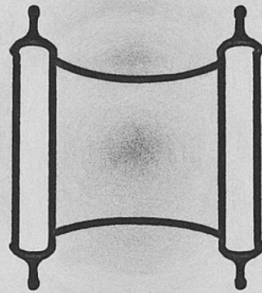


בס"ד

**Rebbe Elimelech
of Lizhensk
Parshas Matos & Massei**



Dedicated in Honor of

לע"נ

רבי אלימלך בן רבי אליעזר ליפמן
מליזנסק

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The Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk

Noam Elimelech

Parshas Matos Massei

Parshas Matos

מאמר א

And Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes of the children of Israel. Behold, the tzaddik who wishes to draw down influence upon Israel must join with other tzaddikim, for through the speech he speaks with them, he channels influence to all of Israel, and they assist him toward that goodness—to silence the mouth of the accuser against him through the merit of the many.

Whereas when he is alone, he needs great strength and a mighty hand to silence the accuser so that he does not overpower him. And this is what Moshe Rabbeinu, peace be upon him, said: “How can I bear alone...”—meaning, when I am alone without connection to other tzaddikim, it is a burden upon me to draw down for you your needs, etc.

And this is [the meaning of] “And Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes”—meaning that he joined himself with the tzaddikim—“for the children of Israel,” i.e., on behalf of Israel, to draw down for them shefa (divine influence). And this is well understood.

And this is [the meaning of the verse] “Awaken, O north wind, and come, O south wind.” That is, the cause through which the north is awakened is the influence of sustenance, as it says: “From the north comes gold.” And “come, O south wind”—you must ascend to the levels of “south,” as in “one who wishes to become wise should go south.” And this is the joining of the tzaddikim and sages, as above.

[NOTE Summary;

This discourse by Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk explores how the collective merit of the righteous amplifies spiritual influence and silences judgment in Heaven. Drawing on the verse “וידבר משה אל ראשי המטות לבני ישראל”, the tzaddik's role is portrayed not as an isolated figure, but as one who must unify with other tzaddikim to successfully draw down divine sustenance and goodness for the people. Moshe Rabbeinu's complaint—“How can I bear alone?”—is understood here not simply as human exhaustion, but as a cosmic truth: no tzaddik can bear the full burden of spiritual influence alone. The collective voice of tzaddikim suppresses prosecuting forces and enables the flow of blessings.

וידבר משה אל ראשי המטות לבני ישראל. דהנה הצדיק הרוצה להמשיך השפעות על ישראל צריך לחבר עמו שאר צדיקים, שעל-ידי הדבור המדבר עמם הוא משפיע לכל ישראל, והם המסייעים אותו אל הטוב שהוא להסתים פי המקטרג מעליו בזכות הרבים,

משאין פן כשהוא לבדו צריך כח גדול ויד חזקה להשקיט המקטרג לכל ישרוט בו. וזהו שאמר משה רבינו עליו השלום “איכה אשא לבדי כו”, פירוש כשאני לבדי בלא התחברות שאר צדיקים הוא למשא עלי להמשיך לכם צורכיכם כו

וזהו “וידבר משה אל ראשי המטות”, פירוש שחיבר עצמו עם הצדיקים, “לבני ישראל” כלומר בשביל ישראל, להמשיך להם שפע. ומל להבין

וזהו “עורי צפון ובואי תימן”, רצון לומר הסבה שעל ידה תעורר את הצפון היא השפעות פרנסה על-שם “מצפון זהב יאתה”, “ובואי תימן” צריך אתה שתבוא למדרגות “תימן”, על דרך הרוצה להתפס נדרים, והיגיו התחברות הצדיקים והתכמים כנ”ל

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This idea is extended through the verse *“Awaken, O north wind, and come, O south wind”*, associating “north” with material blessing (as in *“from the north comes gold”*) and “south” with wisdom and spiritual ascension (as in *“one who wishes to become wise should go south”*). The fusion of these poles—material and spiritual—is only possible when tzaddikim unite, integrating practical blessing with elevated awareness.

Practical Takeaway:

True spiritual leadership is not a solo endeavor. Whether one is a leader, teacher, or seeker, aligning oneself with others—especially with those whose intentions are pure and whose wisdom is deep—creates a collective merit that amplifies both effectiveness and protection. In your personal growth or community work, seek righteous companionship; don't try to carry the burden alone.

Chassidic Story;

Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk once told his students that he never davened for someone without first mentally including his brother, Reb Zusha of Anipoli, in the prayer. “Even the smallest request,” he said, “must pass through the gates of compassion, and no gate opens unless love and humility stand beside you.”

One day, a poor man came begging for a blessing of sustenance. Instead of responding immediately, Reb Elimelech sent a messenger to find Reb Zusha and ask him to say a few words of merit for the petitioner. Only after hearing that Zusha had sighed deeply and whispered a heartfelt “Ribbono shel Olam, have pity,” did Reb Elimelech begin to daven. Within a week, the man's situation reversed: he received an unexpected inheritance. When asked why he didn't simply bless the man himself, Reb Elimelech answered, “When I speak with the heads of the tribes, I speak *for* the children of Israel.”

END NOTE]

מאמר ב

In another manner: “And Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes... this is the thing that Hashem has commanded,”

based on what is stated in the Gemara: “All the prophets prophesied with [the term] ‘Thus’ (*Ko*), but Moshe was added to them, for he prophesied with the expression ‘This is the thing’ (*Zeh haDavar*).”

And to understand the difference between them, and what practical consequence there is in the expression through which they prophesied. And it appears [the explanation is] as follows: the way of a great tzaddik, through whom the spirit of God has spoken due to the greatness of his holiness—then, when one hears his words, it seems to him that just as the holy words were spoken, so too they are written in the holy Torah.

בְּדֶרֶךְ אַחֲרָת. "וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל רָאשֵׁי הַמִּשּׁוֹת כֹּו
זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' ", עַל־כִּי דֹאִיתָא בְּגִמְרָא "כֹּל
הַנְּבִיאִים נִתְנַבְּאוּ בְּכֹה', נֹסֵף עֲלֵיהֶם מֹשֶׁה שְׁנִתְנַבְּא
". "בְּלִשׁוֹן זֶה הַדָּבָר

וְלִהְיוֹת הַפֶּרֶשׁ שֶׁבִּינֵיהֶם וַיִּמָּה נִפְקָא מִינָהּ בְּאִינָה לְשׁוֹן
שְׁנִתְנַבְּאוּ. וְנִרְאֶה כִּי דֶרֶךְ הַצִּדִּיק הַגָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ
אֱלֹקִים דָּבַר בּוֹ בְּגִדְל קְדוּשָׁתוֹ, אִזּוֹ הַשּׁוֹמֵעַ דְּבָרָיו,
נִדְמָה לוֹ שֶׁדְּבָרָיו הַקְּדוּשִׁים כֵּן כְּתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה
הַקְּדוּשָׁה.

