

פרשת חקת

This week's adaptation is dedicated in honor of the upcoming wedding of Tova Levine and Yoseph Jacoby.

מזל טוב!!!

זאת חקת התורה... ויקחו אליך פרה אדמה תמימה
 "This is the statute of the Torah ... take for you a perfectly red unblemished cow" (י"ט, ב)

The Torah is compared to the *Para Aduma* in that just as the *Para Aduma* must be performed in purity¹ so must Torah be learned in purity. Only through pure learning is the world maintained – therefore Chazal say that the world only survives due to the learning of children – because their learning is pure, for they have not tasted sin. (Aron Haedus)

זאת חקת התורה (י"ט, ב)
 "This is the [meta-logical] law of the Torah"

Not everything is understood in life. Our reality is filled with questions, contradictions and doubts. Hashem "reveals a *tefach* and covers two *tefachim*."²

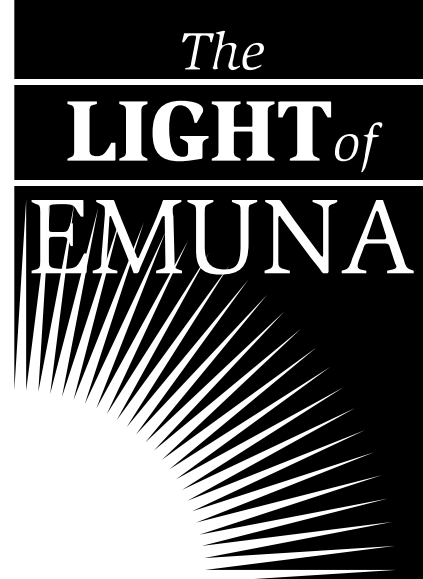
The ashes of the *Para Aduma* are a *chok* - we are incapable of understanding. The *mitzvah* of *Para Aduma* is an ancient secret. - even the wisest of all men, Shlomo Hamelech, testified that he could not understand it.³

Hashem directs the world in a way that is beyond logic and we cannot understand His ways. What is expected of us? Innocence. תמימה - completeness, simplicity. We must acknowledge, "I do not understand anything, I only know that

¹ ואסף איש טהור את אפר הפרה והניח מתוך למחנה במקום טהור (י"ט, ט)

² A phrase (מגלה טפח ומכסה טפחים) quoted often in *sifrei kabbalah* and *chassidus* based on *ש Gemara* in *Nedarim* 20b.

³ אמרתי אהבמה והיא רחוקה ממני: (קהלת ז, כג)



Based on Harav Menachem Azolai's "Ohr Ha'Emuna"

everything is from Hashem and everything is for the good." Hashem's ways are hidden but we know that they lead to the ultimate benefit, even if it is not discernible along the way. Who says that we are supposed to understand everything?

We strategize, we plan several steps ahead, everything seems to be going well, so logically, according to Hashem's will – and then, instantly, everything is turned upside down right in front of our eyes and we find ourselves where we never expected to be. Why? If we are serving Hashem properly, after our few seconds of initial shock – we must replace the "why" with "what for." "Why" is a challenge, anger – why did such a thing happen to us, why did everything turn for us, who has the power to fix this. But, when we remember that everything is by Divine Providence, that everything is from Hashem – we exchange "why" for "what for." Sometimes we receive an immediate answer and sometimes the answer is delayed. When we do finally understand we cannot help but admire that the Divine Providence is so amazing. There are times when there are no answers. This is what Hashem wants and there is certainly good hidden here, even if we do not understand it. It is great when everything goes according to our forecasts. But it is even better and one is even happier when he realizes that the true design is Hashem's. When our plans go awry, the answer to all of the questions that echo in our heads is silence. To remain silent and know that

everything is for the best. True, it is difficult, and at times it seems impossible – but it is absolutely true. Our understanding is limited. There are questions that we are simply incapable of resolving. For these, silence is more apropos than anything. Silence is worth gold.

I want to be sanctified. I want to overcome the desire for food that draws me to the refrigerator every hour and a half because I feel like I must put something in my mouth if I hope to continue functioning. Yet, it does not seem to happen.

I want to guard my eyes. I have *davened* for this for years and yet my head still rises and scans automatically.

I want to stop getting angry – I do not want to relinquish control over myself to other people when I am “lit up” – I am not a free man, I am not a man at all. I am so ashamed before all who saw or heard me while I was irate – and yet it still happens sometimes.

I want so badly to love EVERYONE – to see only the good in each person, to view others with positive eyes. Yet, there are still those who annoy me, that I am jealous of, that I try to avoid and, if I do see them, avoid eye contact with.

I want so badly to *daven* gently – to feel every letter, every word, - to concentrate on what is said and not to chase foreign thoughts and daydreams. Still, there are *tefillos* that are almost complete without me having begun to *daven*.

