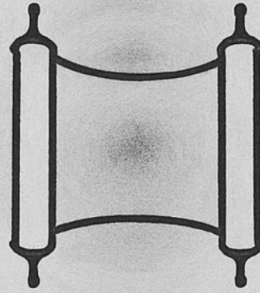


בס"ד

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

מאמר ב



Dedicated To:

חשה בן גיטל

**May Hashem pour Shefa upon you
& your families**

To find more Maamarim and to dedicate one visit:

ChassidusNow.com

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Ki Teitzei

מאמר ב

Introduction

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok (also called Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk, 1730–1788) was one of the foremost disciples of the Maggid of Mezritch and an early leader of Chassidus in White Russia. In 1777, he led a group of about 300 Chassidim in aliyah to Eretz Yisrael, settling in Tiberias, where he remained until his passing. His fiery teachings are preserved in *Pri HaAretz*, where he emphasizes dveikus (cleaving to God), the refinement of middos, and the inner depth of Torah and mitzvos.

In this discourse on *Parshas Ki Seitzei*, Rabbi Menachem Mendel explores the pasuk “When you go out to war against your enemies.” He interprets it as the inner battle of the soul — the struggle with the yetzer hara, the refinement of the middos, and the elevation of fallen sparks through Torah, mitzvos, and teshuvah. The maamar delves into the distinction between tzaddikim and baalei teshuvah, the nature of love and fear of Hashem, the concept of “wine preserved in its grapes,” and the higher state of dveikus that transcends reason and middos.

Parshas Ki Seitzei – Discourse 2. “When you go out,” Rashi of blessed memory explained: the verse is speaking of a milchemes reshuv (optional war). For it says, “and you shall take its captives.” But with regard to a milchemes chovah (obligatory war), such as the seven nations, it says (Devarim 20:16), “you shall not let any soul live,” etc. See there.

פְּרִשֵׁת כִּי תֵצֵא – מֵאֵמֶר בִּי. “כִּי תֵצֵא” פֶּרֶשׁ רַשִׁי זְכוּרוֹנוֹ לְבָרְכָה: בְּמִלְחָמַת הַרְשׁוּת הַכָּתוּב מְדַבֵּר, שֶׁהָרִי נֹאמֵר “וְשָׁבִיתָ שְׂבִי” וְאֵלּוּ בְּמִלְחָמַת חֹבֶה שֶׁהֵם שֶׁבַע עַמּוּיִן נֹאמֵר (דְּבָרִים כ, טז) “לֹא תַחֲיֶה כָּל נֶפֶשׁ” וְכוּ, עֵינֵי שָׁם

Behold, our Sages of blessed memory said (Berachos 34b): Rabbi Chiya bar Abba said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan, “All the prophets only prophesied for baalei teshuvah. But regarding complete tzaddikim — ‘No eye has seen it, O God, except for You’ (Yeshayahu 64:3).”

הִנֵּה אָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זִ"ל (בְּרַכּוֹת לד, ב): אָמַר רַבִּי חִיָּא בַר אֲבָא אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: “כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים כָּלָם לֹא נִתְנַבְּאוּ אֶלָּא לְבַעֲלֵי תְשׁוּבָה. אֲבָל לְצַדִּיקִים גְּמוּרִים — (עֵינֵי לֹא רָאָתָהּ וְכוּ) (יִשְׁעַיָּהוּ סד, ג

And this seems to contradict Rabbi Abbahu, who said: “In the place where baalei teshuvah stand, complete tzaddikim cannot stand.”

וּפְלִיגָא דְרַבִּי אֲבָהוּ, וְאָמַר רַבִּי אֲבָהוּ: “בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁבַעֲלֵי תְשׁוּבָה עוֹמְדִים — אֵין צַדִּיקִים גְּמוּרִים יְכוּלִים לְעֲמוֹד

And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi expounded: “‘No eye has seen’ — this refers to the wine that has been preserved in its grapes since the six days of creation.” And the Rashbam explained: wine is a term for joy, without any admixture of sadness, for every sadness is only due to the deficiency of creation.

וְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי דָרַשׁ: “עֵינֵי לֹא רָאָתָהּ — זֶה יַיִן הַמְּשֻׁמֵּר בַּעֲנֻבֵי מִשְׁשֵׁת יְמֵי בְּרֵאשִׁית.” וּפִירֵשׁ הַרְשָׁבִים: יַיִן הֵיא לְשׁוֹן שְׂמֻחָה, שְׁלֹא יִהְיֶה בָּהּ שׁוֹם תְּעַרְוּבָת עֲצָבוֹן. שֶׁהָרִי “כָּל עֲצָב אֵךְ לְמוֹתֵר” (מִשְׁלֵי יד, כג) מְחַמֵּת בְּרִיאַת הַעוֹלָמוֹת

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Ki Teitzei

מאמר ב

And in order to understand this matter more truly and clearly, we must first preface an understanding of the statement that the advantage of baalei teshuvah is greater than that of tzaddikim.

ובכדי להבין הענין יותר רק ואמת, נקדים הבנת המאמר הנזכר לעיל — שמעלת הבעלי תשובה יותר גדולה מן הצדיקים.

