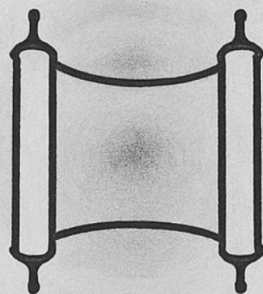


בס"ד

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel
of Horodok
Parshas Eikev**



לע"נ

ר' לוי יצחק בן ברוך שניאור

Dedicated By:

ר' נחום אהרון & חיה ליטשקאווסקי

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Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

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Introduction

This profound discourse by **Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok**—a leading disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch and a spiritual guide to generations of Chassidim in Eretz Yisrael—delves into the inner essence of *yirah* (awe/fear of G-d) as the gateway to true *deveikus* (cleaving to G-d). Often mischaracterized as merely the beginning rung of divine service, the Mitteler Rebbe (his successor) preserves his predecessor's view that *yirah* is in fact both the threshold *and* the ultimate state. Through a masterful journey, Rabbi Menachem Mendel shows how *yirah* is not a mere emotional state but a cosmic mechanism that enables all connection, integration, and transformation in *avodah*. By decoding scriptural references and mystical metaphors, he reveals how awe leads from external discipline to complete unity with the Divine Essence, beyond form, language, or thought.

Behold, our Sages of blessed memory referred to fear (awe) by the name “the outer keys,” and this is the gate to Hashem: “the righteous shall enter through it” (Tehillim 118:20).

הנה רבותינו ז"ל כינו את היראה בשם מפתחות
החיצוני, וזה השער לה' צדיקים יבאו בו

And this is what they said: the measure is two openings. And they said: “Open for me like the eye of a needle,” which is fear (awe)—a mere point compared to love.

והוא אמרם ז"ל ששני פתחים, ואמרו פתחו לי
בחוזה של מחט שהיא היראה, נקודה לגבי אהבה

And without fear, we—the lower beings—have no relation, no comparison, no grasp, no attachment, and no connection at all to cleave to His attributes.

ובלתי היראה אין לנו התחברים שום יחוס וערך
אחיזה ודבקות ושכיכות כלל להדבק במדותיו

For in all the attributes, even physical enjoyment is embedded and depends on them. Therefore, it is susceptible to corruption—that one might mislead himself in these attributes, drawn into bodily pleasures.

שכל המדות גם הנאות הגוף קבועים בהם
ותלויים בהם, לכן קרוב להפסד שלא יתעוהו
במדות בהתעוררות עצמו בהם, ומשכחו להנאות
הגוף

As explained in the Zohar regarding “love without fear.” Not so fear, which breaks and negates the body.

במבואר בזוהר על הרחימו בלא דחילו, מה שאין כן
היראה שהיא הפסד שוברו לגוף

And after complete fear, through it one can cleave to all His attributes. For fear is the resting of the Shechinah upon oneself, and from there all evildoers are separated.

ואחרי היראה השלימה, על ידה אפשר להדבק בכל
מדותיו, כי היראה היא השקטת השכינה על-עצמו
ומשם יתפרדו כל פעלי און

For the Name of Hashem is called upon him, and they will fear him, and he shall go from strength to strength—starting from fear, then attachment, then love, until joy is attained.

כי שם ה' נקרא עליו ויראו ממנו וילך מחיל אל
חיל מפני היראה אל הדבקות והאהבה עד אשר
תשיגהו השמחה

This is the unification of the Holy One, blessed be He, and His Shechinah.

זהו יחיד קודשא בריך הוא ושכינתיה

And this is “והיה” (it shall be)—which denotes joy—“עקב” (as a result of) the joy that he attains from the heel and fear.

וזהו והיה שהוא לשון שמחה, עקב השמחה
שמשיגהו מן העקב והיראה

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“תשמעו” (you shall listen) is an expression of unification.

תשמעו הוא פירוש לשון יחוד

“את המשפטים” (the judgments)—this refers to the Shechinah, called “את” from Aleph to Tav.

