

מֵאָמֵר ב' • תְּקוּנַת הַמִּדּוֹת

Mussar · Hebrew with Nikud and a Literal Translation

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This page teaches us a fundamental principle in avodas Hashem: the proper order of 'taam' (taste or desire) and 'emes' (truth). We often mistakenly build our 'truth' on our desires, leading to bitterness and self-deception, like Avimelech who let his desires blind him to the real truth. The true tzaddik, however, seeks pure truth first, and from that truth, a good and pure desire is born, as we see with Aharon Hakohen.

Nikud and the literal translation are a learning aid prepared by the editor (AI-assisted, pending review), not the sefer's own vowelization.

וְכַעֲשֵׂן זֶה יִשׁ הִרְבֵּה דְגִמָּאוֹת אֶצֶל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר הוּא מִתְבָּרֵךְ בְּלִבּוֹ כִּי יֵשׁ לוֹ טַעַם וְאֵמֶת בְּרַדִּיפַת הַכְּבוֹד,

And similar to this there are many examples with a person who blesses himself in his heart that he has reason and truth in pursuing honor,

אָבֵל אֵין הַטַּעַם שְׁלוֹ טַעַם.

But his taste is no taste.

כִּי תִחְלָתוֹ מֵתוֹק וְסוּפּוֹ מַר, וְכָל הַמַּחְזִיר אַחֵר הַגְּדוּלָּה, גְּדוּלָּה בּוֹרַחַת מִמֶּנּוּ (עִירוּבִין י"ג).

For its beginning is sweet and its end is bitter, and whoever pursues greatness, greatness flees from him (Eruvin 13a).

וְגַם הָאֵמֶת שְׁלוֹ הוּא מִתְהַפֵּךְ,

And also his truth, it is overturned,

וְהוּא מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהָאֵמֶת נּוֹצֵר מִן הַטַּעַם,

And this is because truth is created from reason,

כִּי לֵכֵן בָּחַר בּוֹ מִפְּנֵי הַטַּעַם,

For therefore He chose him because of the reason,

וְכִיּוֹן שֶׁהַטַּעַם לֹא בָּא מִן הָאֵמֶת גַּם לֹא יַעֲרֹב עָלָיו בְּתַמִּידוֹת וְיֻקִּיאוּ אַחֵר כָּךְ.

And since the taste did not come from truth, it also will not be sweet to him constantly, and he will vomit it out afterwards.

וְדָבָר זֶה יֵשׁ בֵּין צַדִּיק לְרָשָׁע,

And this matter exists between a tzaddik and a rasha,

וְכַמוֹ שֶׁהוּא עַל דֶּרֶךְ בְּחִירָתוֹ בְּכָל כֵּן הוּא בְּכָל פֶּרֶט וּפֶרֶט שְׂאֵם נִבְרַר לְהַצְדִּיק דָּבָר,

And just as it is in the way of his choice in general, so it is in every single detail, that if we clarify to justify a matter,

יאמר מיד חטאתי לה', על דרך דוד המלך ע"ה,

He should immediately say, 'I have sinned to Hashem,' in the manner of Dovid HaMelech, may he rest in peace,

גם באופן אשר הוא כמעט בכל חלקיו פעלה צדקת ורק משהו חסרון מגדר חלול השם.

Even in a way where it is almost in all its parts a righteous act, and only a slight deficiency from the category of Chillul Hashem.

והוא מפני שהוא מבקש רק את האמת הברור,

And this is because he seeks only the clear truth,

ולא יביט על הטעמים הקודמים לאמת אם יהיה נעים לו אם יודה אם לאו,

And he should not look at the preceding reasons for truth, whether it will be pleasant for him if he admits it or not,

אלא הוא פונה ישר אל האמת ורואה את החלק אשר יחסר לו,

Rather, he turns directly to the truth and sees the part that is lacking for him,

וכל הטעם ש'לו הוא זה גופא מה ששובר מדותיו,

And his entire taste is this very thing, that he breaks his middos,

כמאמר הגר"א, עקר חיות האדם הוא שבירת המדות ואם לאו למה לו חיים,

As the Vilna Gaon said, the main vitality of a person is the breaking of his middos, and if not, why does he need life?

והטעם הזה נולד אחר האמת,

And this reason is born after the truth,

וממילא האמת הוא בלי שום נגיעה והטעם ש'לו הוא באמת טוב,

And consequently, the truth is without any personal interest, and its reason is truly good,

ולא כמו אצל אבימלך שאצלו היה הטעם קדם,

And not like with Avimelech, where with him the reason came first,

כי מיד שראה את האורחים שאל על האשה.

For immediately when he saw the guests, he asked about the woman.

הרי לנו שהתעורר אצלו הטעם קדם,

Behold for us that the taste awakened within him first,

וכל כה פעל עליו עד שחלק עם הבורא,

And so much did he influence him, until he argued with the Creator,

וגם אחר ההתראה לשוב שאל להקדוש ברוך הוא בטענה הלא הוא אמר לי אחותי היא.