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And he finds verses that support the words of the tzaddik, and he says about the words of the tzaddik: “This is the thing that Hashem has commanded”—meaning, these words that the tzaddik spoke are the very words spoken from the mouth of Hashem.

ומוצא פסוקים המסייעים לדברי הצדיק, והוא אומר על דברי הצדיק "זה הדבר אשר צוה ה'", פירוש אלו דברים שהצדיק דיבר הם הדברים הנאמרים מפי ה'.

And there are other tzaddikim who are not on such a level that all their listeners perceive their words as if they were written in the Torah. Rather, they testify concerning their words that they are words of uprightness and truth and words of the living God, but they do not find them explicitly written in the Torah.

ויש שאר צדיקים אשר אינם במדרגתם כ"כ שיהיו כל השומעים נדמים בעיניהם כאלו כתובים בתורה, אלא שמעידים על דבריהם שהם דברי ישר ואמת ודברי אלקים חיים, אבל אינם מוצאים אותם כתובים בתורה.

And this is the meaning of “All the prophets prophesied with *Ko*”—meaning, they would testify about their words saying: “Thus is it fitting and correct.” But Moshe was added to them, for he prophesied with the expression “This is the thing”—meaning that they would say about his words, “This is the thing that Hashem has commanded,” meaning that the spirit of God so spoke through him that all would testify that his words were words of Torah and are indeed written [therein].

וזהו "כל הנביאים מתנבאים בכה", פירוש שהיו מעידים על דבריהם לומר כה ראוי ונכון, "נוסף עליהם משה שהתנבא בלשון זה הדבר", פירוש שהיו אומרים על דבריו זה הדבר אשר צוה ה', פירוש שרוח אלקים כ"כ דיבר בו עד שהיו מעידים הכל שדבריו דברי תורה והמה בכתובים.

And this is [the meaning of the verse] “And Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes of the children of Israel, saying: This is the thing...”—meaning, as above, that the children of Israel would say about his words, “This is the thing that Hashem has commanded.” And understand this well.

וזהו "וידבר משה אל ראשי המטות לבני ישראל לאמר זה הדבר", פירוש כנ"ל שיאמרו בני ישראל על דבריהם זה הדבר אשר צוה ה'. והבן.

[NOTE Summary:

This discourse contrasts two modes of divine communication—“*Ko amar Hashem*” (“Thus says God”) and “*Zeh haDavar*” (“This is the thing”)—to highlight the unique stature of Moshe Rabbeinu and, by extension, the power of a true tzaddik. The sages teach that all prophets spoke with “*Ko*,” implying approximation, while Moshe alone spoke with “*Zeh*,” direct clarity and absolute transmission.

The teaching reframes this distinction as not just about Moshe’s prophecy but about the impact of a tzaddik’s words. When a truly elevated tzaddik speaks, the listeners intuitively sense that his words are not mere insight or inspiration—they *feel* like Torah itself. The speech is so pure and divinely aligned that people say, “This is the word of Hashem.” In contrast, other righteous individuals may speak with truth and righteousness, but their words don’t resonate with that same Torah-level clarity.

This explains the verse, “Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes, saying: *Zeh haDavar*—this is the thing that Hashem has commanded.” The power of the tzaddik lies not only in receiving truth but in transmitting it in a

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way that awakens recognition in others—to the point where they themselves testify that this must be from Hashem.

Practical Takeaway:

There are moments when a teaching, a phrase, or a heartfelt word cuts through all doubt—it's not just *inspiring*, it feels like *truth itself*. Seek out those voices, those teachings, and those people whose words don't just advise you but awaken something deeper—where your soul whispers, “Zeh haDavar.” And when you speak or lead, strive not just to be right, but to speak with enough purity, humility, and alignment that others feel: this is the thing that God wants from me now.

Chassidic Story:

It is told that when Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev once spoke at a public gathering, his voice trembling with holy fire, he quietly expounded a simple verse. One of the listeners, a young scholar, was so overwhelmed that he ran out into the street in tears.

When others asked what had shaken him so deeply—after all, the teaching itself seemed straightforward—he replied, “I have studied that verse a hundred times. I have read the commentaries. But when the Rebbe said it, I heard the *voice* behind the words. I heard Hashem.” **END NOTE]**

A person who makes a vow, etc. (Bamidbar 30:3). It appears to me that every person possesses a portion of G-dliness from Above. A person must prepare and make a beautiful dwelling place for this Divine portion, namely, within the higher spiritual worlds.

And this is the meaning of “ki yidor” (when he vows)—related to the word *dirah* (dwelling)—“to Hashem,” meaning, for the portion of the Divine. And this is what our Sages said: “A standard rental of a dwelling is for thirty days.”

This hints to the person who wants to acquire a dwelling for his portion from above: he must repair his deeds every thirty days—that is, to reflect in teshuvah and review all of his actions from the past thirty days.

For this reason the Sages instituted fasting on every Erev Rosh Chodesh, in order to examine one's deeds. And this is also the hint in what is said about Rebbe Yehudah ben Beteira (RIBL) that he reviewed his learning every thirty days.

אִישׁ כִּי יִדֹר נָדָר כּו'. נ"ל דְּהֵנָּה הָאָדָם יֵשׁ בּוֹ חֵלֶק
אֱלֹהִים מִמַּעַל, וְצָרִיד הָאָדָם לְהִכִּין וּלְעֲשׂוֹת דִּירָה נָאָה
לְחֵלֶק הַנָּה דְּהֵינּוּ בְּעוֹלָמוֹת עֲלִיוֹנִים

וְזֶהוּ "כִּי יִדֹר" לְשׁוֹן דִּירָה, "לֵה" רְצוֹן לומר לְחֵלֶק
אֱלֹהִים, וְזֶהוּ שְׁאֲמָרוּ חז"ל "סֵתֶם הַשּׁוֹכֵר דִּירָה הוּא
לְתַלְתִּין יוֹמִין,

זֶה רָמַז עַל הָאָדָם הָרוֹצֶה לְקַנּוֹת דִּירָה לְחֵלֶקוֹ מִמַּעַל,
צָרִיד לְתַקֵּן מַעֲשָׂיו בְּכָל תַּלְתֵּין יוֹמִין, דְּהֵינּוּ לְהַרְהֵר
בְּתִשְׁבּוּבָה וּלְהַדָּר עַל כָּל מַעֲשָׂיו שְׁעֲשֶׂה כָּל שְׁלוֹשִׁים
יָוֵם,

שְׁלֹשָׁה תַקְנֵי חז"ל לְהַתְעַנּוּת בְּכָל עָרֵב רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ כְּדִי
לְפַשְׁפֹּשׁ בְּמַעֲשָׂיו, וְלִזְנֶה רָמְזוֹ עַל רִיב"ל שֶׁהִיָּה מְהִיר
תַלְמוּדוֹ כָּל ל' יוֹם.

