar and covers [with that]” (Chullin 84a).

על מאמרם ז"ל מי שאין לו עפר לכסות שוחק
דינר זהב ומכסה

He opened with the portion “See, I am giving before you today...” (Devarim 11:26), “the blessing that you shall listen...” etc.

פתח בפרשת ראה אנכי נותן וגו' את הברכה אשר
תשמעו וכו'

And first we must explain the statement of our Sages, of blessed memory—

—ובתחלה צריך לבאר מאמרם זכרונם לברכה

the question of Reish Lakish to Rabbi Yochanan on the verse “You shall surely tithe” (Devarim 14:22),

שאלת ריש לקיש לרבי יוחנן על פסוק עשר
תעשר,

and he responded to him: “Tithe, so that you shall become wealthy.” (Ta'anis 9a)

והשיב לו: עשר בשביל שתתעשר

And he asked: “But is it permitted to test the Holy One, blessed be He?”

?והקשה: ומי שרבי לנסויה להקדוש ברוך הוא

And he answered: “Yes! As it is said (Malachi 3:10), ‘And test Me now with this, says Hashem...’”

והשיב: אין! כמו שנאמר ובחנני נא בזאת וגו'

And the matter is along the lines of what our Sages, of blessed memory, said:

—והענין הוא על דרוף אמרם ז"ל

“One who says: ‘This sela is for charity on the condition that my son will live’—he is a completely righteous person” (Rosh Hashanah 4a).

האומר סלע זה לצדקה על מנת שיהיה בני—הרי
זה צדיק גמור

And the question is strong: Why should he be called a completely righteous person?

?והקשהא עצומה—למה יהיה עוד צדיק גמור

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But the matter is along the lines of what they said, of blessed memory:	—אָבֵל הָעֲנָנִים הוּא עַל דְּרָף אָמְרָם ז"ל
“One who betroths a woman on the condition that I am a completely righteous person—she is betrothed,	הַמְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת הָאִשָּׁה עַל מְנַת שְׂאֵנֵי צְדִיק גָּמוּר—הָרִי זוֹ מְקוּדָשׁת,
for perhaps he had a thought of repentance in his heart” (Kiddushin 49b).	שְׁמָא הָרַהֵר תְּשׁוּבָה בְּלִבּוֹ.
That the wonder is great and immense before G-d—	—אֲשֶׁר הַתְּמִיזָה גְדוֹלָה וְרַבָּה לְאֱלֹקִים
for repentance must be with his whole heart, to return from the sins in his hand,	שֶׁהָרִי הַתְּשׁוּבָה צָרִיף לְהִיּוֹת בְּכָל לִבּוֹ לְשׁוּב
to regret their doing—	מֵעֲבִירוֹת שֶׁבְּיָדוֹ,
and how is it possible in one moment to return from his actions,	וְאֵיךְ הַדְּבָר אֲפֹשְׁרִי בְּרִגְעַ אֶחָד לְשׁוּב מִמַּעֲשָׂיו
to change that which was loved and habituated until now—	—לְשַׁנּוֹת אֶת הָאֱהוּב וְהַמְוָהָל עַד הַנְּה
which are the sins and lusts that are what they are—	שֶׁהֵם הָעֲבִירוֹת וְהַתְּאַוּוֹת מֵה שֶׁהוּא
and on the contrary, to love Hashem, may He be blessed, and His commandments,	וּבְהִפְךָ לְאֱהוּב אֶת ה' יִתְבָּרַךְ וּמִצְוֹתָיו
which he hated until now and was not habituated in their practice?	אֲשֶׁר שָׂנְאָ עַד הַנְּה וְלֹא הוֹרְגֵל בְּמַעֲשֵׂיהֶם.
For behold, “This opposite that made G-d” (Koheles 7:14),	שֶׁהָרִי אֶת זֶה לְעֵמֶת זֶה עֲשֵׂה הָאֱלֹקִים,
and the acts of lusts and physicality and other sins	—וּמַעֲשֵׂה הַתְּאַוּוֹת וּגְשָׁמִיּוֹת וּשְׂאֵרֵי עֲבִירוֹת
are from the side of impurity and the klipah,	הֵם מִסְטָרָא אַתְרָא וּקְלִיפָה
and when a person is drawn after them—he is literally klipah and sitra achra,	אֲשֶׁר הָאָדָם בְּהִמְשָׁכּוֹ אַתְרֵיהֶם—הוּא קְלִיפָה מִמֶּשׁ
and is opposed to Hashem, may He be blessed.	וּסְטָרָא אַתְרָא
And in what way, according to nature, is it possible to be transformed into one who loves Him and returns to Him?	וּבְאִיזָה דְרָף הַטָּבַע יְכוּל לְהִתְהַפֵּף לְאֱהוּב וְלְשׁוּב אֵלָיו?
And likewise, what is the matter that the Holy One, blessed be He,	—וְכֵן מֵהוּ הָעֲנָנִים שֶׁהִקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
accepts the baal teshuvah with both His hands immediately,	מִקְבֵּל לְבַעַל תְּשׁוּבָה בְּשֵׁתֵי יָדָיו תְּכַף וּמִיָּד
once he has left his evil deeds and refrains from doing them again—	אֲשֶׁר הִנִּיחַ אֶת מַעֲשָׂיו הָרְעִים מִלְעֲשׂוֹתָם עוֹד