את המשפטים פירוש את נקראת השכינה מא' עד ת',

And da'as (knowledge), which is cleaving of the attributes, is called “mishpat” (judgment), for the Shechinah is called “chukim” (statutes), which means faith.

והדעת שהוא דבקות המדות נקרא משפט, כי השכינה נקראת חקים שהיא האמונה

This is the meaning of “תשמעו את המשפטים”—the unification of the Shechinah and the Holy One, blessed be He.

וזהו תשמעו את המשפטים, יחוד שכינה וקדושא בריך הוא

“ושמרתם ועשיתם אתם”—as it is said: a woman enters a covenant only with one who makes her into a vessel.

ושמרתם ועשיתם אתם, כמאמר אין אשה כורתת ברית אלא למי שעושה אותה כלי

And this is the matter of her being raised and her structure being built.

והוא ענין הקמתה ובנין הקמתה

And from the guarding (שמירה) one arrives at action (עשיה)—the building of her stature.

ומן השמירה יבוא אל העשיה בנין קומתה

From the point (of fear) a complete form (of divine connection) is built. And reflect well on this.

מן הנקודה תעשה קומה שלימה, ודו"ק

Everything is in the hands of Heaven, except for fear of Heaven, as it is said (Devarim 10:12): “What does Hashem your G-d ask of you, but only to fear Hashem your G-d, to walk in all His ways...”

הכל בידי שמים חוץ מיראת שמים, שנאמר (דברים י, י"ב): מה ה' אלהיך שאל מעמך כי אם ליראה את ה' אלהיך ללכת בכל דרכיו וגו'

And likewise said Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai: “The Holy One, blessed be He, has nothing in His world except for treasures of fear of Heaven alone,” as it is said (Yeshayahu 33:6): “Fear of Hashem is His treasure.”

וכן אומר רשב"י "אין לו להקב"ה בעולמו אלא אוצרות של יראת שמים בלבד, שנאמר (ישעיהו ל"ג, ו'): יראת ה' היא אוצרו הטוב

And he said this in the manner of the saying in the Zohar (Tikkunei Zohar 5b): “Whoever possesses fear, lacks nothing at all.”

ואמר שהוא דרך מאמר הזהר (תיקוני זוהר ה', "ע"ב): "מאן דאית ביה יראה לית ליה חסרון כלל

And we have explained elsewhere that the Zohar is speaking about the essential, root-level fear that preceded all the creation of the worlds—this is “fear of Hashem for life,” meaning complete attachment, which is the opposite of natural fear.

ויפרשנו במקום אחר שהזהר מדבר ביראה השורשית וקדמה לכל בריאת העולמות שהיא יראת ה' לחיים, שהוא הדבקות גמור מה שהוא הפך דרך הטבע

For other types of fear are the absence of attachment, as is known from the mystery of the vitality of “running and returning” (ratzo v'shov).

ששאר היראות שהם העדר הדבקות פידוע מסוד חיות רצוא ושוב

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For the nature of fear is to recoil slightly backward, as in the saying (Iyov 6:10): “and I recoiled with trembling”—meaning like a person who recoils his hand.

שִׁמְדָּרָה הִירָאָה לְסוּג אַחוֹר מֵעֵט, כְּמֵאֲמַר (אִיּוֹב ו', י'): "וְאֶסְלָדָה בְּחִילָה" פִּירוּשׁ כְּאֵדָם הַסּוֹלֵד יָדוֹ

And even fear “because He is great and powerful,” which is the root and source of all the worlds—this is shame-fear in the presence of one greater than oneself and greater than all worlds—also this entails a slight absence of attachment, for that is the way of shame.