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“Or he shall swear an oath”—meaning, “shvuah” (oath) is from the root “sheva” (seven), for a person must work through seven levels. As I have explained regarding the verse “Six days shall you labor, and on the seventh day, Shabbos...”—this hints that one must rectify the six directions, and afterward enter the seventh level, which is the holiness of Shabbos.

או השבע שבועה, פירוש שבועה הוא מלשון שבעה, שצריך האדם לעבד בז' מדרגות, על דרך שפרשתי "ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי שבת", רמז שצריך לתקן הששה קצוות ואחר זה יבוא אל המדרגה השביעית היא קדושת שבת,

And this is the meaning of “he shall swear an oath”—referring to the seven levels, each of which is composed of seven [sub-levels].

וזהו "השבע שבועה" דהיינו ז' מדרגות שכל אחת כולל משבעה.

“To bind a binding upon his soul”—this is a hint: that after the tzaddik reaches all the levels, he must contemplate with his mind and understand that he still has not fulfilled his obligation in his service. He should always imagine himself as if he is falling short in his avodah, and constantly find within himself deficiencies, sins, and prohibitions.

לאסר אסר על נפשו רמז אחר שיבוא הצדיק לכל המדרגות, צריך לראות בשכלו ולהבין שעדיין לא יצא ידי חובתו בעבודתו, וידמה בעיניו תמיד כאלו מקצר בעבודה ולמצוא בעצמו תמיד חסרונות וחסרונות ואסורים

So that through his searching of his deeds he remains attached to the world below and remains connected to them in order to influence them with great good and supply their needs.

כדי שעל-ידי פשוטו במעשיו יהיה דבוק עם העולם למטה ויהיה מקשר עמם להשפיעם רב טוב הצטרותם.

And this is [the meaning of] “to bind a binding upon his soul,” meaning: to always find that he committed sins and prohibitions.

וזהו "לאסר אסר על נפשו", פירוש למצוא תמיד שעשה אסורים של חטא

And this is what they said: “One who bows in the word *Baruch* must see an *issar* opposite his heart”—meaning, he must humble himself so much that he sees a prohibition opposite his heart, to be opposite his heart as if he committed prohibitions and sins, for the sake of the above-mentioned effect—to bring goodness to Israel by connecting with them.

וזהו שאמרו "הכורע בכרוע צריך שיראה אסר נגד לבו", פירוש צריך שיכנע כ"כ שיראה אסור כנגד לבו, להיות נגד לבו שעשה אסורים וחטאים, למען הפעולה הנ"ל להיטיב לישראל על-ידי התקשרותו בהם.

And this is what was said about Rabbi Akiva: “When he prayed with the congregation, he would shorten and ascend”—meaning, he made himself appear as if he was shortening his service in order to be attached to the congregation and influence them with abundant good.

וזהו שאמרו על רבי עקיבא "כשהיה מתפלל בצבור היה מקצר ועולה", פירוש שהראה לעצמו שהוא מקצר בעבודה למען היותו דבוק עם הצבור להשפיע להם רב טוב

“But when he prayed alone”—meaning, that at times when he secluded himself to unify in Oneness—“a person would leave him in one corner and find him in another corner.” That is, people thought he was in this corner (of this world), but he was in another corner—in the supernal worlds.

וכשהיה מתפלל ביחיד, רצון לומר שלפעמים כשהיה מתבודד בפני עצמו להתבודד באחדות, אדם מניחו בזוית זו ומצאו בזוית אחרת, פירוש שלכני אדם נדמה להם שהוא בזוית זו העולם הזה, והוא היה בזוית אחרת בעולמות עליונים

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For such is the way of the tzaddik: even when he speaks with people, his soul remains bound above, in the supernal worlds.

And it is possible that to this our Sages hinted in saying: “One who does not bow during Modim... afterwards his spine becomes a serpent.” For this is measure for measure.

For in truth, one must understand: how can it be that a completely righteous person would not be able to find himself lacking in his deeds? This truly is due to the sin of the serpent—it is impossible to be complete.

And this is the meaning of “he did not bow during Modim”—meaning, in the manner of bowing—i.e., to the point that he sees an *issar* (as explained above) meaning great submission.

But he thinks of himself that he has already repaired everything, and he did not exert himself to reach the seven aforementioned levels. “His spine becomes a serpent”—measure for measure, because he did not humble himself.

And let us return to the explanation of the verse: “He shall not profane his word”—Rashi explains: “He shall not make his words profane.”

We may explain this, according to our path: that this tzaddik must ensure that his words are not profane at all—but only holiness and attachment [to God].

“But others, it is permitted to him”—meaning, others who come to him with their needs for physical matters—he is compelled to speak with them in mundane, material speech to fulfill all their needs.

“According to whatever comes out of his mouth, he shall do”—meaning, whatever comes from the mouth of the tzaddik, so shall Hashem God do, as it says: “The tzaddik decrees and the Holy One, blessed be He, fulfills.”

[NOTE Summary:

This profound teaching from **Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk** explores the inner avodah of a tzaddik—not merely as a conduit of blessing, but as one who continuously humbles himself to remain connected with the people.

The central verse, “אִישׁ כִּי יָדָר נָדָר לֵה' לְאַסֹּר אֶסֶר עַל נַפְשׁוֹ” (“If a man vows a vow to Hashem to bind a binding upon his soul”) is reinterpreted as a blueprint for spiritual responsibility. A tzaddik must create a dwelling for

כִּי כֹן דֶּרֶךְ הַצַּדִּיק, אִף שֶׁהוּא מְדַבֵּר עִם בְּנֵי אָדָם, בְּכָל זֹאת נִפְשׁוֹ קְשׁוּרָה לְמַעַלָּה בְּעוֹלָמוֹת

וְאֶפְשָׁר שֶׁלִּזְהָרָה רָמְזוּ ז"ל בְּאַמְרָם "מֵאֵן דָּלָא כְרַע בְּמוֹדִים אַחֲרָיו כֹּי נַעֲשֶׂה שְׁדָרְתּוֹ נָחֵשׁ", כִּי זֶה מִדָּה כְּנֻגָּה מִדָּה

דְּבִאֲמַת צָרִיף לְהַבִּין מֵאֵינן יָבוֹא לְצַדִּיק גְּמוּרָה שְׁלֵא יִהְיֶה יוֹכֵל לְמַצֵּא עֲצָמוֹ שְׁלֵם בְּמַעֲשָׂיו? זֶה הוּא בְּאֲמַת מַחֲמַת חֲטָא הַנָּחֵשׁ בְּלִתִּי אֶפְשָׁרִי הֵייתָ שְׁלֵם