And even after the warning to repent, he asked of the Holy One, blessed be He, with a claim: 'Did he not tell me, 'She is my sister'?'

וְהוּא רָאָה תְּשׁוּבַת אַבְרָהָם, וְלֹא רָאָה שְׂאֵלַת עֲצָמוֹ,

And he saw Avraham's answer, but he did not see his own question,

אֲשֶׁר כָּל הַתְּשׁוּבָה הָיְתָה לְפִי הַשְּׂאֵלָה,

that the entire answer was according to the question,

וְהוּא לֹא הִרְגִּישׁ אֶת הַטֶּעַם שְׁלוֹ,

And he did not feel its taste,

וְטָעַן רַק כִּי עָשָׂה בְּאֵמֶת הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה,

And he only claimed that he truly did this thing,

וְלֹו לֹא הָיָה לוֹ טֶעַם בַּדְּבָר אֲזִי הָיָה רוֹאֶה הָאֵמֶת כְּמוֹ שֶׁהוּא,

And if he had no taste in the matter, then he would see the truth as it is,

כִּי הָאֵמֶת הוּא אֲשֶׁר אִם בָּא אוֹרֵחַ שׁוֹאֵלִין אוֹתוֹ רַק בְּעִסְקֵי אֲכִילָה וּשְׁתִּיָּה,

For the truth is that if a guest comes, we ask him only about matters of eating and drinking,

וְלֹא עַל מַה שֶּׁשָּׂאֵל הוּא.

And not about what he asked.

וַיַּעַן אֲשֶׁר יִסּוּדוֹ הָיָה הַטֶּעַם וְלֹא הָאֵמֶת.

And because its foundation was taste and not truth,

לְכֵן גַּם שֶׁהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אָמַר לוֹ שִׁיָּשִׁיב לֹא הִסְפִּיק לוֹ הַהִתְרָאָה פַּעַם אַחַת,

Therefore, even when the Holy One, blessed be He, told him to repent, the warning once was not enough for him,

וְלֹא הוֹדָה עַל חֲסָרוֹנוֹ מִפְּנֵי הַטֶּעַם שֶׁהָיָה לוֹ בַּחֲסָרוֹן,

And he did not admit to his deficiency because of the 'taste' he had in the deficiency,

וַחֲפָה אוֹתוֹ עִם הָאֵמֶת, עַד שֶׁהָיָה מְכַרְח לְהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לֵאמֹר פַּעַם שְׁנִיָּת,

And he covered him with truth, until Hakadosh Baruch Hu was compelled to say a second time,

הָשִׁב וְאִם לֹאוֹ מוֹת תָּמוּת, וְאֲזִי הָיָה מְכַרְח לְהָשִׁיב.

Answer, and if not, you will surely die, and then he was forced to answer.

הֲרִי לָנוּ מִזֶּה שֶׁהַעֲקָר צָרִיךְ הָאָדָם לַעֲמוֹד עַל דֶּרֶךְ זֶה אֲשֶׁר יִקַּח הַטֶּעַם מִן הָאֵמֶת.

We see from this that the main thing is that a person needs to stand on this path, that he should take the taste from the truth.

כִּי אִם יִתְהַפֵּךְ הַדְּבָר וַיִּבְנֶה אֱמֶת עַל יְסוֹד הַטַּעַם,

For if the matter would be reversed, and truth would be built upon the foundation of reason,

וַיֵּמָּה הוּא טַעְמוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם זֹלַת הָאֱמֶת,

And what is the taste of a person other than truth,

הֲלֵא רַק הַמַּדּוּת שָׁלוֹ, עוֹד יִפְסִיד כְּפָלָיִם:

Is it not only his middos, he will yet lose double:

אֶחָד מֵה שְׁחֵי עַל מַדּוּתָיו הָרָעוֹת,

One who lives on his bad character traits,

וְהַטַּעַם הַזֶּה אִם שֶׁבִּהְשָׁקָתוֹ הַדְּמִיוֹן נָעִים לוֹ,

And this taste, even if in his perception the imagination is pleasant to him,

אָבֵל לְסוֹף מוֹצִיאִין אוֹתוֹ מִן הָעוֹלָם,

But in the end, they take him out of the world,

וְעוֹד שִׁישָׁאָר מוֹטָעָה כָּל יָמָיו,

And furthermore, that he will remain mistaken all his days,

אֲשֶׁר הָאֱמֶת עוֹד יִגְדִּיל מְדוּרַת הַמַּדּוּת הָרָעוֹת.

For the truth will further enlarge the bonfire of evil character traits.

כִּי אִם עוֹד יִסְבּוֹר אֲשֶׁר הִדְרָה שָׁלוֹ אֱמֶת לֹא יָשׁוּב לְעוֹלָם,

For if he will still think that his path is truth, he will never return,

אֶלָּא יוֹסִיף עוֹד אֵשׁ עַל עֵצִים וְעוֹד יִרְבֶּה לְשִׁתּוֹת מִיַּם הַמְּלּוּחִים,

Rather, he will add more fire to the wood, and he will further increase drinking the salty waters,

מִפְּנֵי שֶׁסּוֹבֵר עוֹד כִּי אֱמֶת הוּא.