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without any justification in the world for what he has already done—	בְּלִי שׁוּם טַעֲדָקוֹת בְּעוֹלָם עַל מַה שֶּׁעָשָׂה כְּבָר
for by the natural way between man and his fellow—	—אֲשֶׁר מִדְרָף הַטֵּבַע בֵּין אָדָם לְחֵבְרוֹ
if he rebelled and angered his friend thousands [of times], and afterward ceased doing so...	שֶׁהִמְרָה וְהִכְעִיס אֶת חֵבְרוֹ לְאַלְפִים, וְאַחַר כֵּן הִנִּיחַ מַעֲשׂוֹתָהּ...
And is it not [natural] that for this [offense], one should expect and roll upon him what has passed, unless with abundant appeasement?	וְכִי בְשָׂבִיל זֶה לֹא יִחְשׁוּב וַיִּגְלַגַּל עָלָיו מַה שֶּׁעָבַר, אִם לֹא בְהִרְבּוֹת פִּיּוּסִים?
Which is not the case with the Torah's baal teshuvah, for regret and abandoning the sin forever are sufficient?	מַה שֶּׁאִין כֵּן הַבְּעַל תְּשׁוּבָה דְאוֹרְיִיתָא—בְּחֻרְטָה וְעִזִּיבַת הַחֲטָא לְעוֹלָם דִּי
But the matter is as our Sages, of blessed memory, said in the Talmud and the Zohar—	אֲבָל הָעֲנָן הוּא כְמוֹ שֶׁאָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכוֹרֵנָם לְבִרְכָה —בְּש"ס וּבִזְהַר
that repentance was created before the creation of the world, and with it the world was created,	כִּי הַתְּשׁוּבָה נִבְרְאָה קוֹדֵם בְּרִיאַת הָעוֹלָם, וּבָהּ נִבְרְאָה הָעוֹלָם,
because of the accusation of the angels concerning the creation of man.	מִפְּנֵי קְטְרוּגַי הַמַּלְאָכִים עַל בְּרִיאַת הָאָדָם.
And they said: "He is destined to anger You, and to sin before You."	וְאָמְרוּ: זְמִין הוּא לְאַרְגָּזִי קָמָךְ וּלְמַחְטִי קָמָךְ.
Therefore repentance came, so that the world would be created with it—	—לְכַף בְּאֵה הַתְּשׁוּבָה שֶׁיִּבְרָא הָעוֹלָם בָּהּ
that if he repents, he will immediately be accepted—however he may be.	שֶׁאִם יָשׁוּב—מִיָּד יִקְבְּלוּהוּ, יְהִיֵּה אִיף שֶׁיְהִיֵּה.
Without understanding the matter in its depth,	בְּלִתי הִבְנַת הָעֲנָן לְעֵמְקוֹ
nevertheless we have heard that the world was created with the attribute of teshuvah.	עַל כֵּל פָּנִים שֶׁמְעַנּוּ שֶׁהָעוֹלָם נִבְרָא בְּמִדַּת הַתְּשׁוּבָה
It follows, necessarily, at the very least,	—נִמְצָא מְקַרָּח מִמִּילָא עַל כֵּל פָּנִים
that the power of teshuvah is implanted in all of creation.	שֶׁכַּחַת הַתְּשׁוּבָה תְּקוּעַ בְּכֹל בְּרִיאַת הָעוֹלָם
And likewise—and primarily—within man,	וְכֵן וְעָקַר בְּתוֹךְ הָאָדָם
who is a miniature world, encompassing all the worlds that descend from Him, may He be blessed,	שֶׁהוּא עוֹלָם קָטָן כְּלוּל בְּכֹל הָעוֹלָמוֹת הַמְּשַׁתְּלִשְׁלִים מֵאֵתוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ
for the power of the maker is in the product.	שֶׁהֲרִי כַח הַפּוֹעֵל בְּנִפְעָל
And therefore, in every place where a person may find himself—	—וְלָכֵן בְּכֹל מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִמְצָא הָאָדָם אֶת נַפְשׁוֹ
even in the depths of the klipos,	אֲפִלוּ בְּעֵמְקַי הַקְּלִיפּוֹת

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meaning, when he remembers himself—	רְצוֹנֵי לוֹמֵר: כְּשִׁיזְכֹּר אֶת עֲצָמוֹ
how teshuvah preceded the world, and the world was created with it,	אִיךָ הִתְשׁוּבָה קֹדְמָה לְעוֹלָם וְהָעוֹלָם נִבְרָא עִמָּה
and likewise man—	וְכֵן הָאָדָם
it emerges, at the very least, that the power of teshuvah is embedded within him.	וְנִמְצָא עַל כָּל פְּנִים שֶׁכַּחַת הִתְשׁוּבָה תְּקוּעַ בּוֹ
And if he awakens within himself the power of teshuvah,	וְאִם יִעוֹרֵר בְּעֲצָמוֹ אֶת כַּחַת הִתְשׁוּבָה
to connect to it and to draw [himself] to its source, which is the root of his creation,	לְהִתְקַשֵּׁר אֵלָיָהּ וּלְהִמְשִׁיךָ אֶל שְׂרָשָׁה שֶׁהוּא שְׂרֵשׁ בְּרִיאָתוֹ
and of his nature and qualities—	וּטְבָעוֹ וּמְדוּתָיו
and it precedes him—	וְהִיא קוֹדֶמֶת אֵלָיו
then automatically he will be transformed and changed from his nature and habit,	מִמִּילָא יִתְהַפֵּף וְיִשְׁתַּנֶּה מִטְבָּעוֹ וְהַרְגָלוֹ
for he has ascended above the natural,	שֶׁהָרִי נִתְעַלָּה לְמַעְלָה מִהַטְבָּעִי
and has been shifted to the root of his creation and of the creation of all the worlds.	וְנִנְעַתַק אֶל שְׂרֵשׁ בְּרִיאָתוֹ וּבְרִיאַת כָּל הָעוֹלָמוֹת כְּלָם
It thus emerges that his beginning and his end are from Hashem, may He be blessed—	וְנִמְצָא שֶׁתְּחִלָּתוֹ וְסוּפוֹ מִן ה' יִתְבָּרַךְ
as the saying goes: “One who comes to purify, they assist him” (Yoma 38b).	כַּמֵּאמַר: הֵבֵא לְטָהָר—מְסִיעִין לוֹ
Only the awakening must come from the person.	רַק הַהִתְעוֹרָרוֹת צָרִיךְ לִהְיוֹת מִן הָאָדָם
And after he is aroused and connects to a supernal power,	וְאַחַר שֶׁמִּתְעוֹרֵר וּמִתְקַשֵּׁר בְּכַחַת עֲלִיוֹן
and refrains from doing his previous deeds—	וּמְנִיחַ מַעֲשׂוֹת מַעֲשָׂיו הַקּוֹדְמִים
Through this, the attribute of teshuvah rests upon him—	עַל יְדֵי זֶה חָל עָלָיו מִדַּת הִתְשׁוּבָה
for there is no barrier to Hashem to bring salvation, for He is awesome.	כִּי אֵין מַעְצוֹר לָהּ לְהוֹשִׁיעַ, כִּי נוֹרָא הוּא
And this is: “Return to Me”—by the power of teshuvah that is within you—“and I will return to you,” to assist you.	וְזֶהוּ שׁוּבָה אֵלַי—בְּכַחַת הִתְשׁוּבָה שֶׁבְּכֶם—וְאֶשׁוּבָה אֵלֵיכֶם, לְסִיעַ אֶתְכֶם
And this is [the meaning of] “the Chayos run and return” (Yechezkel 1:14)—	וְזֶהוּ וְהַחַיּוֹת רָצוּא וְשׁוּב
that the power of teshuvah within you is embedded in all the Holy Chayos,	שֶׁכַּחַת הִתְשׁוּבָה שֶׁבְּכֶם תְּקוּעַ בְּכָל חַיּוֹת הַקֹּדֶשׁ