וְאֶפִּילוֹ יִרְאָה בְּגִין דְּאִיהוּ רַב וְשִׁלִּיט עֵיקְרָא וְשִׁרְשָׁא דְּכָל עֲלָמִין שֶׁהוּא יִרְאָת בּוֹשָׁה מִפְּנֵי מִי שֶׁגָּדוֹל מִמֶּנּוּ וּמְכַל הָעוֹלָמוֹת – גַּם זֶה הָעֵדֶר הַדְּבָקוֹת מֵעֵט שֶׁכֵּן דְּרָה הַבּוֹשָׁה

But (Mishlei 19:23): “Fear of Hashem is for life”—this is the highest form of attachment, greater than all forms of love and all attributes.

אַבָּל (מִשְׁלֵי י"ט, כ"ג): "יִרְאָת ה' לְחַיִּים" הוּא הַדְּבָקוֹת הַיּוֹתֵר גְּבוּהָ מְכַל הָאֲהָבוֹת וְכָל הַמִּדּוֹת

And this occurs when one becomes clothed in the Shechinah and directs himself to be a chariot for Him, may He be blessed, in everything he receives from Him—

וְהוּא כְּשֶׁמִּתְלַבֵּשׁ בְּשִׁכְיָנָהּ וּמִכֵּן עֲצֻמוֹ הָיִת מְרַפָּה אֵלָיו יִתְבָּרַךְ כְּכֹל מֵה שֶׁמִּקְבֵּל מֵאֲתוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ

from the most subtle attainable perceptions, which are the origins of the thought-letters that constantly shed form and take on form anew, without pausing—

מִן הַהִשְׁגוֹת אֲפִשְׁרִיּוֹת הַדְּקוֹת, וְהֵם מוֹצְאוֹת הָאוֹתִיּוֹת הַמִּתְחַשְּׁבִים שֶׁפּוֹשֵׁט צוּרָה וְלוֹבֵשׁ צוּרָה, תָּמִיד לֹא יִחַשָּׁה

and as he gazes upon the beginning root-source of the origin of his perception from Him, may He be blessed, he is overwhelmed before Him—

וּבְהִסְתַּכְלוּתוֹ בְּתַחֲלַת שֶׁרֵשׁ מוֹצֵא הַשְּׁגָתוֹ מֵאֲתוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ, וְנִבְהַל מִפְּנֵיו

for He, may He be blessed, is the influencer and he is the recipient. For this is the way of all recipients: they become overwhelmed.

לְהִיּוֹתוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ הַמְשַׁפִּיעַ וְהוּא הַמִּקְבֵּל שֶׁכֵּן דְּרָה כָּל הַמִּקְבָּלִים נִבְהָלִים

And this is the matter of their self-nullification—how they become nullified within themselves and included in the influencer.

וְהוּא עֲנִין בְּטוֹלָם שֶׁמִּתְבַּטְּלִים בְּעֲצָמָם וְנִכְלָלִים בַּמְשַׁפִּיעִים

If so, this fear is the complete attachment: one is integrated within the Infinite One, blessed be He.

וְאִם־כֵּן הִירָאָה זֶה הִיא הַדְּבָקוֹת הַגָּמוּר שֶׁהוּא נִכְלָל בְּאַיִן־סוֹף בְּרוּךְ הוּא

And it is higher than all the attributes, as it is said (Tehillim 111:10): “The beginning of wisdom is fear of Hashem.”

וְהִיא גְבוּהָ מְכַל הַמִּדּוֹת כְּמֵאֲמַר (תְּהִלִּים קי"א, י'): "רֵאשִׁית חֲכָמָה יִרְאָת ה'",

For this fear is the beginning of the attribute of wisdom, which is higher and abstracted from any letters at all—even those of thought.

שֶׁיִרְאָה זֶה הִיא רֵאשִׁית לְמִדַּת הַחֲכָמָה שֶׁהוּא לְמַעַלָּה, וּמוֹפָשֵׁט מִן הָאוֹתִיּוֹת כָּלֵל אֶפִּילוֹ הַמִּתְחַשְּׁבִים

And this fear is called “fear of Heaven,” which is the unification of two attributes.