וְזֶהוּ "שְׁלֵא כְרַע בְּמוֹדִים", פִּירוּשׁ בְּדֶרֶךְ הַפְּרִיעָה, הֵינּוּ עַד שֶׁיִּרְאֶה אֶסֶר שֶׁפִּירוּשׁוֹ כֵּן"ל הַהֲכָנָעָה הַגְּדוֹלָה

וְהוּא סוֹבֵר בְּעֲצָמוֹ שֶׁתִּקְוָה הַכֹּל וְלֹא הִתְאַמֵּץ לְבֹא אֶל ז' מִדְּרָגוֹת הַנ"ל, "נַעֲשֶׂה שְׁדָרְתּוֹ נָחֵשׁ" מִדָּה כְּנֻגָּה מִדָּה עַל שְׁלֵא הִכְנִיעַ עֲצָמוֹ

וְנִחְזוֹר לְבִיאֹר הַפְּתוּב. "לֹא יַחַל דְּבָרוֹ" פִּירֵשׁ רַשִּׁי "ז"ל "לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה דְבָרָיו חוּלִין

יֵשׁ לוֹמַר הַפִּירוּשׁ לְפִי דְרָכֵנוּ, שֶׁהַצַּדִּיק הֵזָה צָרִיף לְרֵאוֹת שְׁלֵא יִהְיוּ דְבָרָיו חוּלִין כָּלל וּכְלָל כִּי אִם קְדוּשָׁה וְדִבְקוּת

אֲבָל אַחֲרֵים מַחֲלִין לוֹ", רְצוֹן לוֹמַר אֲבָל אַחֲרֵים הַבָּאִים אֵלָיו בְּדִבְרֵי הַצְּטָרְכוּתָם לִפְעֵל לָהֶם דְּבָרֵי גִשְׁמִיּוֹת, הוּא מְכַרְח לְדַבֵּר עִמָּהֶם בְּדִבְרֵי חוּלִין הַגִּשְׁמִיִּים הָאֵלֶּה לִפְעֵל לָהֶם כָּל צָרָתָם

כָּל הַיּוֹצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה" פִּירוּשׁ כָּלל אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִפִּי הַצַּדִּיק כֹּן יַעֲשֶׂה ה' אֱלֹקִים, כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמְרוּ "צַדִּיק גּוֹזֵר וְהַקֹּדֶם מְקַיֵּם"

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the Divine within himself, repairing his deeds regularly (every thirty days), always striving, and never feeling complete.

But even after attaining lofty levels, the tzaddik must see himself as still lacking—constantly binding “issurim” (prohibitions) upon his soul by imagining his own flaws. This cultivated brokenness allows him to remain attached to those below, influencing them with goodness and spiritual flow. Through this lens, bowing in prayer symbolizes deep self-nullification—so deep that the soul feels the weight of its own imagined sins, for the sake of staying spiritually rooted with the people.

Even Rabbi Akiva is portrayed this way: shortening his public prayers to stay accessible to the community, while soaring into unreachably high meditative states when praying alone. This duality—transcendence paired with total humility—is the path of the true tzaddik.

Practical Takeaway:

A person’s spiritual growth is not about escaping the world, but about continuously deepening one’s self-awareness in order to stay *present* for others. Even if you’ve grown, learned, or advanced—don’t forget to examine yourself, find room for improvement, and stay emotionally and spiritually tethered to those around you. The more a person feels humbled by their own lack, the more they can truly help others rise.

Chassidic Story:

Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk once traveled with his brother Reb Zusha of Anipoli on a mission to inspire a struggling town. The people had become cold in their observance, and the community leaders begged the brothers for help.

Upon arriving, Reb Elimelech did not deliver sermons or chastise anyone. Instead, he secluded himself in his room for three days, fasting and crying. Only muffled sobs could be heard through the walls.

A student asked why he was weeping so deeply. Reb Elimelech replied, “How can I ask Heaven to bring light to others if I see so much darkness in myself?” His student protested, “But Rebbe, you are a holy man!” Reb Elimelech answered, “And that is the very danger. If I see myself as holy, I lose the power to help others. So I dig and dig until I find something broken in me—and from there, I ask Hashem for mercy.”

After three days, he stepped out and began davening with the community. Without speaking a single word of mussar, the entire town’s spirit was transformed. People wept during davening, Torah study revived, and long-neglected mitzvos came back to life. **END NOTE]**

מאמר ג

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Or, it may be explained that the phrase, “According to whatever proceeds...” (Bamidbar 30:3), alludes to the prayer we recite: “Hashem, open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise” (Tehillim 51:17). This means that Hashem should open our lips. The expression “my mouth will declare” denotes drawing forth, meaning that the words that emerge from my mouth should be drawn upward to the higher spiritual world called *Tehillah* (“Praise”).

It follows that the words of holiness that the tzaddik speaks are attached to his mouth and are drawn and ascend to the supernal world, and they are not truly separated from his mouth—but rather remain bound to his holy mouth.

Not so with words of materiality, which are cut off from the speech. And the tzaddik must ensure that even his words of materiality should also be with great holiness and purity, in order that they too may be used for holy action.

And this is [the meaning of] “what comes out of his mouth”—meaning, even material words—“he shall do” rectification with them.

And this is what is said in Parshas Masei: “Command the children of Israel... for you are coming to the land of Canaan.” The meaning is: when you come to subdue and break the strength of the external forces and the Sitra Achra, which is called “the land of Canaan...”

“This is the land that shall fall to you”—as Rashi explains, through the fact that Hashem cast down the ministers of the nations before them. And according to our approach, the explanation is: you shall cast down the Sitra Achra.

“As an inheritance”—meaning, through the holy Torah, which is called “inheritance.” “The land of Canaan to its borders”—meaning, you shall strive to break the borders of the Sitra Achra.

And the verse says, “And the southern edge shall be for you from the wilderness of Tzin...”—meaning, beyond the border of the Sitra Achra, which does not allow you to come to the “southern side,” which represents wisdom, as mentioned above: “One who wishes to become wise should go south.”

או יאמר "כָּכָל הַיּוֹצֵא כו'", על דרך שְׁאֲנֻחָנוּ אוֹמְרִים ה' שִׁפְתֵי תִפְתַּח וּפִי יִגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ, דְּהִינּוּ שִׁיפְתַּח אֶת שְׁפָתֵינוּ, "ופי יגיד" לשון המְשָׁכָה, "תְּהִלָּתְךָ", רָצוֹן לומר הדבורים הַיּוֹצֵאִים מִפִּי יִהְיוּ נִמְשָׁכִים עַד עוֹלָם עֲלִיוֹן הַנִּקְרָא תְּהִלָּה.