For the verse proclaims (Koheles 7:29): “God made man upright, but they sought many calculations.” It is thus found that the baal teshuvah goes against the intent of creation.

והפסוק מרמז (קהלת ז, כט): “אשר עשה האלקים את האדם ישר, והמה בקשו חשבונות רבים.” נמצא שבעלי תשובה הוא נגד פונת הבריאה.

But the matter cannot truly be tasted, except by “those who taste of it merit life” (Musaf of Shabbos). And “they speak with a heart and a heart” (Tehillim 12:3).

אבל הענין אי אפשר להטעים, אלא ל“טועמיה חיים זכו” (מוסף שבת), ו“בלב ולב ידברו” (תהלים יב, ג).

But to bring it out from the mouth outward — this cannot be explained. “All words are wearisome” (Koheles 1:8). And the one who hears does not truly grasp it in his heart, for these are matters of the heart, and whatever the mouth can speak is but the beginning of words.

אבל להוציא מן השפה ולחוץ (סנהדרין קו, ב) — אי אפשר להסביר הענין. “וכל הדברים יגעים” (קהלת א, ח). והשומע במקומו עומד, ובלבבו לא יבין את זאת. כי דברים שבלב הם, וכל מה שיהיה יכול לדבר — ריש מלין נאמר.

And this is to understand the matter of complete and true cleaving of the soul of man to Him, may He be blessed, and the strength of the eternal bond that is never severed — which draws the soul of man to Him, may He be blessed.

והוא להבין ענין הדבקות הגמור והאמתי בנפש האדם אליו ותברך, וחזק הקשר של קימה שאינו נתק לעולם — הממשיך את נפש האדם אליו ותברך.

And the yearning and longing of the soul drags it along — and all of its bindings are torn away, as it is pulled after Him to run, after what his soul has desired.

וכסף וקלות הנפש מגרר גריר — וכל מוסרותיו ינתקו בהמשכה אחריו לרוץ, על מה רצתה נפשו.

And what are the ties that bind the houses of the soul, and bring her a cord to pull her?

ומה הן הקשרים לבתי הנפש, ויבא חבל לה למשכה.

And the matter is known, that all the Torah and the mitzvos are only counsels for the soul regarding cleaving. And in the holy Zohar (Yisro 82b), they are called 613 “advice” — which are the positive and negative mitzvos, which are love and fear, as is known.

והענין ידוע, שכל התורה והמצוות הם רק עצות בנפשו על הדבקות. ובהר הקדוש (יתרו פב, ב) נקראים עטין תרניג — שהם המצוות עשה ולא תעשה, שהם אהבה ויראה כידוע.

But cleaving itself was not explained as to what it is. However, remember it in any case, for the mitzvah is not only advice but a great preparation to enter into holiness.

אבל הדבקות לא פירש מה הוא לו. ברם זכר אותו על כל פנים, כי המצוה איננה רק עצה, והכנה רבה היא לבוא אל הקדוש.

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Ki Teitzei

מאמר ב

The path of the right side — these are the 248 positive commandments, the letters of “racham” (mercy) and the Divine Name Havayah (Zohar Bereishis 24a). These are the middos, as is known, for they are the six directions, and the seventh is Shabbos.

דָּרָךְ יְמִין — שְׁהֵם רַמ"ח מִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה, אוֹתִיּוֹת
 “רַחֵם” וְה' (זֶהָר בְּרֵאשִׁית כד, א). שְׁהֵם הַמִּדּוֹת
 בְּיָדוּעַ, שְׁהֵם ו' קִצּוֹת, וְהַשְּׁבִיעִי — שְׁבֵת

And if “the left shall spread forth” (Yeshayahu 54:3), to strengthen oneself in the roots of the middos — “My name with Y-H” rises to 365 (Zohar there), which is higher than the middos and their root.

וְאִם “הַשְּׂמֵאל תִּפְרָצִי” (יִשְׁעִיָּה נד, ג), לְהִתְחַזֵּק
 בְּשָׂרְשֵׁי הַמִּדּוֹת — “שְׁמִי עִם י"ה” עוֹלָה שְׁס"ה (זֶהָר
 שָׁם), שְׁהִיא לְמַעְלָה מִן הַמִּדּוֹת וְשָׂרְשָׁם

And this is, “Turn from evil and do good” (Tehillim 34:15). At first one must “turn from evil” and strengthen himself with an eternal bond in the roots of the middos.

וְזֶהוּ “סוּר מֵרַע וַעֲשֵׂה טוֹב” (תְּהִלִּים לד, טו).
 שְׁבִתְחַלְקֵה צְרִיף ל”סוּר מֵרַע”, וְלְהִתְחַזֵּק בְּקוֹשֶׁר שָׁל
 קִנְיָמָא בְּשָׂרְשֵׁי הַמִּדּוֹת

And after his heart is confident in his permanence, afterwards “do good” — engage with the middos and arouse them to Him, may He be blessed, through the action of the mitzvos.