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and all the more so in man, who is a complete world.	וְכָל שֶׁכֵּן בְּאָדָם שֶׁהוּא עוֹלָם מְלֵא.
And after reaching through teshuvah to a level above and prior to the creation of worlds and attributes—	וְאַחַר שֶׁמִּגִּיעַ בְּמַעֲלַת הַתְּשׁוּבָה לְמַעְלָה וְקוֹדֵם בְּרִיאַת הָעוֹלָמוֹת וְהַמְדוּת—
it follows automatically that now he is newly born.	מִמִּילָא הוּא שֶׁעֲכָשׁוּ נוֹלָד הוּא.
And this is [the meaning of] “a baal teshuvah is like a newborn child.”	וְזֶהוּ שֶׁבַעֲל תְּשׁוּבָה בְּקָטָן שֶׁנוֹלָד דְּמִי.
In straight formation, as Elokim created man upright upon the earth.	בְּתוֹלְדָה יְשָׁרָה, כְּאֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם יָשָׁר עַל הָאָרֶץ.
And this matter is all-inclusive in Torah and mitzvos:	—וְדָבָר זֶה כָּלֵל בְּדוֹל בְּתוֹרָה וּבְמִצְוֹת
to draw upon oneself the sanctity of that mitzvah,	לְהִמְשִׁיךְ עַל עַצְמוֹ קִדְשַׁת אוֹתָהּ מִצְוָה,
and to sanctify oneself through its holiness,	וּלְהִתְקַדֵּשׁ בְּקִדְשָׁתָהּ
and to draw living waters into his vessels—	וּלְשָׂאב מֵיִם חַיִּים אֶל כְּלָיו,
in such a way that he will see that he himself is included in Torah and mitzvos.	כְּאִפְּסוֹ שֶׁיִּרְאֶה עֵגוֹן הָיְתוֹ הוּא עַצְמוֹ כְּלוּל מִן הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוֹת.
And he needs only to awaken in the mitzvah the power of that mitzvah which is embedded within him,	וְאִין צָרִיךְ רַק לְעוֹרֵר בְּמִצְוָה כַּח אוֹתָהּ מִצְוָה הַתְּקוּעָה בְּעַצְמוֹ,
and to connect with it through the supernal power—its root.	וּלְהִתְקַשֵּׁר בָּהּ בְּכַח הָעֲלִיוֹן שֶׁרִשָּׁם.
Then he will be affected practically to perform that mitzvah,	אוֹ אִז יִתְפַּעַל בְּפַעַל מַעֲשֵׂה אוֹתָהּ מִצְוָה,
for they are the acts of G-d, Who unifies all in oneness.	כִּי מַעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהִים הֵמָּה, הַמְּוַחֵד אֶת הַכֹּל בְּאַחֲדוּת.
Not so when a person performs mitzvos and good deeds and teshuvah according to his intellect—	מִה שֶׁאִין כֵּן כְּשֶׁאָדָם עוֹשֶׂה מִצְוֹת וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים —וּתְשׁוּבָה לְפִי שִׁכְלוֹ
“A man is praised by his understanding,” but one who turns from evil becomes mocked—	זֶהֲלֵל אִישׁ וְסָר מִרַע שֶׁמִּתְהַלֵּל,
for were it not for the Holy One, he would not succeed in changing.	שֶׁאֵלְמֵלֵא הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לֹא הָיָה בְּהַעֲתִיקָה—אִיֵּנוּ, יְכוּל לוֹ,
And [he] becomes materialized even in his good deeds.	וּמִתְגַּשֵּׂם בְּמַעֲשָׂיו הַטוֹבִים גַּם כֵּן.
Not so as previously mentioned—	—מִה שֶׁאִין כֵּן כְּנִי"ל
where the person does nothing but merely awakens through the deed the power of the Torah or mitzvah.	שֶׁהָאָדָם אִיֵּנו עוֹשֶׂה כְּלוּם, כִּי אִם מְעוֹרֵר בְּמַעֲשֵׂה אוֹתוֹ כַּח הַתּוֹרָה אוֹ הַמִּצְוָה.
Then the teshuvah creates him through it, and he becomes connected through it,	אֲזִי הַתְּשׁוּבָה נִבְרָא הוּא עַל יְדֵהּ וּמִתְקַשֵּׁר בָּהּ,

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and he ascends in this elevation to the place of his root and the place of his vitality.

ויעולה הוא במעלה זו אל מקום שרשו ומקום חיותו.

And from there he becomes blessed, for “there Hashem has commanded the blessing” (Tehillim 133:3)—

ומשם מתברך,

כי שם צוה ה' את הברכה,

which is called “day” and “gathering of waters,” a supernal reservoir, the life of the King—

שהוא נקרא יום ומקנה מים, בריכה עליונה, חיי המלך,

as is known in Nedarim, where our Sages said: “Like one who vows by the life of the King.”

כידוע בנדריים שאמרו חז"ל: כגודר בחיי המלך.

Which is not the case with an oath, which is like swearing by the King Himself.

מה שאין כן בשבועה שהוא כנשבע במלך עצמו.

And through this, he becomes connected to his root and essence—

ובזה מתקשר בעקרו ושרשו—

to faith, that he believes all the powers of Torah and teshuvah are embedded within him,

הלא לאמונה שמאמין שכל כחות התורה והתשובה, תקוע בעצמו,

and within all of creation, and One G-d created them all—

ובכל בריאת העולם, ואל אחד בראם,

and his spirit and soul he shall gather to Him with all his strength—

ורוחו ונשמתו אליו יאסף בכל כחו,

as the verse says (Yirmiyahu 4:1), “If you return, O Israel, to Me shall you return.”

כמאמר: אם תשוב ישראל—אלי תשוב.

And this is [the meaning of] “One who says: This sela is for charity so that my son shall live—he is a completely righteous person” (Rosh Hashanah 4a)—

וזהו האומר: סלע זו לצדקה בשביל שיהיה בני—הרי זה צדיק גמור,

because he believed in Hashem, and it was accounted to him as righteousness (Bereishis 15:6),

כי האמין בה, ויחשבה לו צדקה,

and he believes that the attribute of tzedakah has a supernal power and root—

ומאמין שמדת הצדקה יש בה כח ושרש למעלה

to give insight to the poor, which is the Shechinah, which is called “Tzedakah.”

למשכיל אל דל, שהיא השכינה שנקראת צדקה

For when Tzedek is revealed, she is called “Even HaTzedek” (stone of righteousness),

כי דאתגליא צדק—ואתקרייא אבן הצדק

from the side of Chochmah.