וְנִמְצָא דְבָרֵי קִדְשָׁה שֶׁהַצָּדִיק מְדַבֵּר הֵם דְּבוּקִים בְּפִיו וְנִמְשָׁכִים וְעוֹלָם עַד עוֹלָם עֲלִיוֹן, וְאֵינָם נִפְסָקִים, לְצֵאת מִפִּיו מִמַּשׁ רַק דְּבוּקִים גַּם בְּפִיו הַקְדוּשׁ,

וְלֹא כֵן דְּבָרֵי הַגִּשְׁמִיּוֹת הַנִּפְסָקִים מִן הַדְּבוּר, וְהַצָּדִיק צָרִיד לִרְאוֹת שֶׁגַּם דְּבָרֵי הַגִּשְׁמִיּוֹת שֶׁלוֹ יִהְיוּ גַּם כֵּן בְּקִדְשָׁה וְטִהְרָה גְּדוּלָּה לְמַעַן יַעֲשֶׂה בָהֶם גַּם כֵּן עֲשִׂיּוֹת קִדְשָׁה,

וְזֶהוּ "הַיּוֹצֵא מִפִּיו" פִּירוּשׁ אֶפְלוֹ דְּבָרֵי גִשְׁמִי "יַעֲשֶׂה" בְּהֵן תִּקּוֹן.

וְזֶהוּ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בְּפָרֶשֶׁת מַסְעֵי "צוּ אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כֹּה פִּי אֲתֵם בָּאִים אֶל אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן", פִּירוּשׁ כְּשֶׁתְּבֹאוּ לְהַכְנִיעַ וּלְשַׁבֵּר כַּח הַחִיצוֹנִים וְסִטְרָא אַחְרָא הַנִּקְרָא "אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן",

זֹאת הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר תִּפֹּל לָכֶם" כְּפִירוּשׁ רַשִׁי עַל־יָדֶיךָ שֶׁהִפִּיל הַקֹּדֶ"ה שְׂרֵי הָאֲמוֹת לְפָנֶיהֶם, וּלְפִי דְרָכָנוּ, פִּירוּשׁוֹ אֲתֵם תִּפְּלוּ הַסִּטְרָא אַחְרָא

בְּנִחְלָה" רָצוֹן לומר עַל־יָדֶיךָ הַתּוֹרָה הַקְדוּשָׁה הַנִּקְרָאת נִחְלָה, "אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן לְגְבוּלֶיהָ" רָצוֹן לומר שֶׁתִּרְאוּ לְשַׁבֵּר הַגְּבוּלוֹת שֶׁל הַסִּטְרָא אַחְרָא

וְאָמַר הַכָּתוּב "וְהָיָה לָכֶם פָּאֵת נֶגֶב מִמִּדְבַּר צוּ", פִּירוּשׁ אַחֵר הַגְּבוּל שֶׁל הַסִּטְרָא אַחְרָא עַל שְׂאִינּוּ מִנִּיחַ לָכֶם לְבֹא לְפָאֵת נֶגֶב הִיא הַחֲכָמָה עַל דֶּרֶךְ הַנֶּ"ל הַרוֹצֶה לְהַחֲכִים יְדָרִים

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“The wilderness of Tzin”—it is taught that the wilderness of Tzin is a hint to the holy Torah that was given at Sinai, and the Sitra Achra prevents you from engaging in it.

And the primary obstruction is “through Edom,” as it is said: What prevents [the end of exile]? The subjugation of kingdoms.

But after you break the Sitra Achra and its boundaries, you will merit: “And the southern boundary shall be for you from the edge of the Salt Sea to the east.”

“Edge of the Sea” refers to the supernal world, which is called the Sea of the Talmud. “Salt” means you will sweeten it, like salt that sweetens meat.

“East” means that through your ascent in Torah to the supernal Sea, you will cause pleasure to the Creator, blessed be He, who is the Ancient of Days.

“And the border shall turn around for you from the south to Maaleh-Akrabim”—meaning, you will merit through this to encompass yourselves with this border, once you have rectified it, until Maaleh-Akrabim.

As it is taught: “Even if a serpent is wrapped around his heel, he should not interrupt”—meaning, “serpent” hints to the primordial serpent that cast impurity, through which it is impossible for any tzaddik to be completely free of sin.

As I already wrote in our parshah: that the tzaddik constantly finds within himself deficiencies and lack in his service of the Blessed One—and this is truly due to the sin of the serpent.

And this is [the meaning of] “a serpent is wrapped around his heel”—that is, sins that a person tramples with his heels are bound to him due to the serpent.

“He shall not interrupt”—meaning, because of this he should not break his attachment [to God]. And the sages said: “This applies to a snake, but a scorpion—he must interrupt.”

This is a hint: that if, Heaven forbid, one stumbles into a sin that is truly dangerous—that is, an actual sin—then he must, Heaven forbid, separate himself from attachment [to God].

מדבר צן" דאיתא מדבר צן הוא רמז לתורה" הקדושה הנתנה בסיני, והסטרא אחרא מעכבת אתכם מעסוק בה

ועקר העכוב הוא "על-ידי אדום" כמו שפיתוב מי מעכב שעבוד מלכיות

אבל אחר שתשברו את הסטרא אחרא וגבולותיה, "תזכו" ויהיה לכם גבול נגב מקצה ים המלח קדמה

קצה ים" הוא העולם עליון הנקרא ים התלמוד, "המלח" רצון לומר תמתיקו אותם כמו מלח הממתק הבשר

קדמה" פירוש על-ידי שתגיעו בתורה לים העליון תעשו נחת רוח לבורא ברוך הוא שהוא קדמונו של עולם

ונסב לכם הגבול מנגב למעלה עקרבים", פירוש" שתזכו בזה לסבב אתכם עם הגבול הזה אחר שתתקנו אותו עד למעלה עקרבים

דאיתא "אפלו נחש כרוך על עקבו לא יפסיק", רצון לומר "נחש" רמז לנחש הקדמוני שהטילה זקמא, שעל ידי זה אין צדיק בארץ אשר יעשה טוב ולא יחטא

כמו שכתבתי כבר בפירשתינו שהצדיק מוצא תמיד בעצמו חסרונות וקצור בעבודתו יתברך, והוא באמת מחמת חטא הנחש

וזהו "נחש כרוך על עקבו" דהינו חטאים שאדם דש בעקביו כרוך עליו מחמת הנחש

לא יפסיק" רצון לומר בשביל זה לא יפסיק מדבקותו, ואמרו חז"ל "הני מילי נחש אבל עקרב יפסיק"

זה רמז שאם חס ושלום באיזה חטא נכשל שהוא חס ושלום סכנה דהינו חטא ממשי חס ושלום, על-ידי זה יפסיק עצמו מן הדבקות חס ושלום

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And this is what the verse says: when you break and subdue the Sitra Achra, then you will reach “Maaleh-Akrabim”—that no scorpion, that is, actual sin, shall rule over you, Heaven forbid. And you shall be raised far above, so that such [a force] cannot touch you at all.