Why Father? Why so long? How many more years must I traverse before something begins to stir within me? What am I really asking? I am not arguing about materialism because I understand Rebbe Nachman’s teaching that one should not insist and press for materialistic matters in his *davening*. Sometimes, it may actually hurt a person, G-d forbid, if his requests are fulfilled. If a person persists and insists in his *tefillos* he may “force” Hashem’s hand because a person has tremendous power to accomplish with his prayers. Yet, it may not be in his best

interest, G-d forbid, because he is not ready for it. When a person *davens* for livelihood, children or other needs, he is forbidden from insisting on Hashem’s performance because it is comparable to taking something by force, stealing – rather we must *daven* for mercy and with supplication.

What will be with my service of You, Father? What will be with my fear of Heaven? Why is there such a long wait?

The delay is necessary because holiness must be built slowly, layer after layer. One who seeks purity is assisted, but he must be patient. There are things that take time, effort and prayer. Chazal tell us that if someone says he toiled and discovered, he is believed.⁴ Such is the way of holiness. Avraham Avinu waited a long time. Avraham sat at the entrance of the tent at the heat of the day⁵ – meaning that he merited Hashem’s revelation because he sat and lingered for many days at the “entrance of the tent” – the entrance into holiness. For one who contemplates the true eternal purpose will not give up for any reason, he will sit and wait and linger at the door for as long as necessary. Even if he is not admitted and the heat afflicts him, he will not abandon his place until they have mercy on him in Heaven. (*Likutey Halachos*)

We recently counted forty-nine days and on the fiftieth day we received the Torah. We wanted the Torah right away, we had no strength to wait, but Hashem said: wait. In life there are delays. We cannot receive everything immediately. All deficiencies derive from forcing time. Even the problems that great *tzaddikim* caused (at their levels) resulted only because they superseded time and refused to wait for Hashem’s salvation, at the time that Hashem willed it. In this week’s *parsha*, Moishe Rabbeinu’s “mistake” of striking the rock had a tint of pressing time (even though we cannot fathom what really took place).

Keeping the Torah, building holiness –can be achieved only with tears. We must beg, plead for

⁴ *Megilla* 6b

⁵ והוא ישב פתח־האהל כחם היום: (בראשית יח, א)

mercy and with supplication, with complete humility. Why? Because that is what our Father wants. That is how Hashem created His world. There are things beyond the grasp of our comprehension and we must accept them as they are. Our reality is limited, as the Kli Yakar says,⁶ “the purpose of knowledge is to know that we don’t know.” We do not know and we do not understand.

“How is it possible to understand long wait of so many older boys, whose friends are mostly fathers already, while they have difficulty fortifying themselves in their *yeshiva*, with strength not their own, to keep their *sedarim* – but they see how they have fallen from their levels laboriously acquired over years and now everything fades for them. Every day that passes damages them spiritually and they cannot understand why. The questions are also asked by their parents who watch their sons descend in their levels of service of Hashem – how each day they lose some of their warmth in *davening*, in Torah – their warmth and diligence in awakening early to serve Hashem. The father invested years to raise a son who toiled in Torah and fear of Heaven, a son who serves Hashem. Indeed, for many years he saw *nachas* from this son – but now, each passing month, the son falls and the father watches – it shames him and hurts him – he cries to Hashem, ‘this is not the same Srulik.’ And he asks why. He seeks some logic in all of this - outwardly there appears to be only losses. Why? We do not understand. In concealment there are always things beyond comprehension.” (Ki Ata Imadi)

Even *teshuva* (repentance) is difficult to understand. *Teshuva* is so miraculous that with one thought of *teshuva* a person can transform all of reality. *Teshuva* has power even as mere thought. In other words, a person does something wrong, he ruins something and suddenly he is grief-stricken and has thoughts of *teshuva* – everything is instantly overturned, entirely different – he can receive G-dly light,

Hashem opens all of the gates because such is the way Hashem created the world. *Teshuva* is above the world, it preceded the world, it is not found here. Sin, flaws cannot touch *teshuva* because *teshuva* is on a much higher plane, so far above that sin and damage cannot reach such a high place. (Beor Pnei Melech Chaim)

Even a *tzaddik* is not easy to understand. If you want to get a true flavor of *yiddishkeit* seek out a *tzaddik*, for he is the grace, beauty and splendor of the world. He is a man of G-d, half man and half G-dly. Can we understand that? He descends into the lowest places to retrieve each of us as per the depth of our fall and he lifts us up to the highest places, so close to Hashem.