וְאַחַר שִׁיְהִיָּה לְבוֹ בְּטוֹחַ בְּקִיּוּמוֹ, אַחַר כֵּן “וַעֲשֵׂה
 טוֹב” — יַעֲסֹק בְּמִדּוֹת, וְיַעֲרֹרֵם אֵלָיו יִתְבָּרַךְ עַל-יְדֵי
 מַעֲשֵׂה הַמִּצְוֹת

There are mitzvos that resemble the angels: “With two he would fly, and one called to another and said: ‘Holy...’” (Yeshayahu 6:2–3). “And by the breath of His mouth all their host” (Tehillim 33:6). And so too are many mitzvos, like tzitzis and others.

יֵשׁ מִצְוֹת שְׁמֵתֵדְמָה לְמַלְאָכִים: “בְּשֵׁתִים יַעֲוֹפֶה, וְקָרָא
 זֶה אֶל זֶה וְאָמַר קְדוֹשׁ” (יִשְׁעִיָּה ו, ב–ג). “וּבְרִוּחַ פִּיּוֹ
 כָּל צְבָאָם” (תְּהִלִּים לג, ו). וְכֵן מַעֲשֵׂה הַמִּצְוֹת הַרְבֵּה,
 כְּמוֹ צִיצִית וְדוּמִיָּהם

And there are mitzvos connected to the Throne, and some to the footstool, and some in the Shechinah itself — but all of them are found within Him, in each and every one of them.

וְיֵשׁ בְּפִסָּא, וְיֵשׁ בְּשֵׂרְפָרַף, וְיֵשׁ בְּשִׁכְנֵה עֲצֻמָּה. וְכִלְהוּ
 אֵינְהוּ בֵּיהַ בְּכֻלָּם וּבְכֻלָּם אֶחָד מֵהֶם

For the Torah begins with “Bereishis” — which is speech, as it is written: “The beginning of speech” (Hoshea 1:2). And behold, “By the word of Hashem the heavens were made” (Tehillim 33:6), and all the worlds were drawn down.

שֶׁהָרִי הַתּוֹרָה מִתְחַלֵּת: “בְּרֵאשִׁית” — שֶׁהוּא הַדְּבֹר,
 כְּמוֹ שְׁכָתוּב: “בְּרֵאשִׁית דְּבַר” וְכוּי (הוֹשֵׁעַ א, ב). וְהָרִי
 “בְּדִבְרֵי ה' שָׁמַיִם נִעֲשׂוּ” (תְּהִלִּים לג, ו), וְכֵל
 הָעוֹלָמוֹת נִשְׁתַּלְשְׁלוּ

It follows that when the speech came forth from the mouth of Gevurah (Shabbos 88b) in the Ten Commandments (Devarim 4:13), and all the mitzvos — “Then I was by Him, as a nursling” (Mishlei 8:30) — before the creation of the worlds, and they were drawn down until this lowly world.

נִמְצָא, כְּשֶׁהַדְּבֹר יֵצֵא מִפִּי הַגְּבוּרָה (שְׁבֵת פח, ב),
 בְּעֲשָׂרַת הַדְּבָרוֹת (דְּבָרִים ז, ג), וְכֵל הַמִּצְוֹת —
 “וְאַהֲרֵהָ אֶצְלוֹ אֲמוֹן” (מִשְׁלֵי ח, ל) — מִקְדָּם בְּרֵיאַת
 הָעוֹלָמוֹת, וְנִשְׁתַּלְשְׁלוּ עַד עוֹלָם הַשְּׁפִל הַזֶּה

Behold, the speech passed through all the worlds. And in every place that “the word of the king and his law reached” (Esther

הָרִי שֶׁהַדְּבֹר עָבַר דְּרָךְ כָּל הָעוֹלָמוֹת. וּבְכֻלָּ מְקוֹם
 אֲשֶׁר “דְּבַר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָתוֹ הִגִּיעַ” (אֶסְתֵּר ח, ז), נִבְרָא
 הָעוֹלָם — “דְּבַר דְּבַר עַל אֶפְנָיו” (מִשְׁלֵי כה, יא)

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Ki Teitzei

מאמר ב

8:7), the world was created — “a word fitly spoken” (Mishlei 25:11).

And this is (Zohar, Introduction 5a): “With the Torah the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world,” according to the simple meaning, besides the deeper matter. For the Ten Utterances are the Ten Commandments, as is known (Zohar Yisro 93b). And “Bereishis” is also a maamar, as in Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 22 (27a), as mentioned above.

It follows that when man arouses through his mitzvos that same speech, he arouses all the worlds that were created by it. For he is engaged with the root of their creation, and when he touches it, all the branches are stirred through the root.

And when man is included with them, by making himself resemble an angel — to give thanks to His Name — and afterwards he directs himself to be a Throne and a footstool to Him, may He be blessed, in the World of the Throne, to be included with them.

And afterwards he gives over his soul into the Shechinah, climbing and ascending through the worlds — and with all the worlds together, higher and higher, through the mitzvos.

These are the arousal of the emotions that strike him, until his soul goes out in being stripped from the middos — which are love and fear, etc. — in order to cleave to their root.

To the Essence, without any interruption of the garment of love or any attribute or reason at all, but rather with strength, without any reason at all, because of the bond of cleaving — the part to the whole — drawn from Him, without any reason, returning to its root.