וזהו שְׁאֵמֶר הַכְּתוּב כְּשֶׁתִּשְׁכַּרוּ וְתִכְנִיעוּ הַסִּטְרָא
אֲחֵרָא אֲזַי תִּגִּיעוּ לְמַעְלָה עֲקָרִימ, שְׁלֹא יִשְׁלוּט בָּכֶם
שׁוּם עֲקָרִיב הוּא חֲטָא מִמֶּשׁ חֵס וְשְׁלֹם, וְתִהְיֶי לְמַעְלָה
לְמַעְלָה שְׁלֹא יוּכַל לִגַּע בָּכֶם בְּזֹאת.

And may Hashem grant us the merit to serve Him wholeheartedly, that the Evil Inclination shall not rule over us. And may we merit speedily the coming of our Moshiach, through whom the sin of the serpent will be rectified, and the world will be filled with knowledge. Amen, may it be His will.

וְהַשֵּׁם יִזְכְּנוּ לַעֲבֹדוֹ תָּמִיד שְׁלֹא יִשְׁלוּט בָּנוּ יֵצֶר הָרָע,
וְנִזְכֶּה בְּמַהֲרָה לְבִיאַת מְשִׁיחֵנוּ שְׁיִתְקַן חֲטָא הַנָּחֵשׁ
וּמְלֵאכָה הָאָרֶץ דְּעָה. אָמֵן כֵּן יְהִי רָצוֹן.

[NOTE Summary:

This discourse by Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk presents a deeply integrated map of spiritual service, tracing the path of the tzaddik from self-refinement to influence over others, from inner submission to ultimate transformation of the world.

Beginning with the verse “אִישׁ כִּי יָדַר נֶדֶר לֵה”’, the tzaddik is described as one who builds a spiritual “dwelling” for the Divine within the upper worlds. This requires constant introspection—reviewing one’s actions every thirty days, as hinted by Chazal and practices like fasting on Erev Rosh Chodesh or reviewing Torah study cyclically. Even upon ascending spiritual heights, the tzaddik must bind “prohibitions” to himself—i.e., imagine his own faults and smallness—to stay connected to the people and draw down blessings. His words, both holy and mundane, must be refined so they rise upward like offerings, their energy remaining bound to his lips, reaching the upper world of “Tehillah.”

The journey is not merely personal. The tzaddik is tasked with breaking the boundaries of the Sitra Achra—the spiritual forces of concealment and impurity—represented by “Eretz Canaan.” By doing so through Torah (called “Nachalah”), he liberates access to higher wisdom (symbolized by the “south,” or “Darom”), and reaches “Maaleh Akrabim,” a level beyond the sting of sin. Even when “a snake coils around his heel”—i.e., the residue of the primordial serpent that introduces flaws—he does not sever his attachment to holiness. Only a true fall (a “scorpion”) endangers his bond, but the tzaddik’s work ensures even that cannot reach him. The discourse concludes with a plea for the final redemption, when the sin of the serpent will be permanently rectified and the world will be filled with Divine knowledge.

Practical Takeaway:

Spiritual greatness isn’t measured by how high one ascends, but by how *deeply one remains attached* to truth—even while sensing one’s own spiritual lack. Real growth involves self-examination, regular teshuvah, and humility—even when engaged in holy pursuits. Whether your words are Torah or mundane speech, seek to sanctify all expression. And never let your failures sever your connection to Hashem. If the “snake” of doubt or habit coils around you—tighten your bond, don’t release it. Keep moving upward.

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Chassidic Story:

When Reb Elimelech was near the end of his life, he asked to be moved to a small, dark room. “I do not want to pass away in honor,” he whispered to his students. In those final hours, he wept continuously and repeated the verse, “ונפשי כעפר לכל תהיה”—“Let my soul be as dust to all.” The students were confused. One of them finally asked, “Rebbe, why do you cry? You sanctified your life; the gates of Gan Eden surely open before you.”

Reb Elimelech opened his eyes and said, “That is precisely why I tremble. What if my avodah was mixed with self-interest? What if I served Hashem only for the reward? A tzaddik’s only desire must be to stay with the people—to carry their burden, to feel their suffering, and to speak their pain in Heaven’s ear.”

Years later, a Jew from a distant village visited Lizhensk. He entered the ohel and said only one sentence: “Rebbe Elimelech, I have no words, but I know you still carry us.” That night, he dreamed of the Rebbe sitting alone in that dark room, tears in his eyes, whispering, “Ribbono Shel Olam, forgive them—for I am still one of them.”

END NOTE]

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מאמר א

“And Moshe recorded their starting points according to their journeys” (Bamidbar 33:2). It appears to me that, at first glance, this verse requires explanation. First, the Torah could simply have stated, “Moshe recorded their journeys.” The additional word “their starting points” seems unnecessary and, at first glance, appears to have no apparent purpose.

And also: why were these journeys written, as Rashi also questions? And furthermore: why in each of the journeys is it written, “and they encamped”? It would have sufficed to write: “And the children of Israel traveled from Raamses to Sukkos,” and so on for all.

However, the matter is as follows: behold, the forty-two journeys written here are a hint to forty-two worlds.

ויכתב מֹשֶׁה אֶת מוֹצְאֵיהֶם לְמַסְעֵיהֶם. נ"ל דְּהִנֵּה לְכַאוֹרָה יֵשׁ לְדַקְדָּק. א' שֶׁהִיָּה לוֹ לְכַתֵּב "ויכתב מֹשֶׁה אֶת מַסְעֵיהֶם" וּמֵלֶת "מוֹצְאֵיהֶם" הִיא מִיּוֹתֶרֶת וְאֵין לוֹ פְּרוֹשׁ לְכַאוֹרָה.

וְגַם לָמָּה נִכְתְּבוּ הַמַּסְעוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וְכִמּוֹ שֶׁדַּקְדָּק רַשִׁי ז"ל. וְעוֹד לָמָּה נִכְתְּבָה בְּכָל מַסְעֵי "ויחננו" וְהִיָּה דִּי בְּכַתְּבוֹ "ויסעוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִרַעְמֶסס סִכְתָּה" וְכֵן בְּכֵל.

אֲבָל הָעֲנָן דְּהִנֵּה מ"ב מַסְעוֹת נִכְתְּבוּ בְּאֵן רִמְזֵי לַמ"ב עוֹלָמוֹת.

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Now, there are worlds of judgment, and there are worlds of mercy, and there are worlds that are a mixture with mercy. And each and every world is unique unto itself, each with its own command and rectification.