מסטרא דחכמה.

And “sela” is called “even” (stone)—this is “this sela for tzedakah,”

וסלע נקרא אבן—זהו סלע זו לצדקה,

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as is known—this is the unification of the Holy One, blessed be He.

בְּיָדוֹעַ—שֶׁהוּא יְחִוּד קַדְשָׁא בְּרִיף הוּא

And he believes there is power in this mitzvah to draw life to the heart,

וּמֵאַמִּין שְׁיֵשׁ כַּח בְּמִצְוָה זוֹ לְהַמְשִׁיךְ חַיּוּת לְלִבּוֹ

for the Torah and the mitzvah are the life of the worlds, as mentioned above.

כִּי הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוָה הֵן חַיֵּי הָעוֹלָמוֹת כְּנֻזָּר לְעֵיל

And now, as he performs this mitzvah, he desires through it to connect above the middos and prior to the creation of the world—

וְעַתָּה בְּעִשׂוֹתוֹ מִצְוָה זוֹ רוֹצֵה בָּהּ לְהַתְקַשֵּׁר עִמָּה—
לְמַעַלָּה מִן הַמִּדּוֹת וְקוֹדֵם בְּרִיאַת הָעוֹלָם

to the place of the Life of all Worlds.

לְמָקוֹם חַיֵּי הָעוֹלָמִים

And the well-trodden path by which he ascends and becomes connected to his root—

וְדַרְךְ הַכְּבוּשָׁה שְׁעוּלָה וּמִתְקַשֵּׁר בְּשַׁרְשָׁה

it is the public path through which vitality flows into all the worlds.

הוּא הַשְּׁבִיל הַרְבִּים שֶׁחַיּוּת נִשְׁפָּעִים אֶל כָּל
הָעוֹלָמוֹת

And this is: “So that my son shall live”—as is known that the worlds and the middos of the seven days of creation are called “ben Y-H.”

וְזֶהוּ: בְּשִׁבִיל שְׂיַחֲזֶה בְּנִי, כִּי דוֹעַ שֶׁהָעוֹלָמוֹת וְהַמִּדּוֹת
שֶׁבְּשִׁבְעַת יְמֵי הַבְּנִיָּן נִקְרָא בֶן י"ה

And for this reason, teshuvah is called “Binah”—for it is the place of contemplation, as explained in the maamar.

וְעַל שֵׁם כֶּף נִקְרָאת הַתְּשׁוּבָה "בִּינָה", שֶׁהִיא מָקוֹם
הַתְּבוֹנְנוּת, כְּמִבּוֹאֵר בַּמֵּאמָר

And through contemplation comes transformation—

וְעַל יְדֵי הַתְּבוֹנְנוּת הוּא הַהִשְׁתַּנּוּת

and “wisdom gives life to those who possess it” (Koheles 7:12), for there is the source of life.

וְהַחֲכָמָה תַּחֲיָה בְּעֲלִיָּה, כִּי נֶשֶׁם מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים

And this is [the meaning of] “shall live my son”—“ben Yud,” for Yud is Chochmah, the source of all.

וְזֶהוּ "יַחֲזֶה בְּנִי", בֶּן "י", כִּי "י" הִיא חֲכָמָה, מְקוֹר
הַכֹּל

If so, he is certainly a completely righteous person—

וְאִם כֵּן, בְּיֻדָּאֵי הוּא צַדִּיק גָּמוֹר

for a completely righteous person is one who connects the upper worlds with the lower ones.

כִּי צַדִּיק גָּמוֹר הוּא הַמְקַשֵּׁר הָעוֹלָמוֹת הָעֲלִיּוֹנִים עִם
הַתַּתְּחוֹנִים

And this is: “Tithe so that you shall become wealthy” (Ta’anis 9a)—

"וְזֶהוּ: "עֲשֹׂר בְּשִׁבִיל שְׂתַתְּעֶשֶׂר

“for the sake of” (bishvil) specifically—

בְּשִׁבִיל "דִּוְקָא"

for it is that very path (“shvil”) embedded in him—

שֶׁהוּא אוֹתוֹ שְׁבִיל הַתְּקוּעַ בְּעִצְמוֹ

the power of this mitzvah—whereby he becomes wealthy as well.

כַּח מִצְוָה זוֹ שְׂתַתְּעֶשֶׂר גַּם הוּא בְּעִצְמוֹ

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And automatically he is blessed from the source of blessings,	וממילא מתברך ממקור הברכות,
which is the root and origin and source of the path—	שהוא שרש התחלה ומוצא השביל,
which is the supernal blessing.	שהוא ברכה עליונה.
If so, he is not testing the Holy One, blessed be He—	אם כן, איננה מנסה לה' יתברך,
only that his intention is to draw the Life of the King from the Life of all Worlds,	רק שפונתו להמשיך חיי המלך מחיי העולמים
and [to draw] blessings upon the head of the righteous.	ובברכות לראש צדיק.
And even though he knows that through this he will certainly become wealthy and blessed—	אף שידע שבודאי על ידי זה יתעשר ויתברך גם הוא—
what of it, if his sole intention is to cleave to the Living Life?	?מה בכך, אם פונתו רק להדבק בחי החיים
Moreover, even the simplest faith—that the mitzvah causes unification and an increase of blessing from Above to below—	ואולם, גם האמונה בפשוטה—שהמצוה גורמת יחוד ותוספת ברכה מלמעלה למטה—
and he performs the mitzvah of giving only so that he will become wealthy or that his son shall live—	ועושה מצות הנתינה רק כדי שיתעשר או שיתקיה בנו—
it effects its true impact.	פועל פעולתו אמת.
For his faith is so strong that the deed arouses the faith and the vitality.	אחרי שאמונתו חזקה כל כך שגורם המעשה מעורר האמונה והחיות.
And this is: “The righteous lives by his faith” (Chavakuk 2:4),	”וזהו: ”צדיק באמונתו יתקיה”
and “the reward of a mitzvah is the mitzvah” (Avos 4:2)—	”ו”שכר מצוה—מצוה”
for he desires to give, he scatters [his wealth], and more is added to him—so he may give again one hundred times.	כיון שמתאווה לתת—מפניו, ונוסף עוד בכדי שיתזזור ניתן מאה פעמים.
And this is: “See, I [give]...”—	”... וזהו: ”ראה, אנכי”
for “see” is Chochmah, as the saying goes: “My heart has seen much wisdom” (Koheles 1:16),	ש”ראה” הוא חכמה, כמאמר: ”לבי ראה הרבה חכמה”
and “Anochi” refers to Binah.	ופירוש “אנכי” הוא בינה.
For the three first [sefiros]—Kesser, Chochmah, Binah—are not called by name, but rather “I.”	שג’ ראשונות—קטר, חכמה, בינה—אינן נקראים, [”בשם”], אלא “אני”
And the “chaf” [of Anochi] is Kesser.	והכ”ף הוא קטר.
And this is: “I place before you today...”—	—”וזהו: ”נותן לפניכם היום”
meaning, that “today,” which is Anochi, which is Binah, which is teshuvah—	פירושו: שהיום ההוא, שהוא “אנכי”, שהוא “בינה”, שהיא התשובה—

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behold, it precedes and is before the middos and the seven days of construction.