As our Sages of blessed memory said (Bereishis Rabbah 53:20): “Throw a stick into the air, it falls back to its root.” And all returns to the place from which it was taken (Koheles 3:20).

וְזֶהוּ (זֶהרַ הַקְדָּמָה ה, א): “בְּאִוְרֵיתָא בְּרָא קוּדְשָׁא-בְּרִיךְ-הוּא עֲלֵמָא,” עַל דְּרַךְ הַפְּשׁוּט, לְבַד עֲמֵק הָעֵנִין. כִּי הַעֲשָׂרָה מְאֻמְרוֹת הֵן הֵם י' הַדְּבָרוֹת כְּפִדּוּעַ (זֶהרַ יִתְרוֹ צג, ב). וְ“בְּרֵאשִׁית” נִמְי מְאֻמְרָה הִיא (תִּיקוּנֵי זֶהרַ, תִּיקוּן כ"ב כז, א), כְּנִזְכָּר לְעֵיל.

נִמְצָא, כְּשֶׁהָאָדָם מְעוֹרֵר בְּמִצְוֹתָיו אוֹתוֹ הַדְּבוּר — מְעוֹרֵר כָּל הָעוֹלָמוֹת שֶׁנִּבְרְאוּ עַל-יְדֵיהֶן. שֶׁהָרִי מִתְעַסֵּק הוּא בְּשֵׁרֵשׁ בְּרִיאָתָם, וּמִמְשַׁמֵּשׁ בּוֹ — מִתְנוּעָעִים כָּל הָעֵנָפִים בְּלֵם עַל-יְדֵי הַשֵּׁרֵשׁ.

וּכְשֶׁהָאָדָם נִכְלָל עִמָּהֶם, בְּהִיּוֹתוֹ מִתְדַמֶּה לְמַלְאָךְ — לְהוֹדוֹת אֶת שְׁמוֹ, וְאַחַר כֵּן מְכַוֵּן עֲצָמוֹ לְהִיּוֹת כִּסֵּא וְשֵׁרֶפֶת אֵלָיו יִתְבָּרַךְ, בְּעוֹלָם הַכִּסֵּא — לְהַכְלִיל עִמָּהֶם.

וְאַחַר כֵּן מוֹסֵר נַפְשׁוֹ בְּשִׂכְיִנָּה, מִטַּפְס וְעוֹלָה הוּא דְרַךְ הָעוֹלָמוֹת — וְעַם הָעוֹלָמוֹת בְּלֵם, מְעַלָּה מְעַלָּה עַל-יְדֵי הַמִּצְוֹת.

שֶׁהֵם הַתְּעוֹרְרוֹת הַמַּדּוֹת הַמִּפְּנִים בּוֹ — עַד שֶׁתִּצְאָה נַפְשׁוֹ, בְּהַתְּפַשְׁטוֹת מִן הַמַּדּוֹת, שֶׁהֵם אֲהֶבָה וְיִרְאָה וְכו', בְּכַדִּי לְהַדְּבִק בְּשֵׁרֵשׁ.

אֵל הָעֵצָם, בְּלִי שׁוּם הַכִּסֵּק לְכוּשׁ אֲהֶבָה אוֹ שׁוּם מִדָּה וְטַעַם כָּלֵל וְכָלֵל, רַק חֲזָק בְּלִי שׁוּם טַעַם כָּלֵל, מִחֲמַת קִשְׁר הַדְּבָקוֹת — הַחֲלֵק אֵל הַכָּלֵל כָּלוּ, הַנִּמְשָׁךְ מֵאֵלָיו בְּלִי שׁוּם טַעַם, וּמִתְחַבֵּט אֵל שֵׁרֵשׁוֹ.

כְּמֵאֵמֶר רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכוּרֵנוֹם לְבָרְכָה (בְּרֵאשִׁית רַבָּה נג, כ): “וְרוֹק חוּטְרָא לְאוּרָא — אַעֲקֵרָא קְאִי.” וְהַכֵּל נֶשֶׁב (אֵל הַמְּקוּם, אֲשֶׁר לָקַח מִשָּׁם) קִהְלַת ג, כ

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Ki Teitzei

מאמר ב

And this is “Love that is explained as complete cleaving, which is not dependent on any reason, and is never nullified” (Avos 5:16).

וזו היא “אהבה – פירוש דבקות גמור, שאינו תלוי בשום טעם כלל, שאינה בטלה לעולם” (אבות ה, ט).

And there are included the right and the left together — drawing down together. And although this is complete cleaving, nevertheless it is still contraction, like the creation of the worlds, which is included in contraction of right and left and drawing down.

ושם נכלל הימין ושמאל – המשכה יחד. ואגם שהוא דבקות גמור, אף-על-פי-כן צמצום הוא, כדרך בריאת העולמות, שנכלל בצמצום ימין ושמאל והמשכה.

And this middah is called “Rachum” (Merciful), from the 248 positive commandments, and the drawing down which is the vav within them.

ומדה זו נקראת “רחום”, על-שם רמ”ח מצוות עשה, והמשכה – שהוא ו' בתוכם.