וְיִרְאָה זֶה נִקְרָאת יִרְאָת שָׁמַיִם, שֶׁהוּא יְחוד שְׁנֵי מִדּוֹת

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As is known: that the word “fear” is one term, and above it is “Heaven,” which is the influencer.

כִּידוּעַ שְׁתַּבַּת יִרְאָה הִיא תִּבְּהָ אַחַת, וְלִמְעַלָּה מִמֶּנָּה, שְׁמַיִם שֶׁהוּא הַמְשַׁפִּיעַ

And fear is called “Malchus” (Kingship), as is known.

וְהִירְאָה נִקְרָאת מַלְכוּת כִּידוּעַ

For it is impossible for there to be any fear unless it is due to something higher than it, and fear is the recipient.

מִפְּנֵי שֶׁאֵי־אֶפְשָׁר לְשׁוּם יִרְאָה אֲלֵא־כֵּן מִפְּנֵי הַגְּבוּהָ מִמֶּנָּה, וְהִירְאָה הוּא הַמְקַבֵּל

And this is (the meaning of) “There is no king without a nation,” and Malchus (Kingship) is governance, as is known from the verse (Tehillim 103:19): “And His Kingship rules over all.”

וְזֶהוּ אֵין מֶלֶךְ בְּלֹא עַם, וּמַלְכוּת הוּא הַהִנְהָגָה כִּידוּעַ, “מִמַּאֲמָר (תְּהִלִּים ק"ג, י"ט): "וּמַלְכוּתוֹ בְּכָל מְשָׁלָה

And behold, a person who has fear of Heaven, as mentioned—who is included in Him, may He be blessed, through the nullification of his entire being and vitality, and who remains beyond even the letters of thought—

וְהִנֵּה אָדָם שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹ יִרְאָת שְׁמַיִם כְּנֹזֵכֶר, וְנִכְלָל בּוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ בְּהִתְבַּטֵּל כָּל עֲצָמוֹ וְחַיָּיתוֹ, וְנִשְׁאַר לְמַעַלָּה —מֵאוֹתִיּוֹת הַמִּחְשְׁבָה

such a person has in his hands the ability to cause all change—miracles and wonders—since all the worlds are in his hand,

כִּידוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת כָּל הַהִשְׁתַּנּוּת נִסִּים וְנִפְלְאוֹת, שֶׁהָרִי כָּל הָעוֹלָמוֹת הֵם כִּידוּ

for he is included in Him, may He be praised, and all is in His hand.

שֶׁהָרִי הוּא נִכְלָל בּוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמוֹ וּבִידוּ הַכֹּל

And such a person is called “the husband of the Matron,” for he is the master of the governance of all the worlds.

וְאָדָם כָּזֶה נִקְרָא בַּעֲלָה דְּמַטְרוּנִיתָא, שֶׁהָרִי הוּא בַּעֲלֵ הַהִנְהָגָה שֶׁל כָּל הָעוֹלָמוֹת

And this is (the meaning of) “Whoever has fear, lacks nothing at all.”

וְזֶהוּ מֵאֵן דְּאִית בֵּיהּ יִרְאָה לִית לִיהּ חֲסָרוֹן כָּלֵל

And this is the meaning of “Everything is in the hands of Heaven except for fear of Heaven”—meaning, one who possesses fear of Heaven has everything in his hand.

וְזֶהוּ הַכֹּל בְּיַדִּי שְׁמַיִם חוּץ מִירְאָת שְׁמַיִם, פִּירוּשׁ מִי שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹ יִרְאָת שְׁמַיִם הַכֹּל כִּידוּ

As in the saying: “A righteous one rules through fear of G-d.”

כְּמַאֲמָר צְדִיק מוֹשֵׁל יִרְאָת אֱלֹהִים

And this is what is written: “What does Hashem ask of you”—as is known from the saying of the Zohar that all beginning of revelation stands as a question of “What is this?”