הנה קודם ולפני המדות ושבעת ימי הבנין.

And this is [the meaning of] that He said “before you” in plural form—

—וזהו שאמר "לפניכם" לשון רבים

and on that very day are included both the blessings and the curses,

ובאותו היום נכללים הברכות והקלות,

for judgments are aroused from it.

כי דינין מתערין מנה.

And this is: “The blessing, that you shall listen...”—

—“... וזהו: "את הברכה אשר תשמעו

as is known regarding the intent of the phrase “Who sanctified us...”—

—“... כידוע מפונת "אשר קדשנו

for “asher” is what sanctifies.

כי "אשר" הוא המקדש

And this is: “you shall listen”—for teshuvah is the place of hearing,

, וזהו "תשמעו"—כי התשובה היא מקום השמיעה

as in the saying: “Listen and your soul shall live” (Yeshayahu 55:3).

." כמאמר: "שמעו ותחי נפשכם

And afterward it says: “to the commandments of Hashem your G-d”—

—“ואמר אחר כן: "אל מצות ה' אלקיכם

which is the place where the middos are unified and connected in their root,

שהוא מקום שהמדות מיחדים ומקושרים בשרשם

in the matter of mitzvah, from the language of “commanding to,” as is known from elsewhere—

בענין מצוה מלשון לצוות לזה, כידוע ממקום אחר—

and similar to the intention in the blessing: “in His commandments and commanded us...” etc.

וכענין הפונה בברכה: "במצותיו וצונו" וגו'

And the order of the verse is: “The blessing...”—

—“... וסדרא דקרא הוא: "את הברכה

it is the drawing of the blessing in this order: “That you shall listen to the commandments...” etc.

הוא המשכת הברכה בסדר זה: "אשר תשמעו על מצות" וגו'

And in the manner of the verse: “That you shall listen”—

—“ועל דרך הפסוק: "אשר תשמעו

that you shall draw yourselves to the commandments of Hashem.

שתמשו עצמכם אל מצות ה'

“See, I place before you today a blessing and a curse, the blessing...” etc.

ראה אנכי נותן לפניכם היום ברכה וקלה, את הברכה כו'

The Rebbe was precise with the expression “noten” (“I place”), which is like a physical act of giving, from hand to hand.

דקדק הרב לשון "נותן", שהוא כמו דבר גשמי, הנותן מיד ליד.

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And the Rebbe prefaced this with the words of the author of *Avodas HaKodesh*, who questioned all the physical rewards in the Torah—

והקדים הרב לזה דברי הבעל עבודת הקדוש,
—שהקשה על כל היעודים הגשמיים שבתורה

such as: “If in My statutes you walk... I will give your rains in their season” (Vayikra 26:3–4),

,"כגון: "אם בְּחַקְתִּי תֵלְכוּ... וְנָתַתִּי גֶשְׁמֵיכֶם בְּעִתָּם

for this is greatly puzzling: is the reward for mitzvos merely physicality?

אֲשֶׁר הַתְּמִיּה רַבָּה—וְכִי כָל שְׂכָר הַמִּצְוֹת הוּא זֶה
?!הַגִּשְׁמִיּוֹת

And the author of that book said: the Torah does not mention these promises as reward,

וְאָמַר בְּעַל הַסֵּפֶר הַנִּלְ שָׁלָא הַזְכִּירָה הַתּוֹרָה הַיְעוּדִים
דְּרַךְ שְׂכָר

but rather as a manner of conduct—such that this will happen as a matter of course.

אֵלָּא דְרַךְ הַנְּהִיגָה—שְׂמִמִּילָא יְהִי כּוֹ עִמּוֹ

“If you walk in My statutes...”—the reward of a mitzvah is a mitzvah, and the spiritual cleaving;

אִם בְּחַקְתִּי תֵלְכוּ—שְׂכָר מִצְוָה מִצְוָה, וְהַדְּבָקוֹת"
הַרוּחָנִית

but the physical follows automatically and so it will be: “I will give your rains...”

אָבֵל הַגִּשְׁמִיּוֹת מִמִּילָא יִפְשֹׁד, וַיְהִי כּוֹ—"וְנָתַתִּי
גֶשְׁמֵיכֶם".

For surely it will be so, after he has cleaved to divine vitality.

שְׁבֻדָּאֵי יְהִי כּוֹ אַחַר הַיּוֹתוֹ דְּבוּק בְּחַיּוֹת אֱלֹהִית

But this is not said as a reward.

אָבֵל אִין זֶה אָמֹר לְשְׂכָר

Now, the concept and expression of “berachah” (blessing) is from the root of “berichas mayim” (a flowing of water)—

וְהִנֵּה עֲנִין וְלִשׁוֹן "בְּרַכָּה" הוּא לִשׁוֹן "בְּרִיכַת
—"מַיִם

which means the outpour and flow [of vitality].

שֶׁהוּא הַנְּבִיעָה וְהַשְּׁפָעָה

But most blessings [people seek] are in physicality,

—אָבֵל רַב בְּרִכּוֹת בְּגִשְׁמִיּוֹת

which is the matter of expansion and fulfillment of physical desire,

שֶׁהוּא עֲנִין הַתְּפִשְׁטוֹת וּמְלוֹי חֶפְצוֹ בְּגִשְׁמִיּוֹת

even in excess,

—אָפְלוּ בְּדְבָרִים הַמֵּיִתְרִים

and this is extremely repulsive.

הוּא מְאוֹס מְאֹד

For behold, lusts are named after mud, filth, and excrement—

דְּהִנֵּה הַתְּאֻנָּה נִקְרָאת עַל שֵׁם טִיט וְצוֹאָה וְלִקְלִיד כָּל
—דְּבָר

and they are not from Hashem,

וְלֹא מִן הַשֵּׁם הִיא

rather worse than mud and excrement and stench—

אֵלָּא יוֹתֵר גְּרוּעַ מִטִּיט וְצוֹאָה וְסִרְחוֹן

for the whole concept of stench is the destruction and ruin of its original existence,

שְׁכָל עֲנִין סִרְחוֹן הוּא הַפְּלִיּוֹן וְהַפְּסֹד מִקְיוֹתוֹ
הַרְאִשׁוֹן

that it has begun to rot.