And this is the meaning of “the wine that has been preserved in its grapes since the six days of creation.” It is without any reason or measure from the attributes that could calm the ear. Rather, its taste is far higher, to the enlightened one (Mishlei 15:24), at the time of cleaving.

והוא פירוש “יין המשמר בענביו מששת ימי בראשית” – שהוא בלי שום טעם ומדה מן המדות האפשריות לשפך את האזן. אבל טעמו למעלה למעלה למשכיל (משלי טו, כד) בשעת הדבקות.

And immediately after the absence of the cleaving, it is impossible to place it into any human intellect — to be an intellect grasping a thing (Mishlei 16:20) or to know understanding (ibid. 4:1).

ותכף אחר העדר הדבקות, אי אפשר להכניסו בשום שכל אנושי – להיותו משכיל אל דבר (משלי טז, כ), (ולדעת בינה (שם ד, א).

For there is no intellect and no intelligence perceived at all, except the intellect of complete cleaving — which knows itself at the time of the act.

מפני שאין שום משכל ומשכיל נפר כלל, כי אם השכל הדבקות הגמור – יודע את עצמו בשעת מעשה.

And after its separation, “there is no remembrance of the former things” (Koheles 1:11), except for a trace that it leaves in nature — every spirituality, after its separation and withdrawal.

ואחר הפרדה, “אין זכרון לראשונים” (קהלת א, יא), כי אם רשימה המניח בטבע כל רוחניות אחר הפרדה והסתלקותה.

Like fire — and this is faith, which is above reason, without any taste or measure — that consumes and devours everything. “And many waters cannot quench it” (Shir HaShirim 8:7).

כאש – והיא האמונה, שהיא למעלה מן השכל, בלי שום טעם וחקר, אוכלת ומכלה את הכל. “ונגהרות (לא) ישטפה” (שיר השירים ח, ז).

And “even though he does not see, his mazal sees” (Megillah 3a). And this is called (Shabbos 31a): “The entire Torah on one foot” — the standing and existence of the world, and its foundation.

“אף על גב דאיהו לא חזי – מזליה הוא דחזי” (מגלה ג, א). והוא נקרא (שבת לא, א): “כל התורה בלה על רגל אחת” – העמדה וקיום עולם ויסודו.

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Ki Teitzei

מאמר ב

And this is, “The tzaddik is the foundation of the world” (Mishlei 10:25).

(וזהו – “צדיק יסוד עולם” (משלי י, כה

But the complete cleaving, as mentioned above, is called “sod” (secret), because it is a hidden and wondrous secret that cannot be revealed, since it is revealed only to itself. And this is “No eye has seen, O God, besides You” — this is the wine that ascends to the letter ayin, called sod, “preserved in its grapes.”

אבל הדבקות הגמור, כנזכר לעיל, נקרא “סוד” – מפני היותו סוד כמוס ומפליא שאי אפשר לגלותו, מפני שאינו גלוי אלא לעצמו. וזהו “עין לא ראתה אלקים זולתך” – שהוא יין העולה ע, הנקרא סוד, המשמר בענביו.

For before the sin of Adam HaRishon, “God made man upright” (Koheles 7:29). “And God said: Let there be light” (Bereishis 1:3) — to be used by the righteous. But after he sinned and the intellect became materialized, it resulted that whatever the intellect can grasp is in physicality.

מפני שקדם חטא אדם הראשון, “ברא אלקים את האדם ישר” (קהלת ז, כט). “ויאמר אלקים יהי אור” (בראשית א, ג) – להשתמש בו לצדיקים. ואחר שקטא, ונתגשם השכל – נמצא שכל מה שהשכל יכול לתפוש, הוא בשמיות.

And the light was hidden away, and “God separated” (Bereishis Rabbah 12:5).

(ונגנז האור, ויבדל אלקים (בראשית רבה יב, ה

And behold, regarding the tree from which Adam HaRishon ate, our Sages, of blessed memory, hinted (Berachos 40a): “It was a vine.” And the hidden light is the wine that has been preserved in its grapes since the six days of creation, which is above intellect and attributes.

והנה עץ שאכל אדם הראשון – רמזו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה (ברכות מ, א): “גפן היה.” וזהו האור הגנוז הוא יין, המשמר בענביו מששת ימי בראשית, והוא למעלה מן השכל והמדות.

And this is the place to which the baal teshuvah must return — all the attributes through which the Torah is expounded (Chullin 63a). These are the negative commandments, which are the root of the attributes by which the mitzvos are expounded.

והוא המקום שבעל תשובה צריך לשוב אליו – כל המדות שהתורה נדרשת בהן (חולין סג, א). שהם הלא-תעשה, שהם שרש המדות, שהמצוות נדרשות בהן.

But he took them out of their boundary — to the place of the kelipah and the world of impurity. Therefore they must be returned outside their boundary and existence.

והוא הוציא אותם מגדרם – אל מקום הקלפה ועולם השטמאה. לכן צריך להשיבם חוץ מגדרם והיותם

For within their boundary of existence they could no longer stand — and how then could they now still stand? But by binding himself above them, in complete cleaving, this is “a love that is never nullified,” and he will no longer sin, as mentioned above.