וְזֶהוּ שֶׁכְּתוּב מָה ה' שׁוֹאֵל מֵעַמּוֹ, כִּידוּעַ מַאֲמָר הַזֶּה־ר, שֶׁכָּל תְּחִלַּת הַהִתְגַּלּוּת הוּא דְּקִיָּמָא לְשׂאֲלָה מָה זֶה

Not so before the beginning of revelation, for then no question applies at all.

מָה שֶׁאֵין כּוֹן קֹדֶם תְּחִלַּת הַהִתְגַּלּוּת דְּלֹא קִיָּמָא לְשׂאֲלָה כָּלֵל

And this, as explained, is that fear is the root—the beginning of revelation.

וְזֶהוּ כְּמִבּוֹאֵר שֶׁהִיא הִירְאָה הַשְּׁרָשִׁית תְּחִלַּת הַהִתְגַּלּוּת

And this is (the meaning of) “but only to fear” (Devarim 10:12), similar to the verse (Mishlei 2:3): “If only for understanding...”

וְזֶהוּ פִּי־אֵם לְיִרְאָה, עַל־דֶּרֶךְ הַפְּסוּק (דְּבָרִים י, ג): “כִּי אִם לְבִינָה וְגו'

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And this is (the meaning of) “Hashem has nothing in His world except treasuries of fear”—

וְזֶהוּ אֵין לַהֲקֵב"ה בְּעוֹלָמוֹ אֵלָּא אוֹצְרוֹת שֶׁל יִרְאָה
בְּלִבָּד,

for after fear, nothing else remains—if it is present, everything is present.

מִפְּנֵי שֶׁכָּבֶד אֵינוֹ נִשְׁאָר כְּלוּם אַחֵר הַיִּרְאָה, אִם הוּא
כָּאֵן הַכֹּל כָּאֵן

For it is the beginning of everything and the end of everything in its inclusion within Him, may He be blessed.

שֶׁהוּא תְּחִלַּת הַכֹּל וְתִכְלִית הַכֹּל בְּהִתְקַלּוּתוֹ בּוֹ
יִתְבָּרַךְ,

And what is there still to safeguard? And this is the astonishment of our Sages in saying: “Is fear a small matter?”

וּמָה נִשְׁמַר עוֹד? וְזֶהוּ תַמְיַהֲת חֲז"ל בְּאַמְרָם: אֲטוֹ
יִרְאָה מִלְּתָא זוּטְרָתִי הִיא

And they said: “Yes—for Moshe, it is a small matter.”

וְאַמְרוּ: אֵין, לְגַבֵּי מֹשֶׁה מִלְּתָא זוּטְרָתִי הִיא

And the explanation is that Moshe is the tzaddik of the generation—the tzaddik who connects all the worlds from the highest root down to the lowest depths—

וּפִירוּשׁ מֹשֶׁה שֶׁהוּא צַדִּיק הַדּוֹר, פִּירוּשׁ צַדִּיק
הַמְּקַשֵּׁר כָּל הָעוֹלָמוֹת מִן הַשָּׁרֵשׁ הָעֲלִיּוֹן עַד הַשְּׁפָלִים
הַתְּתוֹנִים

and through him all the worlds are conducted. To him, it is indeed a small matter,

וְעַל־יָדוֹ מְתַנְהֲגִים כָּל הָעוֹלָמוֹת — לְגַבֵּי מִלְּתָא
זוּטְרָתָא הִיא

for he is called “the husband of the Matron,”

שֶׁהָרִי הוּא נִקְרָא בְּעֵלָה דְּמַטְרוֹנִיתָא

and this is the parable that our Sages brought—of one who is asked for a golden vessel, and he has one similar to it, etc.