והנה יש עולם שהוא דין ויש עולם שהוא רחמים ויש עולם שהוא משתף ברחמים, וכן כל עולם, ועולם מיוחד לעצמו כל אחד למצותו ותקונו,

But due to people corrupting their deeds in ways that are not good, and thereby causing damage, Heaven forbid, in some world—this is called by the name “journeys,” as in “And they journeyed from Mount Hor.”

אבל מחמת שישי בני אדם המקלקלים במעשיהם אשר לא טובים ופוגמים חס ושלום באיזה עולם, זה נקרא בשם מסעי על דרך "ויסעו מהר החר" דאיתא בזוהר פרשת חקת דנטלי מאלפא תלמודא כו' ע"ש לשונו,

And the tzaddik must rectify what was corrupted in that world. And this is called by the name “encampment,” as the verse says: “And Israel encamped opposite the mountain.”

וצריך הצדיק לתקן מה ששלקלו עולם, וזה נקרא בשם חנייה על דרך שאמר הכתוב "ויחן ישראל נגד", "החר",

Therefore, it is said: “And they journeyed, and they encamped”—meaning, that which they journeyed somewhat away from the Ancient One of the world, and corrupted something in a world—“and they encamped,” meaning the tzaddikim among them rectified, as explained above.

לכן נאמר "ויסעו ויחנו", רצון לומר מה שנסעו מקדמונו של עולם קצת וקלקלו באיזה עולם, "ויחנו" פירוש שהיו הצדיקים שבתוכם מתקנים כנ"ל,

Therefore, regarding the verse: “And they encamped in Rithmah,” Rashi explains in his commentary that the place was called Rithmah because of the slander of the spies, from the expression “coals of broom trees,” and he did not explain similarly by the other journeys.

לכן בפסוק "ויחנו ברתמה" פירש רש"י בפירושו על שם הלשון הרע של המרגלים נקרא המקום רתמה, על שם גחלי רתמים ע"ש

And he did not explain this regarding the other journeys, because this sin was revealed—it was the sin of the spies.

ולא פירש כן בשאר מסעות, בשביל שזה החטא היה בגלוי שהוא חטא המרגלים

And this is [the meaning of] “And Moshe wrote their goings forth according to their journeys”—meaning, that which the tzaddikim utter with their mouths, through their inner holy power, is what rectifies the journeys, as explained above.

וזהו "ויכתב משה את מוצאייהם למסעיהם", פירוש הינו מה שהצדיקים מוציאים בפיהם בכתבם בפנימיותם הקדושה, הם מתקנים את המסעות כנ"ל

And this is [the meaning of the verse] (Tehillim 65:9): “And those who dwell at the edges shall fear because of Your signs”—meaning, those who dwell at the edges are the tzaddikim who always dwell on the edges, that is, on both extremes, in order to rectify and sweeten judgments and to awaken mercy.

וזהו (תהלים ס"ה, ט') "וייראו יושבי קצוות מאותמיד", רצון לומר יושבי קצוות הם הצדיקים היושבים תמיד על הקצוות, דהיינו על ב' קצוות, לתקן ולהמתיק הדינים ולעורר הרחמים

As in the expression: “Yaakov was a wholesome man, dwelling in tents”—meaning, two tents: judgment and mercy.

על דרך "יעקב איש תם יושב אהלים" פירוש ב' אהלים הינו דין ורחמים

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And the verse explains: [this is] to Hashem—that the tzaddikim take proof for this “from Your signs”—meaning, the tzaddikim derive proof from the holy Torah, for such appears from the letters of the Torah.

As we find in the Torah, at first glance, words and letters that seem extra—like the above-mentioned journeys, which need understanding as to why they were written. And the word “and they encamped” appears extra at first glance.

Rather, the Torah hinted in this that the tzaddikim rectified everything that had been damaged, as explained above.

And sometimes they sweetened the judgments that were awakened through a wrongful act, and sometimes they would awaken mercy—each world according to its matter.

Therefore, the tzaddikim who come after them walk in their footsteps and do likewise in both extremes, as mentioned above.

And this is [the meaning of] “Motzaei Boker”—meaning, that they bring forth and cause mercy, which is called “morning.”

“And evening singing” refers to the judgments, which are called “evening,” and they sweeten them into mercy. Thus, they too sing with rejoicing and gladness and light for the Jews. Amen.

And this is the explanation of the saying: “Never did a person sleep in Yerushalayim with a sin in his hand”—and I have already analyzed this above.

And according to our way, its meaning is: judgment is called “lodging,” which is evening, as explained above.

And one who has the ability to pray and sweeten [judgments] and does not do so is called a sinner—as it is written: “Also I, far be it from me to sin by ceasing to pray.”

And this is [the meaning of] “No one ever slept”—meaning, there was never any judgment, Heaven forbid, upon any person that was not sweetened—this never occurred at all.

ומפרש הפתוב לה' שהצדיקים נוטלים ראיה לזה "מאותתיה", פירוש והצדיקים הם נוטלים ראיה מן התורה הקדושה, שכן נראה מאותיות התורה

כאשר מצינו בתורה לקאורה תבות ואותיות יתירות, כמו המסעות הנ"ל שצריך אומד למה נכתבו, ומלת "ויחננו" הוא מיותר לקאורה

אלא שהתורה רמזה בזה שהצדיקים תקנו הכל, כל מה שנקלקלו אותו כנ"ל

ולפעמים היו ממתקים הדינים שנתעוררו על-ידי המעשה לא טוב, ולפעמים היו מעוררים רחמים כל עולם לפי ענינו

ולכן הצדיקים הבאים אחריהם יוצאים בעקבותיהם, ועושים גם כן כמעשיהם בב' קצוות כנ"ל

וזהו "מוצאי בקר" רצון לומר שהם ממציאים, ופועלים רחמים הנקרא "בקר"

וערב תנין הם הדינים הנקראים "ערב" וממתקים אותם לרחמים, ונמצא גם הם מרגנים ברגה ושמחה ואור ליהודים. אמן

וזהו פירוש "מעולם לא לן אדם בירושלים ועברה בגידו", וכבר דקדקתי בו עין לעיל

ולפי דרכנו פירוש דהדין נקרא לשון "לינה" שהוא ערב כנ"ל

ומי שבידו להתפלל ולהמתיק אותם ואינו עושה זאת הוא נקרא חוטא, כמו שאמר הפתוב "גם אנכי", "חלילה לי מחטא מחדל להתפלל"

וזהו "לא לן אדם", דהינו שלא היה אינה דין חס ושלום על אינה אדם ולא היו ממתקים אותו, זה לא היה כלל

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And this is [the meaning of] “with a sin in his hand”—meaning, that this stumbling block was not in their hands, that they would see judgments and not pray and sweeten [them]. For immediately they would pray, and through their pure prayers and proper actions, they would sweeten everything and transform it into mercy.