שהרי בגדר היותם כבר לא יכלו לעמוד – ואיככה יוכל עתה גם עתה. אבל בהתקשרו למעלה מהם, בדבקות גמור, היא “אהבה שאינה בטלה לעולם”, ושוב לא יחטא כנזכר לעיל.

And this is (Yoma 86b): “What is the case of a baal teshuvah? In the same situation, in the same place,” etc., aside from the deeper matter — in its simple meaning.

וזהו (יומא פו, ב): “היכי דמי בעל תשובה, באותו פרק, באותו מקום” וכיו – לבד עמק הענין, והוא כפשוטו.

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Ki Teitzei

מאמר ב

But the complete tzaddik, who is the foundation of the world, and upon whom the world depends — in every measure that he measures to bring down the blessing of Hashem from world to world (Tehillim 103:17), all are sustained through him (Chullin 86a).

In doing one mitzvah of Hashem, which is the attribute spoken of in the Torah, it is necessary for him to be within the boundary of middos and the conduct of the worlds through him.

And this is, “In the place where baalei teshuvah stand, complete tzaddikim cannot stand,” because they cannot remain there except in a state of “running and returning.”

For if they were to stand there, the “wings of dawn” (Yechezkel 1:24) would weaken, and the world would return to chaos and void (Arachin 17a). Surely they cannot stand there.

And this is the explanation (Tehillim 27:1): “Of David: Hashem is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? Hashem is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?” — in doubled expression and different terms.

But the understanding of the word “yirah” (fear) is something that is felt and has the possibility of being removed — therefore one fears, perhaps it will not depart.

But the matter of “pachad” (dread) is because of his knowledge that it will surely be so and will surely stand, with no possibility of removal.

As it is said (Hoshea 3:5): “And they shall dread.” And this is “pachad Hashem” for sinners in Him — if there were no possibility of forgiveness in their teshuvah.

And this is (Yeshayahu 33:14): “The sinners in Zion were afraid,” because they despaired of the acceptance of their teshuvah.

And this is what the Gemara answered (Berachos 60a): But behold it is written (Mishlei 28:14): “Fortunate is the man who always fears.” This refers to one who said to his fellow: “You have sinned,” because of his dread, and he changed, etc., see there.

אָבֵל הַצַּדִּיק גָּמֹר, שֶׁהוּא יְסוּד עוֹלָם, וְצוּרָהּ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹ – בְּכָל מִדָּה וּמִדָּה, שֶׁהוּא מוֹדֵד לְהַשְׁפִּיעַ בְּרַפְתְּ ה', מֵעוֹלָם עַד עוֹלָם (תְּהִלִּים קג, יז), וְכֻלָּם נִיזוֹנִים עַל יָדוֹ (חוּלִין פו, א).

בְּעִשׂוֹתוֹ אַחַת מִמִּצְוֹת ה' – שֶׁהִיא הַמִּדָּה הָאֲמוּרָה בַּתּוֹרָה – מִכָּרַח הוּא לְהִיּוֹת בְּגֵדֵר הַמִּדּוֹת וְהַנְּהֻגוֹת עוֹלָמוֹת עַל-יָדוֹ.

וְזֶהוּ: “בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁבַעֲלֵי תְּשׁוּבָה עוֹמְדִים – אֵין צַדִּיקִים גָּמֹרִים יְכוּלִים לַעֲמוֹד.” מִפְּנֵי שֶׁאֵין לָהֶם לַעֲמוֹד שָׁם, כִּי אִם בְּרִצּוֹא וְשׁוּב.

כִּי בְּעִמְדָם שָׁם, תְּרַפֵּינָה כְּנִפֵי שַׁחַר (יְחֻזְקָאֵל א, כד), וְיִחְזַר הָעוֹלָם לְתוֹהוֹ וְבוֹהוֹ (עַרְכִין יז, א). וּבִנְדָאֵי אֵינָם יְכוּלִים לַעֲמוֹד שָׁם.

וְזֶהוּ הַפִּירוּשׁ (תְּהִלִּים כז, א): “לְדוֹד: ה' אוֹרִי וְיִשְׁעִי, מִמִּי אֵירָא; ה' מַעוֹז חַיִּי, מִמִּי אֶפְחָד.” בְּכַפֵּל לְשׁוֹן וּמִלּוֹת שׁוֹנוֹת.

אָבֵל הַבְּנוֹת מִלֵּת “יִרְאָה” – הִיא דָּבָר הַמְּמַשְׁמֵשׁ וּבָא, וְאֶפְשָׁרוֹת הַסֵּרְתוֹ. לָכֵן מִתְנַרָא, אוֹלֵי לֹא יְסוּר.

אָבֵל עֲנִין הַ“פָּחַד” – הוּא מִפְּנֵי יְדִיעַתוֹ, שֶׁבִּנְדָאֵי כֵן יִהְיֶה וְכֵן יָקוּם, לְבִלְתִּי אֶפְשָׁרוֹת הַסֵּרְתוֹ.