Because he still thinks that it is true.

וְנִמְצָא בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁהָיָה לוֹ לְאֱמֶת לְכַלּוֹת אֶת הַחֲסָרוֹן שָׁלוֹ, עוֹד הוּא מַגְבִּיל אוֹתוֹ.

And he finds himself in a place where the truth should have eradicated his deficiency, yet he still restricts it.

וְדָבָר זֶה הוֹרוּנוּ חֲזו"ל בְּמִשְׁלַל נִאָּה (בְּמִדְרַשׁ פֶּקוּדֵי):

And this matter our Sages of blessed memory taught us with a beautiful parable (in Midrash Pekudei):

שְׁנֵי צִפּוֹרִים הָיוּ מְתָרוּצְצִים זֶה עִם זֶה,

Two birds were running back and forth, one with the other,

עד שְקָמָה אַחַת וְהִרְגָה אֶת חֲבֵרָתָהּ,

until one rose up and killed her friend,

אח"כ הָלַךְ הַצִּפּוֹר הַחַיָּה וְתָלַשׁ עֵשֶׂב אֶחָד וְהִנִּיחָהּ עַל הַצִּפּוֹר הַמֵּתָה,

Afterwards, the living bird went and plucked one blade of grass and placed it upon the dead bird,

מִיָּד שָׁב הַצִּפּוֹר לְחַיּוּתָהּ.

Immediately the bird returned to its life-force.

כַּאֲשֶׁר רָאָה זֶה אָדָם אָמַר כִּינּוֹן שֶׁהָעֵשֶׂב הַזֶּה הוּא מְחַיֶּה מֵתִים, אֶטֶל הָעֵשֶׂב וְאֶשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בָּעֵשֶׂב לְהַחְיֹת מֵתִים.

When this man saw, he said, 'Since this herb revives the dead, I will take the herb and use the herb to revive the dead.'

לָקַח אֶת הָעֵשֶׂב וְרָץ בְּשִׂמְחָה רַבָּה לָעִיר,

He took the grass and ran with great joy to the city,

בְּעָבְרוֹ לִפְנֵי אַרִי מֵת, אָמַר בְּדַעְתּוֹ אֲבַחֵן אֶת הָעֵשֶׂב אִם יֵשׁ לוֹ עוֹד הַכֹּחַ לְהַחְיֹת מֵתִים.

When he passed before a dead lion, he said in his mind, 'I will test the herb if it still has the power to revive the dead.'

לָקַח הָעֵשֶׂב וְדָבַק לוֹ לְאַרְיֵה הַמֵּת. מִיָּד הָיָה שָׁב לְחַיּוּתוֹ וְאָכַל אוֹתוֹ וְלֹא הִשָּׁאִיר מִמֶּנּוּ כְּלוּם.

The grass took hold and clung to the dead lion; immediately it returned to its life and ate it, and left nothing of it.

כֵּן הוּא הָאָדָם עִם הָאֱמֶת.

So it is with a person regarding truth.

הָאֱמֶת הוּא סֵם חַיִּים וְהוּא יָכוֹל לְהַחְיֹת מֵתִים.

Truth is a life-giving elixir, and it can revive the dead.

וְלֹא הָיָה מִשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ עִם הָאֱמֶת כְּמוֹ שִׂיאוֹת,

And if he would use the truth as is proper,

הֵינּוּ שֶׁהָיָה בָּא אֶצְלוֹ הָאֱמֶת קוֹדֵם,

Meaning that he would come to the truth beforehand,

אִז הָיָה פּוֹעֵל עָלָיו הָאֱמֶת לְהַשְׁלִים אֶת הַחֲסָרוֹן שֶׁבּוֹ וּלְהַחְיֹת אֶת הַשֹּׁכֵל שְׁלוֹ.

Then the truth would act upon him to complete the lack within him and to revive his intellect.

לֹא כֵן כְּשֶׁבָּא אֶל הָאֱמֶת אַחֵר הַטַּעַם וְהַמִּדּוֹת מִשְׁתַּמְּשִׁים בָּאֱמֶת לְחַפּוֹת עַל רָעָתָם,

Not so when one comes to the truth after taste and character traits; they use the truth to cover up their evil.

אז דומה הוא לפלוני אשר כִּשְׁהִיה לוֹ סֵם חַיִּים אֲשֶׁר יָכוֹל עַל יָדוֹ לְהַחְיֹת מֵתִים,

So he is similar to a certain person who, when he had a life-giving elixir with which he could revive the dead,

לֹא הִשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בְּעֵשֶׂב הַזֶּה לְהַחְיֹת בְּנֵי אָדָם אֲלָא הִחְיֶה בּוֹ אֶת הָאֲרִיָּה וּכְשֶׁהִיָּה הָאֲרִיָּה הָמִית אוֹתוֹ.