Parshas Chukas is a *parsha* of *emuna*. Nowadays, we speak a lot of improving “quality of life” – and that is precisely *emuna*. Quality of life is *emuna*. “One whose heart is completely with Hashem and his *emuna* is strong and he has *emuna* that everything is orchestrated only by Hashem’s will – is always happy, he has no worries or fear of anything.” (Likutey Moharan)

Our lives are one long struggle. There are moments when everything is suddenly reversed on us, like one whose world is darkened at noon. What do we do then? We run to Hashem. We run to the *emuna* that everything that happens to us is from Hashem and for the best. We are small people. To see the benefit in the midst of grief is often impossible – but to have *emuna* is possible. We must review it over and over until we truly feel it in our hearts, until we can dance from great joy and we can say thank You to Hashem for the suffering that He sent us – we feel that it is for the best.

A Jew with *emuna* is able to survive in absolute poverty and be happy. He receives nourishment from his *emuna*. A person falls into sadness, despair, he hears that people spread rumors about him, work against him and his spirit is drained, he loses the joy of living. A few words of *emuna*, even a simple thought of *emuna*, or merely remembering that Hashem exists – and he find joy. The more a person strengthens his

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שמות כה, י

emuna and sees Hashem's guiding hand in every occurrence – the more he does not blame (himself or others), he is not broken by anything that happens to him, he has *emuna* that Divine Providence guides him on his own personal path, at a pace and in a way that is most appropriate for him because Hashem knows what is best for him. He is less worried, less angry, and less sad.

He is happier because happiness is the revelation of *emuna*. Our problem is that we generally only recognize Divine Providence after things become clear. That is also good because with each case we are reinforced with *emuna* that everything that happens to us is all amazing destiny.

Hisbodeus Corner

General principle: Everyone must accustom himself to talk to Hashem at all times. Primarily, he should talk honestly, in his own words, from his heart, until he is ashamed for all of his sins before the Great King. It is essential that he does so often. He should ask Hashem to nullify his passions, for they are afflictions. Desires are like chocolate covered poison – they seem sweet and pleasant, but they are really poisonous. Cravings separate a person from Hashem and the true pleasantness and real sweetness of Hashem. How can a person overcome them when at times of challenge we lose all control and coherence? What should we do? The one and only recommendation is to stand before Hashem each day and beg for mercy that our desires be nullified along with our bad traits - they too cause horrible suffering to us and those around us. Here too a person loses control when he is challenged. The only advice is extensive prayer again and again. (*Bsdei Ya'ar*)

תפילה

Master of the World! Give me *emuna*. Help me understand that when I lose my temper – I do not have *emuna* - and certainly when I am vengeful. It is so difficult for me, Father, to remember, at the right time, that everything that happens to me, that everything that is done to me - is from You. When will I merit remembering this right away, when things occur and not after several hours or days, during which time I am filled with emotion, upset and angry? It is so good to forgive, to judge favorably, to understand, to forego – it is so sweet. Why doesn't that happen to me as soon as things occur? Help me, father, to remember that this world is a large repair shop because there is much here to fix. If I would introspect a bit more, I would see how much there is to repair. Help me, Father, to recognize that everything that happens to me is part of the path I must travel for my correction.

Master of the World, give me *emuna*. Help me realize that when I am tense and worried – I do not have *emuna*. Help me, when something causes me to worry, to immediately remember that there is a Hashem in the world, that I have You, Father, that I have *tefilla*, that *tefilla* has amazing power and if I *daven*, specifically with a cry from the heart, a silent cry that repeats every time I remember, then I will see great salvation – but first I must calm down. We are not alone. We have to Whom to turn, we have a Father in Heaven Who is all-powerful and nothing is difficult for Him.

Master of the World, give me *emuna*. Help me acknowledge that when I am in a bad mood, when I am unhappy – I do not have *emuna*. For, if there is Hashem in the world, how can I be sad? If I have a Father in Heaven Who loves me with an eternal love and Who has great pleasure from every little *mitzvah* that I do, even without proper *kavana*, even without wholeheartedness, how can I be depressed?

Master of the World, give me *emuna*, because *emuna* is my joy and vitality, *emuna* is my relaxation and peace of mind, it is my pleasantness and sweetness. It is the melody of my life.

MASTER OF THE WORLD – GIVE ME *EMUNA*!!!

Have an awesome, uplifting and wonderful Shabbos,

Dov

Notice: The foregoing is based on my limited understanding of the Parsha Sheet, *Ohr Ha'Emuna*, disseminated by Harav Menachem Azolai Shlita and is not a complete or exact translation of *Ohr Ha'Emuna* and is not necessarily even a reliable interpretation of the ideas presented therein. *Ohr Ha'Emuna* is published in Hebrew; in translation, accuracy is always compromised. Rav Azolai has not reviewed this material and is not even aware of its existence. Any inaccuracies, omissions or confusion should be attributed exclusively to me. I still hope you enjoy and it provides some *chizuk*.

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