כְּמֵאֲמָר (הושע ג, ה): “וּפָחַדוּ.” וְזֶהוּ “פָּחַד ה'” לְחוּטְאִים בּוֹ – אִם לֹא הִיָּתָה אֶפְשָׁרוֹת הַסֵּלִיחָה בְּתִשׁוּבָתָם.

וְזֶהוּ (ישעיה לג, יד): “פָּחַדוּ בְּצִיּוֹן חַטָּאִים,” מִפְּנֵי הַחַטָּאִים מִקְּבֵלֵת תְּשׁוּבָתָם.

וְזֶהוּ שֶׁהַשִּׁיב בְּשׁוֹס (בְּרַכּוֹת ס, א): וְהָא פְּתִיב (מִשְׁלֵי כח, יד): “אֲשֶׁרִי אָדָם מִפָּחַד תְּמִיד” – עַל מֵאֲמָר אֶחָד לְחֶבְרוֹ “חַטָּאָתְ אַתָּה,” מִפְּנֵי פְחָדוֹתוֹ, וּמִשְׁנֵי וְגו' – עֵינֵי שָׁם.

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Ki Teitzei

מאמר ב

And this is (Tehillim 130:4): “For with You is forgiveness, in order that You may be feared.” For if there were no possibility of forgiveness, there would be no relevance to fear after one had sinned. But through forgiveness — fear becomes relevant.

וְזֶהוּ (תהלים קל, ד): “כִּי עִמָּךְ הַסְּלִיחָה, לְמַעַן תִּתְּנָהּ.” שְׂאֵם לֹא הִיָּתָה אֶפְשָׁרוֹת הַסְּלִיחָה – לֹא הִיָּתָה שׁוּם שִׂיכוֹת לְיִרְאָה אַחֵר שֶׁחָטָא. מֵה שֶׁאֵין כּוֹן, עַל־יְדֵי הַסְּלִיחָה – שִׂיכוֹת יִרְאָה.

And behold, when the tzaddik encounters some worldly fear, which has the possibility of being removed, he uses his middos toward the Creator — to fear before Him — after knowing that there is no fear in the world besides Him.

וְהִנֵּה כְּשֶׁהַצַּדִּיק מִזְדַּמֵּן בְּמָקוֹם אֵיזָה יִרְאָה גִּשְׁמִית, הָאֶפְשָׁרוֹת הַסְּרָתָה – מִשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בְּמִדּוֹתָיו אֶל הַבּוֹרָא, לִירֵא מִפְּנֵי, אַחֲרֵי יְדִיעָתוֹ שֶׁאֵין שׁוּם יִרְאָה בְּעוֹלָם בְּלָתוֹ.

And when he encounters dread — for which there is no possibility of removal and no salvation through nature — he binds himself above nature and above the middos, to Him, may He be blessed, who is Master of nature and its Sustainer, and he is not afraid.

וּבְהִזְדַּמְנוּ לְמָקוֹם הַפְּחַד, שֶׁאֵין שׁוּם אֶפְשָׁרוֹת הַסְּרָתוֹ וַיִּשׁוּעָה דְרָךְ הַטֵּבַע – מִתְקַשֵּׁר לְמַעְלָה מִן הַטֵּבַע וְהַמִּדּוֹת, בּו יִתְבָּרַךְ, שֶׁהוּא אֲדוֹן הַטֵּבַע וְהַמְקַיְמָם, וְאֵינּוּ מִפְּחַד.

And this is, “Hashem is my light and my salvation — whom shall I fear?” meaning, He is the place of salvation. And afterwards: “Hashem is the stronghold of my life — of whom shall I be afraid?”

וְזֶהוּ: “ה' אֹרֵי וַיִּשְׁעֵי – מִמֵּי אֵירָא.” שֶׁהוּא מָקוֹם “וַיִּשׁוּעָה. וְאַחֵר כָּד: “ה' מְעוֹז חַיִּי – מִמֵּי אֶפְחָד

For He is the stronghold, and “a tower flying in the air” (Chagigah 15b), and the Life of life, which is the letter Lamed in its ascent (Rashi ad loc.). And in the Lamed above is the vav in the drawing down, which is above the middos.

שֶׁהוּא מְעוֹז, וְ“מִגְדַּל הַפּוֹרֵחַ בְּאֵוִיר” (חגיגה טו, ב), וְחַי הַחַיִּים – שֶׁהִיא לָמֵד בְּעֲלוֹתוֹ (רש"י שם). וּבִלְמִד לְמַעְלָה, וְ בְּהַמְשָׁכָה, שֶׁהוּא לְמַעְלָה מִן הַמִּדּוֹת.

And now, “Of whom shall I be afraid?” — for behold, He, may He be blessed, is Master of nature and of the middos.

וְעַתָּה “מִמֵּי אֶפְחָד” – שֶׁהִרֵּי הוּא יִתְבָּרַךְ אֲדוֹן הַטֵּבַע וְהַמִּדּוֹת.

And this is, “When you go out to war” — for the going out of the tzaddik makes an impression (Rashi, Bereishis 28:10) in every middah upon which he goes out to war.