He did not use this herb to revive people, rather He revived with it the lion, and when the lion was, He killed it.

כֵּן הוּא מַצֵּב הָאָדָם בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה,

Such is the state of man in this world,

שֵׁישׁ לוֹ הַבְּחִירָה לְהַחְיֹת אֶת הַטּוֹב שָׁבוּ וּלְהַגְבִּיר שְׂכָלוֹ עַל מִדּוֹתָיו וְלַחְיֹת הַמְּאוֹשֵׁר בְּאַמָּת,

that he has the choice to bring to life the good within him, and to strengthen his intellect over his character traits, and to be truly happy,

וְאִם יִגְבִּיר רְצוֹנוֹ עַל שְׂכָלוֹ וְהוּא מִשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בַּהַשְׂכָּל לְשַׁעֲבָדוֹ לְחַיֵּי הַמְּדוּת,

And if he strengthens his will over his intellect, and he uses the intellect to enslave it to a life of character traits,

הוּא כְּמוֹ מְדַבֵּיק הָעֵשֶׂב לְהַרִּי הַמֵּת וּכְשֶׁחֲיָה הָמִית אוֹתוֹ.

He is like one who attaches grass to a dead lion, and when it came to life, it killed him.

וְכֵן קָרָה אֶצֶל קֹרַח, אֲשֶׁר רָאָה הָאֱמֶת אַחֵר הַטַּעַם.

And so it happened with Korach, that he saw the truth after the taste.

בְּשַׁעַה שֶׁהָיָה צָרִיךְ הָרוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ שְׁלוֹ לְרַחֲקֵהוּ מִן הַכְּבוֹד, עוֹד הִגְדִּיל אֶצְלוֹ אֶהֱבַת הַכְּבוֹד עַד שֶׁחָלַק עַל מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוֹ.

At the time when his ruach hakodesh should have distanced him from honor, he further increased within himself the love of honor, until he disputed Moshe Rabbeinu.

וְהוּא מִפְּנֵי שֶׁבָּא אֶל הָאֱמֶת אַחֵר הַטַּעַם,

And this is because he came to the truth after the taste,

וְהִפָּךְ לוֹ הָאֱמֶת אֲשֶׁר בְּטִבְעוֹ הוּא סֵם חַיִּים לְסֵם הַמָּוֶת,

And He transformed for him the truth that by its nature is a life-giving elixir into a deadly poison,

וַיִּתְּבֹאֵר שֶׁדָּבַק אוֹתוֹ אֶל הַטַּעַם,

And it became clear that he clung to it, to the taste,

עוֹד הִחְיָה אֶת הַטַּעַם וְהִגְדִּיל אוֹתוֹ.

He further revived the taste and magnified it.

וְהִפָּךְ מִזֶּה מְצִינוֹ אֶצֶל אַהֲרֹן,

And the opposite of this we find with Aharon,

שְׁאֲמָרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכוֹרֵנָם לְבִרְכָּהּ, אֵלּוּ יָדַע אַהֲרֹן שֶׁהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא כּוֹתֵב עָלָיו "הִנֵּה הוּא יוֹצֵא לְקִרְאָתְךָ וְרֹאֶךָ וְשִׂמְח בְּלִבּוֹ", הֲיֵה יֵצֵא לְקִרְאָתוֹ בְּתַפִּים וּבְמַחֲלוֹת (יְלָקוּט וַיֵּשֶׁב).

For our Sages, of blessed memory, said: If Aharon had known that the Holy One, blessed be He, writes about him, "Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and he will see you and rejoice in his heart," he would have gone out to meet him with drums and dances (Yalkut Vayeshev).

וּמֵאֲמָרָם אֵינוּ מוֹכֵן, וְכִי בָּאוּ לְהַקְטִין מַעֲלַת אַהֲרֹן,

And their statement is not understood: did they come to diminish Aharon's greatness?

שְׂאֵלּוּ יָדַע שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה תְּפַרְסֵם פְּעֻלָּתוֹ הֲיֵה עוֹשֶׂה הַפְּעֻלָּה בְּיוֹתֵר שְׁלֵמוֹת?

That if he knew that the Torah would publicize his deed, would he do the deed with greater perfection?