שֶׁהַתְּחִיל לְהִסְרִיחַ

And so it is with every physical lust that generates its own consequence—

—וְכֵן כָּל תְּאֻנָּה גִשְׁמִית שְׂמוּלִיד בְּעֶצְמוֹ תוֹלְדָתוֹ

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it is stench, meaning destruction and ruin from its original state, which was the love of Hashem, may He be blessed.

הוא הסרחון, שהוא הכליון והפסד מהיותו הראשון, שהוא אהבת ה' ותברך.

And just as human excrement smells more than all others, as explained in the laws regarding distancing oneself from excrement during Krias Shema—specifically human excrement and not that of animals or birds—this is its nature: that according to a person's greatness, so too is his fall.

וכמו שצואת אדם מסרחת יותר מכולם, כמבואר בהרחקת ק"ש—דוקא מצואת אדם ולא של בהמות ועופות—ונהו ענינו: שלפי גדלו תהיה מפלתו.

For after man, who rises above all others, therefore the ruin and destruction within him is a complete reversal—from the highest peak to the lowest pit.

אחר היות האדם העולה על כולם—לכן ההפסד והכליון שבו הוא מהפך להפך: מאיגרא רמא לבריאה עמיקתא.

And in proportion to the degree of the ruin is the intensity of the stench—unlike with other living creatures.

ולפי ערך גדל ההפסד—כן גדל הסרחון, מה שאין כן בשאר בעלי חיים.

And similarly is the fulfillment of lusts, which is the greatest loss and most severe destruction—a complete inversion from the love of Hashem, blessed be He, Who is Infinite, to the love of lusts, G-d forbid.

ועל דרך זה במלואי התאוות, שהוא ההפסד היותר גדול וכליון חרוץ—מהפך להפך: מאהבת ה' ותברך. שהוא אין-סוף, אל אהבת התאוות, רחמנא לצלן.

Certainly there is no comparison to the magnitude of the stench and loathsomeness.

בנדאי אין ערך אל גדל הסרחון והמאוס.

And this is [the meaning of] “all expressions of kindness are disgrace and loathsomeness,” as the verse says regarding forbidden relations: “it is kindness” (Vayikra 20:17), and they shall be cut off.

ונהו שכל לשון חסד הוא חרפה ומאוס, כמאמר: "כפרשת עריות: חסד הוא ונכרתו".

And the explanation is that “chesed” means “chissuda”—from the structure of kindness stem lusts.

ופירוש לשון "חסודא", כי מבנין החסד מסתעפים התאוות.

And this is the meaning of “My soul grew disgusted with you” said in the rebuke—

—ונהו "ונעלה נפשי אתכם" האמור בתוכחה.

that divinity recoils from its ruin, which are the lusts and transgressions—

שהאלוקות מואס בהפסדו, שהם התאוות והעונות.

meaning: like a person who recoils from the stench that comes out from him and his own corruption.

רצוני לומר: כאדם שמואס בסרחון היוצא ממנו והפסדו.

And in this way, the eye of Bilaam the wicked was blinded—because he said and described the intimacy of Israel, saying: “Who is holy and whose servants are holy—should gaze upon such a thing?”

ועל דרך זה נסתמה עינו של בלעם הרשע—על שאמר ומספר את רבעו של ישראל, שאמר: מי שהוא קדוש ומשרתיו קדושים—סתפל?! כדבר זה!

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That is: the matter of lust and revulsion.	שהוא ענין התאונה והמאוס.
But in truth, the matter is not as he said.	אבל באמת אין הענין כדבריו.
For to separate entirely from physicality is contrary to halachah, for the verse says "you shall live by them" (Vayikra 18:5).	שהפרישות מכל גשמיות—נגד גמירא אי אפ"ש.
And though surely one who is pure and holy will be like the ministering angels—	"שכתוב: 'וחי בהם'.
still, the Torah was not given to angels.	אם כי באמת בודאי מי שהוא טהור וקדוש—יהיה, כמלאכי השרת,
For complete separation from all physicality is withdrawal into gevurah and strict judgment,	אף על פי כן—לא נתנה תורה למלאכי השרת.
which the world cannot endure unless through the inclusion of mercy with judgment—	שהפרישות מכל וכל—הוא ענין ההסתלקות מן, הגבורה ומדת הדין,
which is the scale and righteous balance that mediates between them.	שאין העולם מתקנים בו—אלא על ידי שיתוף מדת, הרחמים למדת הדין.
"He measures the path of his feet" (Mishlei 5:6), and all his middos are to know Hashem in all his ways,	שהוא המאזנים ומאזני צדק המכריע ביניהם.
and all his deeds for the honor of his Creator, solely for Hashem alone.	פ"לס מעגל רגליו", וכל עניני מדותיו לדעת את ה',
And what is unnecessary must be destroyed,	בכל דרכיו,
for when one brings the Creator into his actions, He enlivens the matter—	וכל מעשיו לכבוד בוראו—בלתי לה' לבדו.
as it says: "And You give life to them all" (Nechemiah 9:6).	והמותר יתרוס,
And certainly it will not rot or be destroyed or stink.	כי בהכניסו הבורא בתוך מעשהו—הרי הוא מחיה, הדבר,
And it is not called a "lust" at all,	"כמאמר: 'ואתה מחיה את כלם'.
but rather a mitzvah—meaning "connection," for it is true attachment even in the lowest and most physical of things—	ובודאי לא יכלה ולא יפסיד ולא יסרוס,
a pleasing aroma to Hashem, Who said and it was done—His will accomplished.	ואינו נקרא תאונה כלל,
And this is the greatest joy before Him, blessed be He—	אלא מצוה, לשון ציותא, שהוא הדבקות האמיתי,
and there is no end to the joy of serving Him through physicality—greater than all spiritual service.	—אפילו בשפלים ובתחתונים ובגשמים
And the proof of this is that we await the resurrection of the dead in the future to come, may it be speedily.	ריח ניחוח לה'—שאמר ונעשה רצונו.
	והיא השמחה היותר גדולה לפניו ותפ"ד,
	ואין קץ לשמחת עבודת הגשמים—יתר על כל, הרוחנים.
	והראיה לזה: שהרי אנו מצפים לתחיית, המתים—שתהיה לעתיד במהרה.