וְזֶהוּ הַמֶּשֶׁל שֶׁהֵבִיאוּ חֲז"ל מֶשֶׁל מְבַקְשִׁים מִמֶּנּוּ כְּלִי
'זָהָב וַיֵּשׁ לוֹ דּוֹמָה לוֹ וְכוּ'

Or one could say: “Everything is in the hands of Heaven”—because the hands are what lift and give, and perform all actions and directions—like the manner of hands.

אוּ יוֹאֵמַר: הַכֹּל בְּיַדֵּי שָׁמַיִם, כִּי הַיָּדִים נִקְרָאִים מָה
שֶׁנוֹשֵׂא וְנוֹתֵן בָּהֶם וּפּוֹעֵל כָּל הַפְּעֻלּוֹת וְהַנְּהֻגוֹת
בְּדֶרֶךְ הַיָּדִים

And this excludes fear of Heaven, which itself is the governance and the actor, as mentioned above.

וְזֶהוּ חוּץ מִיִּרְאַת שָׁמַיִם שֶׁהִיא בְּעֶצְמָהּ הִיא הַנְּהֻגָה
וְהַפּוֹעֵל כְּנֹזֵקֶר לַעֲלִיל

[NOTE Summary

Fear of Heaven—*yiras Hashem*—is not a lower step in divine service, but the very gate that opens to the full spectrum of spiritual connection. Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok explains that Chazal called *yirah* “outer keys,” not because it is peripheral, but because it is the first point of entry. Without it, no attribute, no act, and no love can be real or lasting. Unlike love, which can still contain ego or bodily pleasure, true awe breaks the ego and nullifies the self. Thus, it allows for alignment with G-d’s will and leads to deveikus and the Shechinah.

This awe is not based on fear of punishment or reward, but a refined trembling before the majesty of G-d’s presence. It produces a deep internal collapse of self into Divine reality. From there, the soul can ascend through deveikus and love until it reaches joy (*simchah*), which is the unification of the Holy One and His

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

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Shechinah. This dynamic is embedded in the verse: “And it shall be (וְהָיָה) because of the heel (עֵקֶב)” —joy emerges from awe, from the lowest place of reverence.

True *yiras Shamayim* involves becoming a chariot to G-d's presence, receiving subtle Divine perception, and becoming so overwhelmed by this revelation that the soul nullifies itself completely. This type of awe surpasses even love and wisdom; it is the primal root of all revelation. One who lives in such awe merges into the Infinite and gains mastery over creation—not by force, but by inclusion within the Source.

Thus, when the Talmud says, “Everything is in the hands of Heaven except fear of Heaven,” it implies that *one who truly has yirah lacks nothing*. Yirah is not a small thing—it is the whole structure. And while it may be beyond ordinary capacity, for Moshe Rabbeinu, the tzaddik who connects Heaven and Earth, yirah is a “small matter,” readily accessible. For the tzaddik is the “husband of the Shechinah,” able to elicit awe and revelation for all who are attached to him.

Practical Takeaway

Don't view *yiras Hashem* as mere discipline or fear of consequences. It is the holy tremor that cracks the shell of ego and opens the soul to real transformation. To cultivate this awe, approach Torah and mitzvos with reverence and inner stillness, seeking not reward but closeness to the Source. Use awe to ground your emotions and direct your love and joy upward, letting it lead you beyond selfhood into alignment with Divine presence.

Chassidic Story

When Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok arrived in Eretz Yisrael, he faced immense physical and spiritual hardships—poverty, illness, and detachment from the broader Chassidic world. One day, a Chassid came to him deeply shaken: “Rebbe, I try to love Hashem, but I feel nothing but fear and trembling.” The Rebbe closed his eyes and said: “Fortunate are you. Fear is not the absence of love—it is the vessel for it. When awe of Hashem burns so deeply that it silences even thought, it draws the fire of love after it. That silence... is your soul becoming a throne.”

(Story sourced from *Toldos Anshei Shem* and *Shivchei HaBaal Shem Tov*, with traditions regarding Horodoker's arrival and teachings in Tzfas.)

END NOTE]