אָמְנָם כְּשֶׁנִּתְבּוֹנֵן בְּדַבָּר נִרְאָה לְהֵפֶךְ,

However, when we contemplate the matter, it appears the opposite,

שְׁכוּנָתָם הִיא לְגִלּוֹת עַד כַּמָּה הַשְׁתַּלֵּם בְּמִדּוֹתָיו שֶׁגַּם שִׂשְׁמַח בְּלִבּוֹ עַל גְּדֻלַּת מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ עָלָיו הַשְּׁלֹם,

that their intention is to reveal how much he perfected his character traits, that even though he rejoiced in his heart over the greatness of Moshe Rabbeinu, peace be upon him,

הִנֵּה הֲיֵה כָּל זֶה אֶצְלוֹ בְּגֵדֵר טָבַע שְׁנִי מִצַּד שְׁלֵמוֹתוֹ בְּתִקּוּן מִדּוֹתָיו,

Behold, all this was for him in the category of a second nature, due to his perfection in the rectification of his character traits,

עַד שֶׁלֹּא הִרְגִּישׁ שׁוּם יִתְרוֹן בְּזֶה כָּלֵל,

until he felt no advantage in this at all,

וְלֹא יָדַע כִּי יֵשׁ כָּאֵן שׁוּם מְקוֹם הַקְפָּדָה,

and he did not know that there is here any place for strictness,

אֲלֹא הֲיֵה אַהֲרֹן בְּמַדְרִגָּה רַמָּה אֲשֶׁר טָבְעוּ נִתְהַפֵּף בּוֹ כָּל כֶּף עַד שֶׁהִרְגִּישׁ שִׂמְחָה בְּלִבּוֹ מִה שֶׁאֲחִיו עָלָה לְגֻדְלוֹהָ,

Rather, Aharon was on such a lofty madreiga, that his very nature was transformed within him so much, until he felt joy in his heart that his brother ascended to greatness,

שְׂאֵלּוּ הֲיֵה יוֹדֵעַ אֲשֶׁר הַתּוֹרָה יִשְׂבַּח לוֹ עַל זֶה,

For if he would know that the Torah would praise him for this,

הִנֵּה אָז הֲיֵה מִרְגִּישׁ אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ כָּאֵן מְקוֹם הַקְפָּדָה,

Behold, then he would feel that there is here a place for strictness,

וְלֹא הֲיֵה מֵאֲמִין בְּעַצְמוֹ וְסוֹמֵךְ עַל מִדּוֹתָיו הַמְתוּקָנִים,

And he would not believe in himself, nor rely on his refined character traits,

אֵלָא הָיָה חוֹשֵׁשׁ שְׂמָא לֹא יִשְׂמַח אֲזֵי אִם יִפְגְּשֵׁנוּ,

Rather, he was concerned lest he would not rejoice then if he would meet him,

וְעוֹד שְׂמָא יִכִּיר מִשָּׁה רַבְּנוּ הַקְפָּדָתוֹ,

And furthermore, perhaps Moshe Rabbeinu would recognize His strictness,

וַיְהִי קוֹשָׁה עָלָיו גְּדֻלָּתוֹ,

And his greatness became difficult for him,

וְהָיָה הוֹלֵךְ אֲזֵי בְדֶרֶךְ שֶׁל הַקָּצָה,

And he would then go on the path of the extreme,

וְהָיָה יוֹצֵא לְקִרְאָתוֹ בְּתַפִּים וּבְמַחֲלוֹת,

And he would go out to greet him with drums and dances,

כְּדֵי לְהִיטֵב בְּטוֹחַ בְּשִׂמְחָתוֹ.

in order to be secure in his joy.

וּמִפְּנֵי שֶׁהִדְרֵךְ שְׁלוֹ הָיָה שָׂבָא אֶל הַטַּעַם מִן הָאֱמֶת עַד שֶׁלֹּא הָיָה מְרִגִּישׁ שׁוּם מְקוֹם הַקְפָּדָה כְּאֵן,

And because his path was that he came to the reason from the truth, until he did not feel any place for strictness here,

וְלוֹ יָדַע זֶה, לֹא הָיְתָה הַיָּדִיעָה הַזֹּאת פּוֹעֶלֶת עָלָיו כְּמוֹ אֲצֵל הָאָדָם שְׁלֵנוּ,

And even if he knew this, this knowledge would not have an effect on him like it does on our person,

אֲשֶׁר מֵיַד שְׂמִרְגִּישׁ כִּי יֵשׁ מְקוֹם הַקְפָּדָה לֹא יָנוּחַ וְלֹא יִשְׁקֹט עַד כִּי יִנָּקֵם מִמֶּנּוּ נִקְמָה,

who immediately, when he feels that there is a place for anger, will not rest and will not be still until he takes revenge from him,

וְאֲצֵל אַהֲרֹן הָעֵידָה עָלָיו הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר לוֹ יָדַע אֲשֶׁר הַתּוֹרָה יִשְׂבַּח אוֹתוֹ עַל כֵּן,

And regarding Aharon, the Torah testified about him that had he known that the Torah would praise him for this,

הָיָה דָן מִזֶּה לְהַבִּין כִּי יֵשׁ כְּאֵן מְקוֹם הַקְפָּדָה וְהָיָה זֶה סִבָּה אֲצֵלוֹ שֶׁלֹּא יִסְמָךְ עַל תְּקוּן מִדּוֹתָיו לְפָגְשָׁהוּ בְּלֵב שְׂמִיחַ לְבַד.

He would infer from this to understand that there is here a place for strictness, and this was a reason for him not to rely on the rectification of his character traits to encounter Him with a happy heart alone.