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And not every person merits this—for the wicked do not.	וְלֹא כָּל אָדָם זֹכֶה, שְׁלֵא כֵּן הָרָשָׁעִים
And it seems puzzling: what is the joy in the renewal of the physical body, and its embodiment?	וְלִכְאוּרָה תִּמְהָ: מֵהוּ עֲנִנּוּ הַשְּׂמִיחָה בְּהִתְחַדְּשׁוֹ שֶׁל הַגּוּף הַגִּשְׁמִי וְהַלְבִּישׁתוֹ
Is it not better for him to remain in the upper worlds without a body?	הֲלֹא טוֹב לוֹ אִזְ בְּעוֹלָמוֹת הָעֲלִיּוֹנִים בְּלִי גוּף
But the truth is as we have said: the greatness of the joy of serving the Creator through the body is boundless.	אָבֵל הָאֵמֶת הוּא כַּדְּבָרֵינוּ: מִגְדֵּל שְׂמִיחַת עֲבוֹדַת הַגּוּף לְבוֹרָא יִתְעַלֶּה—אִין קִץ
And this is what Moshe requested—to enter the Land of Israel.	וְזֶהוּ שֶׁבִקֵּשׁ מֹשֶׁה לְכַנֵּס לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל
For was it to eat its fruits that he desired?	וְכִי לְאֹכֹל מִפְרֵיהָ הִנֵּה צָרִיךְ
Rather, to fulfill the mitzvos dependent on the land—while still in a body.	אֲלֵא לְקַנֵּם הַמִּצְוֹת הַתְּלוּיֹת בְּאֶרֶץ, בְּעוֹדוֹ בַּגּוּף
And behold, the matters of desires and middos in physicality which are for the sake of a mitzvah—such as love in the context of being fruitful and multiplying, or fear in capital cases when judging one who is liable—these are gifts within man, which the Holy One, blessed be He, took from their supernal officers at the giving of the Torah.	וְהִנֵּה עֲנִינֵי הַתְּאוּוֹת וְהַמְדוֹת בְּגִשְׁמִיּוֹת שְׂהֵמָה לְשֵׁם מִצְוָה, כְּמוֹ הָאֵהָבָה בְּכִרּוֹ וּרְבוּ, וְהִירָאָה בְּדִינֵי נַפְשׁוֹת לְדוֹן הַמְּחֻיָּב—הֵם מִתְּנוּת בְּאֵדָם אֲשֶׁר לָקַח הַשֵּׁר עֲלָיו מִשְׁרֵי הָעֲלִיּוֹנִים בְּקַבְּלַת הַתּוֹרָה
as explained in the Zohar, that if not for [the giving of the Torah], “you shall not commit adultery” would have implied even with one’s own wife, and likewise “you shall not murder.”	כְּמִבּוֹאֵר בִּזְהַר שֶׁבְּלַעֲנֵי הַכּוֹן—“לֹא תִנְאַף” אֲפִלּוֹ עִם “אִשְׁתּוֹ מִשְׁמַע, וְכֵן “לֹא תִרְצַח
But what is for the sake of a mitzvah is the life-force of that desire, which Yishmael and Edom’s heavenly ministers relinquished from their own domains.	אָבֵל מֵה שֶׁהוּא לְצַרְף מִצְוָה—הוּא הַחַיּוּת שֶׁל אוֹתָהּ תְּאוּוָה, שְׁוִיִּתְרוֹ יִשְׁמַעֲאֵל וְעָדוֹם שָׂרִים הָעֲלִיּוֹנִים מִשְׁלָתָם
And this is why the eye of Bilaam the wicked was blinded regarding the above wonder:	וְזֶהוּ שֶׁנִּסְתְּמָה עֵינּוֹ שֶׁל בִּלְעָם הָרָשָׁע עַל תְּמִיתוֹ הַנִּיִּל
for surely, the indulgence of physical desires for bodily pleasure is stench, filth, and excrement—	שֶׁבּוֹדָאֵי מוֹתֵר הַתְּאוּוֹת הַגִּשְׁמִיּוֹת לְהִנְאֹת הַגּוּף—הֵם סְרַחוֹן, לְכִלּוֹף וְצוֹאָה
even when technically permitted, the Holy One, blessed be He, abhors it.	אֲפִלּוֹ בְּמוֹתֵר לוֹ—הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ מוֹאֵס בּוֹ
But what is for the need of the body and for the sake of a mitzvah—surely Hashem looks upon it and illuminates it,	אָבֵל מֵה שֶׁהוּא לְצַרְף הַגּוּף וּלְשֵׁם מִצְוָה—בּוֹדָאֵי ה' מְסַתְּפֵל וּמְאִיר בּוֹ
when one inserts his intention for His glory, may He be blessed.	בְּהַכְנִיסוֹ כּוֹנְנוֹ לְכְבוֹדוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ
And that spark gives life and illuminates all things,	וְאוֹתוֹ נִיצוֹץ מְחַיֶּה וּמְאִיר אֶת הַכֹּל