וזהו "ועברה בידו" פירוש שלא הייתה המכשלה הזאת תחת ידם שיראו איזה דינין ולא היו מתפללים וממתקים, כי תכף ומיד היו מתפללים ופועלים בתפלתם הזכה ועבודות הכשרות להמתיק הכל ולהפכו לרחמים.

[NOTE Summary:

In this final segment of the discourse, Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk offers a penetrating look into the hidden work of the tzaddik—not only as a personal spiritual figure but as the one who stands at the “edges” of existence to guard and repair the flow of Divine influence for all.

The verse “ויראו יושבי קצוות מאותה” (Tehillim 65:9) is reinterpreted: the “dwellers of the edges” are the tzaddikim who occupy the extremes—oscillating between *din* (judgment) and *rachamim* (mercy), just like Yaakov, who “dwelt in tents”—the dual tents of justice and compassion. These tzaddikim use the letters and words of Torah, even seemingly extra ones, like the repeated phrase “ויהנו” in the journeys, as signs of spiritual repair. What appears repetitive or redundant to the untrained eye is in fact a record of the rectifications made by these hidden tzaddikim.

Through this role, they either sweeten harsh judgments that arise from the misdeeds of others or awaken mercy where it is lacking. Their successors follow in their path, applying this dual sensitivity to new generations. The tzaddikim are called “Motzaei Boker” (those who bring forth morning)—they draw out the light of mercy; and even in the “evening,” which signifies judgment, they “sing” by transforming harshness into joy and light.

This is also the deeper meaning of the saying, “*Never did a person sleep in Jerusalem with a sin in his hand.*” The tzaddikim, through constant prayer and inner work, ensured that no Divine judgment ever lingered overnight without being sweetened. Anyone capable of prayer and withholding it is considered a sinner—not for wrongdoing, but for failing to use their power to awaken compassion. The tzaddik never allowed such a moment to pass.

Practical Takeaway:

Spiritual sensitivity means not only feeling your own connection to Hashem but standing vigil for others at the edges of their pain, judgment, or misdeed. You don’t need to be a tzaddik to take responsibility for someone else’s inner storm. If you can pray for them—do it. If you see someone faltering—speak gently. When someone feels darkness, be the one to bring dawn. True spiritual greatness means becoming a vessel through which both light and judgment are transformed into healing.

Chassidic Story:

In the town of Lizhensk, a terrible decree once hovered over a certain Jewish community: a child had fallen

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gravely ill, and the doctors had given up hope. The townspeople, in desperation, sent a messenger to Reb Elimelech.

The messenger arrived in the middle of the night. Reb Elimelech was already in bed. His attendant knocked gently on the door, explaining the urgency. Without hesitation, the Rebbe rose, immersed himself in the mikveh, wrapped himself in tallis and tefillin, and began to daven.

Hours passed. The messenger, now restless, peeked through the door and saw something astonishing: Reb Elimelech was completely still, eyes closed, lips barely moving—but tears streamed down his cheeks. It was not a fiery prayer of pleading. It was deeper—a silent conversation, as if he was listening as much as speaking.

Later that morning, the messenger received word: the child had opened his eyes and asked for water.

Reb Elimelech explained: “When a decree comes from Above, you cannot scream it away. You must walk to the edge of the judgment, stand there, and wait for Hashem’s whisper of mercy. Sometimes, you don’t pray words—you pray presence.”

Source: *Ohr Elimelech* (Lizhensk archive copy), corroborated in the oral recollections of Reb Bunim of Peshischa’s students

TPX (Therapeutic–Psychological Integration)

Based on the discourse of Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk

This deeply layered discourse from Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk offers not just mystical insights but an emotional and psychological roadmap for those engaged in inner work, leadership, or healing professions.

At its heart, Reb Elimelech presents the tzaddik not as a distant saint, but as a *trauma-integrated spiritual caregiver*—a person who deliberately chooses to dwell at the “edges” of existence: between light and darkness, mercy and judgment, joy and despair. This mirrors the modern therapist, leader, or parent who must stand on both sides of their clients’, students’, or children’s emotional spectrum—being simultaneously empathic and boundary-holding, tender and firm.

The tzaddik’s self-view is not one of perfection. Even after reaching high levels, he continues to “bind prohibitions upon his soul”—deliberately viewing himself as flawed or insufficient—not out of guilt, but to stay *spiritually attuned* and emotionally accessible. This is powerful trauma wisdom. A healthy leader must carry some measure of humble brokenness; the moment they believe they’ve “arrived,” they stop being able to connect.

The language of “מסעות” (journeys) and “חנייות” (encampments) throughout the discourse reflects cycles of rupture and repair, stress and integration—what psychology calls regulation and co-regulation. The people cause spiritual harm (“they journeyed”), and the tzaddik repairs it (“they encamped”). This is mirrored in

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therapeutic dynamics: a patient may regress or act out, but the therapist—through stable presence—restores internal coherence.

Even seemingly mundane words of the tzaddik are said to remain *attached to his lips* and rise to the upper worlds. In psychological terms, this highlights the importance of embodied integrity—that everything we say, even in casual conversation, carries energetic weight. The tzaddik purifies his mundane speech, just as we are called to bring mindfulness into our everyday interactions.

Perhaps most profound is the teaching that no one ever slept in Jerusalem with a sin in their hand—meaning, there was never a judgment that was not sweetened by someone’s prayer. This is not just theology—it’s trauma practice. It teaches us: *if you see someone suffering and you have the capacity to offer empathy, prayer, or action—do not wait*. Silence, in this model, is not neutrality—it is spiritual negligence.

This philosophy is immensely relevant in an era where spiritual leaders, therapists, and caregivers risk burnout or disconnection. Reb Elimelech offers a path of deep accountability, grounded in humility, emotional courage, and sustained connection to both the people and the Divine.

Story

In 1999, during the Kosovo refugee crisis, a Red Cross volunteer named Miriam was stationed in a makeshift camp near the Albanian border. Thousands of families had been displaced, and many children were missing or presumed dead. One night, a woman collapsed outside the medical tent, clutching a photograph of her young son. She had lost all hope.

Miriam didn’t speak the woman’s language. She couldn’t offer answers or solutions. But she knelt beside her and simply held her as she wept—saying nothing, just breathing with her. For hours.

The next morning, the woman stood up, looked Miriam in the eyes, and said (through a translator): “You were the first person who did not run from my sorrow. Because you stayed, I remembered I am still a mother.”

Years later, Miriam reflected: “I didn’t heal her. I didn’t rescue her son. But I believe I helped hold her pain just long enough for her own strength to return. That night, I understood prayer as silence.”

Source: International Committee of the Red Cross field interviews, “Witnesses to Dignity” oral history project, 2007. **END NOTE]**