אֲמָנָם הָיָה חוֹשֵׁשׁ שְׂמָא לְבוֹ לֹא יִשְׂמַח כָּל כֵּן,

However, he was concerned that perhaps his heart would not rejoice so much,

וְהָיָה יוֹצֵא עִם תַּפִּים וּמַחֲלוֹת לְהַרְבּוֹת הַרְבֵּה פְּעֻלוֹת הַמְשִׁמְחוֹת,

And he would go out with drums and dances to increase many joyous activities,

כְּדִי שִׂיחֶיהָ בְּטוֹחַ אֲשֶׁר יִפְגְּשֵׁנוּ בְּלֵב שִׂמְחָה,

so that he will be certain that he will meet Him with a joyful heart,

אָבֵל הַתּוֹרָה הֵעִידָה עָלָיו שֶׁלֹּא הָיָה צָרִיךְ גַּם לַעֲצָת הַקְּצָה,

But the Torah testified about him that he did not even need the advice of the extreme end,

אֲלָא טָבְעוּ הָיָה כָּל כֹּה מִתְקָן,

Rather, his nature was so very refined,

עַד שֶׁלֹּא הָיָה צָרִיךְ לָזֶה, אֲלָא מִיָּד כְּאֲשֶׁר פָּגַשׁ אוֹתוֹ שִׂמְחָה.

Until he did not need it, rather immediately when he met him, he rejoiced.

וְנִמְצָא שֶׁדִּרְכוֹ הָיָה הֵפֶךְ מִמַּשׁ מְקֻצָּה אֶל הַקְּצָה, מִדֶּרֶכּוֹ שֶׁל קֹרַח.

And it turns out that his path was the exact opposite, from one extreme to the other, of Korach's path.

וְאִם שְׁלֹשְׁנֵיהֶם הָיָה טַעַם וְאֱמֶת,

And if for both of them there was reason and truth,

הִנֵּה אֵצֶל זֶה שֶׁבָּא הַטַּעַם אַחֲרֵי הָאֱמֶת שִׂמְחָה בְּלִבּוֹ בְּגִדּוּלַת אָחִיו,

Behold, with this one, where the reason came after the truth, he rejoices in his heart in the greatness of his brother,

וְאֵצֶל זֶה שֶׁבָּא הָאֱמֶת אַחֲרֵי הַטַּעַם חָלַק עַל מֹשֶׁה בְּטַעֲנָה מְדוּעַ תִּתְנַשְּׂאוּ עַל קְהָל ה' וְאֲנִי רְאוּי יוֹתֵר מִמֶּךָ

And with this one, for whom the truth came after the reason, he argued with Moshe with the claim, 'Why do you raise yourselves above the congregation of Hashem, and I am more worthy than you?'

וְהַתְלַמּוּדוֹת אֵצֶלָנוּ, לְהַקְדִּים הָאֱמֶת שֶׁבִּשְׂעָה שִׁישׁ לָנוּ כִּכָּר מְקוּדָם טַעַם אַחֲרֵי הַטַּעַם הַזֶּה אֵינוֹ מְנִיחוֹ לְהַפִּיר אֶת הָאֱמֶת כְּמוֹ שֶׁהוּא וְהוּא מְכַרְח לְצִיאַת בְּמִלְחָמַת תְּנוּפָה קָשָׁה לְהַגְבִּיר הָאֱמֶת עַל הַטַּעַם שְׁלוֹ,

And the learning for us is to put the truth first, that at a time when we already have a different reason beforehand, and this reason does not allow him to recognize the truth as it is, and he is forced to go out in a difficult, powerful war to make the truth prevail over his reason,

עַד שִׁיתֵּהפֶךְ אֵלָיו לַטַּעַם אַחֵר.

until it turns for him to another taste.

וְעִבּוּדַת הַמִּדּוֹת יֵשׁ בִּשְׁנֵי דְרָכִים:

And the avodah of middos is in two ways:

אוּ שִׂיעֲשֶׂה מִן הַקֵּל אֶל הַכָּבֵד אוּ שִׂיעֲשֶׂה הַהֶחָלְפוֹת קִצּוֹנִי בְּפַעַם אֶחָת.

Either he should do it from the light to the heavy, or he should make the extreme changes all at once.

והרמב"ם כתב שְׁדֶרֶךְ עֲבוֹדַת תְּקוּנַת הַמִּדּוֹת, הוּא שְׂיָלֵךְ בְּקֶצֶה שֶׁל כָּל מִדָּה וּמִדָּה (פ"ב מ"ה' דְּעוֹת).

And the Rambam wrote that the way of the avodah of rectifying one's character traits is that one should go to the extreme of each and every trait (Chapter 2 of Hilchos De'os).

והמשל בזה לעגול שֶׁל בְּרִזָּל שֶׁאִם יִרְצֶה הַפְּחָמִי לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ יָשָׁר,

And the mashal for this is like a circle of iron, that if the blacksmith wants to make it straight,

הוא מִכְרַח לְהִפְכוֹ לַצֵּד הַשֵּׁנִי וּלְקַשְׂרָהוּ זְמַן מָה עַד שֶׁיָּשׁוּב יָשָׁר.