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like the idea of a lamp: a small spark of light drives away all the darkness of the room,	כַּעֲנַן הַנֵּר, שֶׁהוּא נִיצוֹץ אֹר קָטָן—דּוֹקָה אֵת כָּל הַחֹשֶׁךְ מִן הַחֶדֶר,
and causes the possibility to see everything in the room.	וְגוֹרֵם אֶפְשָׁרוּת הַהִסְתַּכְּלוּת בְּכָל הַחֶדֶר.
And this is the idea of blessing that branches from the thing through the act of the mitzvah within it,	וְזֶהוּ עֲנֵן הַבְּרָכָה הַמְסַתַּעֵף בְּדָבָר עַל־יְדֵי מַעֲשֵׂה הַמִּצְוָה שֶׁבְּתוֹכוֹ,
like the blessing from tithing.	כַּעֲנֵן הַבְּרָכָה מִן הַמַּעֲשֵׂר.
And not only in positive commandments, but even in prohibitions, which are 365 like the 365 sinews—	וְלֹא דוֹקָא בְּמִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה, אֲלָא אֶפְלוּ בְּלֹא תַעֲשֵׂה, —שֶׁהֵם יֵשׁ מֵאוֹת וְחֲמֵשׁ כְּמוֹ יֵשׁ מֵאוֹת וְחֲמֵשׁ גִּידִין
like the river Nagid, which is a drawing down of light and vitality through the mitzvos, which are the limbs of the soul.	עַל שֵׁם נָהָר נָגִיד, שֶׁהוּא הַמְשַׁכֵּת אֹר וְחַיּוּת בְּמִצְוֹת, לְשֵׁם אֲבָרֵי הַנְּשָׁמָה.
And thus the fruit of his womb is blessed through the mitzvah of “you shall not commit adultery.”	”וְכֵן מִתְבָּרֵךְ פְּרִי בִטְנוֹ בְּמִצְוֹת ”לֹא תִנְאַף
But the blessing is not called after the physical extension,	אֲבָל אֵין הַבְּרָכָה נִקְרָאת עַל שֵׁם הַגְּשָׁמִיּוֹת
rather the spark of intention for His glory, blessed be He, that is inserted into the physicality—	אֲלָא נִיצוֹץ פְּנוּת כְּבוֹדוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ שֶׁהוּא מְכַנֵּס בְּתוֹךְ הַגְּשָׁמִיּוֹת
that is what is called “blessing.”	הוּא הַנִּקְרָא בְּרָכָה.
As the Zohar says: “He is blessed and He is blessing,” because intention causes Hashem’s looking upon it.	כְּמֵאִמֵּר הַזֶּה: ”אִיהוּ בְרוּךְ וְאִיהוּ בְּרָכָה”, כִּי הַכּוֹנֵה גּוֹרֵמַת בְּהִסְתַּכְּלוּתוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ בּוֹ
And the proof: “See, I...”—which is the idea of “Anochi Hashem Elokecha,”	וְהִרְאֵהוּ: ”רְאֵה אֲנֹכִי”—שֶׁהוּא עֲנֵן ”אֲנֹכִי ה'”, ”אֲלֹקֶיךָ
which is His oneness, blessed be He, to draw into oneself in actuality the unity of His name,	שֶׁהוּא אֶחָדוּתוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ—לְהַמְשִׁיךְ עַל עַצְמוֹ כְּפוּעַל
this seeing and perception is what “gives before you a blessing...”	אֵת יַחֲוֵד שְׁמוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ, ...וְרֵאֵה וְהִסְתַּכְּלוּת זֶה—הִיא הַנּוֹתֵן לְפָנֶיכֶם בְּרָכָה
and the blessing is not on the physical act,	וְאֵין הַבְּרָכָה עַל מַעֲשֵׂה הַגְּשָׁמִיּוֹת
but “the blessing, that you shall listen to the commandments of Hashem...”—	—”...אֲלָא: ”אֵת הַבְּרָכָה אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמָעוּן אֵל מִצְוֹת ה'”
which is the idea of “in all your ways know Him.”	”שֶׁהוּא עֲנֵן: ”בְּכָל דְרָכֶיךָ דַּעֵהוּ
And perhaps this is the meaning of: “your fear and dread shall be upon all the beasts of the field”—	וְאוּלַי זֶהוּ פִירוּשׁ: ”וּמִוֹרְאָכֶם וְחִתְּכֶם יִהְיֶה עַל כָּל חַיֵּי הָאָרֶץ”

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for the fear of Hashem within man is what causes influence and flow upon all animals of the earth.

כִּי יִרְאֵת ה' שְׂבָאָדָם—הִיא הַשְּׁפָעָה שְׁפַע עַל כָּל חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ.

[NOTE Summary

The discourse opens with a striking question: Why are the Torah's rewards seemingly physical—rain, food, children—when the soul's true fulfillment lies in spiritual closeness to Hashem? Quoting the *Avodas HaKodesh*, the Rebbe explains that these “rewards” are not transactional, but natural outcomes of spiritual alignment: the physical blessings come *mimela* (automatically) when one's soul is attached to holiness.

He then introduces the deeper concept of *berachah* as spiritual flow—like a wellspring that overflows into the world. Yet, when this flow manifests in unrefined physicality—such as lust for bodily pleasure without spiritual intention—it becomes corrupted and repulsive, termed in Chazal as filth or stench. This descent, particularly when originating from a lofty soul, is far more devastating than for animals or non-spiritual beings, echoing the rule that “the higher something is, the lower it falls.”

The discourse proceeds to distinguish between **ta'avos for pleasure** (which result in decay) and **ta'avos for mitzvah purposes**, such as intimacy in the context of *pru urvu* or fear when judging capital cases. These are spiritual tools, gifted to man at Har Sinai, which the nations of Yishmael and Edom refused to accept. Such desires, when used in divine service, draw light into the world and are sanctified by Hashem's gaze.

This, explains the Rebbe, is the meaning of true *berachah*: not the physical outcome, but the **divine spark of kavannah** (intention) for Hashem's honor that enlivens the act. Even mitzvos like *lo tinaf* and *ma'aser* have the power to draw down blessing, not due to the act itself, but because of the holiness embedded in the person's intention. This is echoed in the Zohar's teaching: “He is blessing and He is blessed”—Hashem's gaze is drawn by human kavannah.

The Rebbe elaborates that through inserting kavannah, one becomes like a lamp: a tiny flame that illuminates an entire room. So too, one's mitzvah performance can flood the material world with light. He applies this also to negative commandments, which correspond to the 365 sinews of the soul, acting as conduits for vitality. Even the prohibition of *lo tinaf* becomes a source of blessing when observed with purity.

Moshe Rabbeinu's longing to enter Eretz Yisrael is interpreted in this light—not to eat its fruits, but to perform **physical mitzvos** within a body, expressing that the ultimate spiritual joy is in serving Hashem through materiality. This is why *techiyas hameisim* is so central: the physical body, when used in divine service, becomes holier than the spiritual realms.

Practical Takeaway

The physical world is not an obstacle to holiness but its vessel—**when filled with kavannah for Hashem**. Eating, intimacy, work, speech, and even fear can become divine acts when aligned with Torah. Blessing flows not from the deed alone, but from the spark of **intentional godliness inserted into the act**. One must approach

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every mitzvah and moment with the aim to unite with Hashem. That very consciousness turns decay into blessing, stench into light, and body into soul.

Chassidic Story

When Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok arrived in Eretz Yisrael, the Chassidim who had made aliyah with him faced immense material hardship—lack of food, poor housing, and dangerous surroundings. One of the Chassidim asked the Rebbe how they could possibly serve Hashem with joy in such physical deprivation.

The Rebbe pointed to a small clay lamp flickering weakly in a dark room. “See,” he said, “even this tiny flame pushes away the entire darkness. When one puts kavannah into even a small act—eating a crust of bread, saying a word of Torah, refraining from anger—that act lights up worlds. Here, in Eretz Yisrael, without the luxuries, our kavannah is pure. Every bite for the sake of a mitzvah shines like the Menorah in the Beis HaMikdash.”

This became a foundation for Chassidus in Eretz Yisrael: **physical poverty transformed into spiritual wealth through kavannah.**

(Source: Toldos Avos, oral traditions of the students of MM Horodoker)

END NOTE]