וְזֶהוּ: “כִּי תֵצֵא לְמִלְחָמָה” – שֶׁיִּצְיָאֵת צַדִּיק עוֹשֶׂה רָשָׁם (רש"י בְּרֵאשִׁית כח, י), בְּכָל מִדָּה וּמִדָּה, שֶׁהוּא יוֹצֵא עָלֶיהָ לְמִלְחָמָה.

And certainly, “you shall capture its captivity” — meaning, that the sparks of holiness will be elevated through him, and the holiness within that captivity (middah) will be clarified, as explained elsewhere (maamar Parshas Shoftim).

וּבּוֹדָאֵי “וְשָׁבִית שְׁבוּיָו” – שֶׁיִּתְעַלּוּ נְצוּצוֹת הַקְּדוּשָׁה עַל יְדוֹ, וְיִתְבָּרְרוּ הַקְּדוּשָׁה שֶׁבְּאוֹתָהּ שְׁבוּיָה – מִדָּה, (כְּמִבּוֹאָר בְּמָקוֹם אַחֵר (מאמר פרשת שופטים).

For if it is a war of obligation, which is the war for Eretz Yisrael, which is above the middos — it is a city of refuge, where all those who return in complete teshuvah enter.

דָּאֵי בְּמִלְחָמַת חוּבָה, שֶׁהוּא מְלַחֶמֶת אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל, שֶׁהוּא לְמַעְלָה מִן הַמִּדּוֹת – הוּא עִיר מְקֻלָּט, אֲשֶׁר שָׁמָּה כָּל הַשְּׁבוּיָה בְּתִשְׁבּוּבָה שֶׁלְּמָה.

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Ki Teitzei

מאמר ב

It is said (Devarim 20:16): “You shall not let a soul live” — referring to the seven nations, which are the middos — and not to leave any trace of them at all.

And then, “and live forever” (Bereishis 3:22). Amen.

נאמר (דברים כ, טז): “לא תחיה כל נשמה” — מן השבעה עממים, שהם המדות — ולא ישאירו בו רשם כלל.

והי לעולם” (בראשית ג, כב). אמן.

[NOTE Summary

The maamar opens with the teaching that Torah “spoke only against the yetzer hara,” framing the battle of *Ki Seitzei* as the war against the internal enemy of the soul. Chazal identify three aspects of teshuvah — change of name, place, and deed — which parallel the transformation of one’s middos. Torah and mitzvos are described as the garments of the Shechinah, clothing the soul and enabling it to withstand the yetzer hara.

Middos (attributes) derive their life-force through the letters of Torah; words like *chesed* and *simcha* themselves carry the sparks of the qualities they represent. Through mitzvos, a Jew awakens these middos to holiness. However, middos in their raw form are limited — they require boundaries and vessels (*tzimtzum*) to be usable. Teshuvah, by contrast, elevates one’s prior misused middos, turning them into vessels for higher divine expression. This is why the baal teshuvah reaches higher than the tzaddik.

The discourse explains that complete *dveikus* (absolute cleaving) is a hidden “sod,” a state beyond reason, described by Chazal as the “wine preserved in its grapes since the six days of creation.” Before Adam’s sin, the divine light was openly accessible, but after the sin, it became hidden. This hidden wine is where the baal teshuvah returns, restoring the middos from their exile in the realm of impurity.

The tzaddik operates within the structure of middos to channel divine blessing into the world; the baal teshuvah, however, rises beyond them, to a place where even tzaddikim cannot stand. This is expressed in the dual language of Tehillim: “Hashem is my light and my salvation... Hashem is the stronghold of my life.” *Yirah* (fear) can be removed, but *pachad* (dread) is absolute — corresponding to the unshakable recognition of Hashem’s presence.

Ultimately, the maamar concludes that when the tzaddik “goes out to war,” his presence impresses itself upon the middos, elevating the sparks of holiness from within them. In a *milchemes chovah* (a compulsory war for Eretz Yisrael), however, which corresponds to teshuvah sheleimah (complete return), there is no trace of the seven nations (middos of impurity) left at all, leading to eternal life — “and he shall live forever.”

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Ki Teitzei

מאמר ב

Practical Takeaway

The maamar teaches that every spiritual struggle is a “going out to war.” Our challenge is not only to resist the yetzer hara but to transform it, turning even fallen middos into tools of holiness. Teshuvah is the power to return sparks to their source, beyond the limitations of reason or emotion.

In practice:

- When faced with fear, remember that only Hashem is the true source of awe; direct natural emotions back to Him.
- When struggling with past failures, know that teshuvah can elevate those very experiences, making them fuel for greater dveikus.
- Strive for mitzvos not just as obligations but as vessels to awaken deeper love and awe of Hashem.

Chassidic Story

When Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok lived in Tiberias, the Chassidim once saw him trembling in awe while saying the words of *Shema*. Afterward, they asked him why he shook so strongly, even more than usual. He replied:

“When one says *Shema Yisrael*, it is as though he goes out to war — not against another nation, but against his own middos and yetzer hara. At that moment, the sparks that had been trapped in exile are lifted up to their source. If one truly feels this, the body trembles like a soldier entering battle. But it is not fear of loss; it is the dread and awe of standing before the King Himself.”

END NOTE]