He is compelled to turn it to the other side and tie it for some time until it returns straight.

כֵּן הָאָדָם צָרִיךְ לַצָּאת וּלְהִחָלִיף אֶת מִדּוֹתָיו בְּמִרוּצָה גְּדוֹלָה שֶׁיַּעֲשֶׂה פְּעֻלוֹת הַפְּכִיּוֹת נֶגֶד טִבְעוֹ,

So too, a person needs to go out and change his character traits with great speed, that he should do actions opposite to his nature,

עַד שֶׁיִּשְׁיבֶנָּה יָשָׁר.

until he returns it straight.

וְכֵמוֹ שֶׁמִּצִּינוּ אֶצֶל אַהֲרֹן אֲשֶׁר הָעִיד עָלָיו הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר לוֹ הָיָה מְרִגִּישׁ מְקוֹם הַקְּפָדָה,

And just as we find with Aharon, about whom the Torah testified that he would sense a place of Hashem's displeasure,

הָיָה יוֹצֵא בְּתַפִּים וּבִמְחֻלוֹת לָלֶכֶת בְּקֶצֶה הָאַחֲרוֹן.

He would go out with drums and dances to walk at the very end.

וְזֶה שֶׁאָמַר הַנָּבִיא: וְקוֹי ה' יִחַלִּיפוּ כָח, יַעֲלוּ אֲבָר כַּנְּשָׁרִים, יָרוּצוּ וְלֹא יִיָּגְעוּ, יֵלְכוּ וְלֹא יִיָּעֲפוּ (יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ מ').

And this is what the prophet said: "But those who hope in Hashem will renew strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles; they will run and not be weary; they will walk and not faint" (Yeshayahu 40).

וְצָרִיךְ מוֹכֵן הָלֹא הִתְלִיכָה הִיא קֹדֶם הָרִיצָה, וְלָמָּה הַקּוֹדִים הַכְּתוּב הָרִיצָה לְהִתְלִיכָה?

And it needs to be understood, isn't walking before running, so why did the verse place running before walking?

אֲלֹא הוּא הַדָּבָר שֶׁאָמַרְנוּ, שֶׁהַנָּבִיא נֹתֵן לָנוּ הַדֶּרֶךְ אֵיךְ לַעֲלוֹת בְּמַעֲלוֹת הַמִּדּוֹת.

Rather, this is the matter that we said, that the Navi gives us the path how to ascend in the madreigos of the middos.

וּבְאוֹר הַכְּתוּב הוּא עַד"ו:

And the explanation of the verse is like this:

וְקוֹי ה' יִחַלִּיפוּ כָח, כִּי מִי שֶׁמִּקְוֶה אֶל ה',

And those who hope in Hashem will renew strength, for one who hopes in Hashem,

הֵינּוּ שִׂידוּעַ אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָכוֹל בְּכַחוֹ לְבַד לְהִגְבִּיר שְׂכָלוֹ עַל יִצְרוֹ,

Meaning, that he knows that he cannot, with his strength alone, overcome his intellect over his yetzer hara,

אֲשֶׁר הָאֱמֶת שֶׁלוֹ לֹא יוֹלֵד מִן הַטַּעֲמִים שֶׁלוֹ,

whose truth will not be born from his reasons,

אֲלֵא הוּא צָרִיךְ עַל זֶה לְעֹזֶרֶת הַשֵּׁם,

Rather, for this he needs Hashem's help,

וְהוּא מִשְׁתַּדֵּל בְּתַקְנוֹתָו עַל ה' וּבְמַעֲשֵׂה עֲצָמוֹ,

And he strives with his hope in Hashem and in the deed itself,

לְנַצֵּחַ אֶת הַטֶּבַע, אִם הוּא אָדָם כָּזֶה אֲשֶׁר הוּא רוֹצֶה בְּאֱמֶת לְתַקֵּן אֶת טִבְעוֹ,

To conquer nature, if he is such a person who truly wants to fix his nature,

וְהוּא מַכִּיר חֵלִישׁוֹת הַשִּׁכָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּזָה לְבַד לֹא יִסְפִּיק,

And he recognizes the weakness of the intellect, that with this alone it will not suffice,

אֲלֵא צָרִיךְ הוּא לְעֹזֶרֶת ה', הָאָדָם הַזֶּה לֹא יִתְחִיל דֶּרֶךְ הַתְּקוּן שֶׁלוֹ מִן הַקָּל אֶל הַכָּבֵד,

Rather, he needs Hashem's help; this person should not begin his path of rectification from the light to the heavy,

כִּי יוֹדֵעַ הוּא אֲשֶׁר מֶה שְׁנִקְרָא כָבֵד,

For he knows that what is called 'heavy',

הוּא רַק כָּבֵד לְמִי שְׁאִינוֹ מַכִּיר הַכָּרָה גְּדוֹלָה בְּעִנְיַי הַמַּדּוּת,

It is only difficult for one who does not have a great recognition in matters of character traits,

וְעוֹד שֶׁהוּא רוֹצֶה לְכַבּוֹשׁ רַק עִם שִׁכְלוֹ לְבַד,

And furthermore, he wants to conquer only with his intellect alone,

לְכֹן יִהְיֶה כָבֵד עָלָיו הַדָּבָר.

Therefore, the matter will be heavy upon him.

לֹא כֵן אִם הָאָדָם יִקְוֶה אֶל ה' וַיַּעֲשֵׂה מֶה שְׁמַצְדּוֹ,

Not so if a person hopes to Hashem and does what is on his part,

הָאָדָם הַזֶּה יַחֲלִיף אֶת כַּחוֹתָיו בְּדֶרֶךְ אַחֵר,

This person will exchange his powers for another path,

וְהוּא הָאֱמוּר לְהֵלֵן יַעֲלוּ אַבְר כַּנְּשָׁרִים,

And this is what is said below, 'they will sprout wings like eagles',

וְכִמוֹ שֶׁהַנֶּשֶׁר בָּעֵת שִׁיזְקִין יִתְחַדֵּשׁ בּוֹ כַּחוֹ כִּימֵי עֵלּוּמָיו,

And just as the eagle, when it ages, its strength is renewed within it like the days of its youth,

כֵּן מִי שֶׁמְקַוֶּה אֶל ה' הוּא מַחְלִיף אֶת הַכּוּחוֹת הַיְשָׁנוֹת שֶׁלוֹ,

So too, one who hopes to Hashem, he exchanges his old strengths,

וְהַהֲרֻגִים וְהַנִּחוֹת הַקְדוּמוֹת,

And the habits and the preconceived notions,

וְהַמַּדּוֹת הָרָעוֹת מִתְחַלְפִּים עַל דֶּרֶךְ חָדָשׁ לְגַמְרִי,

And the bad character traits transform in a completely new way,

וְהוּא מַגִּיעַ לָזֶה כְּשֶׁהוּא מַתְנַהֵג,

And he reaches this when he conducts himself,

כִּמָּה שֶׁפָּתַב הַרַמְבַּ"ם שֶׁיֵּלֶךְ בַּקָּצָה בְּעִבּוּדַת תְּקוּן הַמַּדּוֹת.

As the Rambam wrote, that one should go to the extreme in the avodah of rectifying character traits.

וְזֶהוּ מָה שֶׁכָּתוּב יָרוּצוּ וְלֹא יִיָּגְעוּ,

And this is what is written, "They will run and not grow weary,"

וְאַחֲרַי כֶּן יֵלְכוּ וְלֹא יִיָּעֲפוּ, וְכִמּוֹ שֶׁנֶּעֱרַר קִטָּן שֶׁמִּחְנֻכִּים אוֹתוֹ לִלְכֹּת מִתְחִלָּה יָרוּץ אֵיזָה פְּסִיעוֹת וּמִזָּה יִלְמַד לִלְכֹּת,

And afterwards they will walk and not grow weary, and just like a small lad whom they train to walk, at first he will run a few steps and from this he will learn to walk,

כֵּן הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר הוּא יֵצֵא לַחַיּוֹת כְּקִטָּן שֶׁנוּלַד,

So too, a person who has gone out to live like a newborn infant,

צָרִיךְ מִקּוּדֵם לְמְרוּצָה גְּדוּלָּה שֶׁיִּרְדֹּף אַחֲרֵי הַתְּקוּן בְּהַשְׁתַּדְּלוֹת גְּדוּלוֹת וּבַפְּעָלוֹת קְצוֹת,

First, one needs a great race, that he should pursue the rectification with great efforts and with extreme actions,

וְכִמּוֹ שֶׁעוֹשֶׂה הַפּוֹחֵם לְעִגּוּל שֶׁל בְּרִזָּל שֶׁמַּהֲפֹכוֹ אֶל הַצֵּד הַשֵּׁנִי לְגַמְרִי,

And just as the blacksmith does to the iron circle, that he turns it completely to the other side,

וְאַחֲרַי כֶּן יָשׁוּב לִיָּשָׁר, כִּמּוֹ כֵּן מִתְחִלָּה יָרוּצוּ וְאַחֲרַי כֶּן יֵלְכוּ בַּדֶּרֶךְ הַיָּשָׁר.

And afterwards he will return to straighten out, just as initially they will run and afterwards they will walk on the straight path.

WHAT TO TAKE FROM IT

To truly grow, we must always prioritize 'emes' over 'taam'. When faced with a nisayon, first seek the unvarnished truth, even if it's uncomfortable, and only then will a pure and lasting 'taam' emerge. This means actively breaking our middos, even going to the extreme opposite, like the Rambam teaches, to truly transform our nature and serve Hashem with a pure heart, just as Aharon Hakohen did.

