

פרשת שופטים

This adaptation is dedicated in honor of: our dear son, Moishe, who embarks this week, iy"h, on a spiritual journey to yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel – may he continue to be a source of *yiddishe nachas* to us and the entire family. !!! הצלחה מושי !!!

Dear Friends:

As many of you know, several of the friends and family of Avigdor Glaser, of blessed memory, formed an organization, in his memory, to financially assist widows and orphans. The organization, Avigdor's Helping Hand, is entering its seventh year of operation and, unfortunately, business is booming. Since our inception, we have distributed almost \$3,000,000 in financial assistance.

We conduct one major fundraising effort each year. Please join us for an enjoyable evening of fine cuisine and relaxing music in support of Avigdor's Helping Hand, at our:

Seventh Annual Labor Day BBQ

Monday, September 3, 2012 at 7:00 pm at the Moradi Residence, 72 Muriel Avenue, Lawrence, NY.

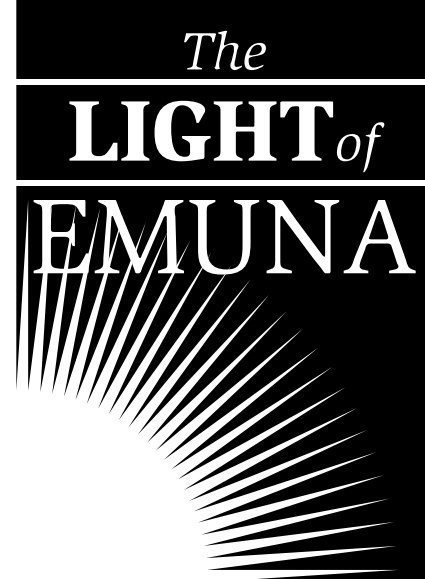
For more information about the BBQ or Avigdor's Helping Hand, visit: www.AvigdorsHelpingHand.org

If you cannot attend the BBQ, you can still help by making your tax-deductible donation online or by sending your contributions to: Avigdor's Helping Hand, 138-45 78th Drive, Flushing, NY 11367.

תזכו למצוות and thank you,
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**"שפטים ושטרם תתן לך בכל שעריך" (טז, יח)
"You shall set up judges and officers for yourselves in all of your cities."**

Hashem loves justice above all else. Rabbi Levi taught: "to what is the matter comparable? A king had many sons, but he loved his youngest son more than the others. The king had an orchard that was his most prized possession. The king thought, 'I shall give my orchard, which I cherish over all of my other possessions, to my youngest son, whom I love more than any of my other sons.' Hashem says, 'Of all the nations that I created, I love only Israel, as it says, 'For, when



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

Israel was young, I loved him¹ and of everything I created I love only justice, as it says 'For I am Hashem, Who loves justice.'² Hashem concludes, "I will give what I treasure most to the nation that I love – set up 'judges and officers'³

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Each of us is unique. There is a lot we can learn from each other. Rebbe Nachman says, "Each Jew contains something precious that is not found in any other."⁴

It is currently *Elul*. It is a time of abandoning discord and considering others in a positive light, even if they are not exactly like us. This is real *ahavas Yisroel* (love of fellow Jews) – to seek the good in others, not the negative, G-d forbid. *Elul* hints at the *mitzvos* of *Purim* that engender friendship.⁵ We need inner judges and officers to guard our thoughts, words and improper actions. When a person forgoes all of his claims against others (even legitimate ones), the claims against him in Heaven are also waived - a turn for a turn.

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כי נער ישראל ואהבו (הושע יא, א)
כי אני ד' אוהב משפט (ישעיה סא, ח)
דברים רבה ה, ז
ליקו"מ לד
אלול = איש לרעהו ומתנות לאביונים

More than anything else, Hashem wants us to treat each other well, honor each other, display a welcoming countenance toward each other. People want to see smiling faces, even if you did not get a good night's sleep. If you didn't sleep – take a nap – but do not go outside if you cannot muster a smile. You were given a face so that you could smile at others. Do you know what others are going through? Do you know what your smile can do for them? Do you know how much a few words of encouragement can help?

We received the Torah “as one person with one heart.” Hashem does not relinquish this – it is a precondition. But, it is very difficult. A person can barely put up with himself. He only barely endures his spouse and his children. His neighbors – he quickly shuts the doors and windows to avoid them. Often we cannot seem to tolerate ourselves, how can we embrace the whole world? We have no choice. Hashem does not waive this requirement. Hashem's Presence is only found where there is unity. Each person is a limb of the Divine Presence – yet it cannot receive anything without harmony. Therefore, before each *tefilla* we accept the *mitzvah* of “loving our fellow Jews as ourselves.” That is what makes our *tefillos* more agreeable. The more friends a person has, the more people he helps, the more people he listens to, pays attention to, draws close to Hashem, connects to, forgives, gives in to, joins – whether family, neighbors, or people in the street – the more he does his part in unifying – until all become connected – ultimately leading to the final and complete ingathering of the exiles.⁶

If we “love our fellow Jews as ourselves” then we can be said to love Hashem. These two loves cannot be separated – they are interdependent – each one strengthening the other. Here too, we need the inner judges, and primarily, the inner officers - so that we do not fall asleep.

A person must constantly elevate himself, inspire himself and long for Hashem. The *pasuk* says, “My soul yearns and also pines for the courts of

Hashem ... even a bird found a home and a swallow, her nest.”⁷ When will I too find my Father? When will I too lift myself up to Your courts, to absorb Your grace, to bask in the radiance of Your spirit? When will I merit raising myself to You every time that I feel as if I cannot go on – for down here things are difficult, Father – a constant struggle, incessant coping.

When a person feels distant, that he is estranged from Hashem – the stabbing pain in his heart brings him nearer. These longings are the greatest closeness. As in Rebbe Nachman's story of the seven beggars – the bride and groom merely yearned for each beggar and they arrived. If we crave Hashem, He is with us.

A person must think about Hashem, remember Hashem. That is our success in life. The more we cling to Hashem, the more we desire Hashem – the more Hashem showers us with good. Rebbe Nachman taught: “Our response to the evil inclination is to increase and progress⁸ - more awakening, more yearning – drawing more and more Jews close to Hashem. When a person prays with devotion, does something genuine – he causes the root of all Jewish souls to tremble – this is the greatest *kiruv*.” A person must believe in himself, in the powers that Hashem gave him. To see one's self as unimportant is very important – but not if it results in inactivity. We must be humble – but, with faith in ourselves. We cannot reach authentic humility without accomplishing. To truly say “I am nothing” one must learn much Torah. We must trust in ourselves, for we experience amazing moments during which we are connected to Hashem. In the midst of the confusion, the darkness – we cannot see anything – but we are with Hashem. “I was not successful with my children, with my *davening*, I committed this foolish act or that one – but, I love Hashem, I love holiness, I love those incredible moments of connection, even if they are few and far between.” In the chaotic pace of life, in the bedlam within which we find

⁷ נכספה וגם כלתה נפשי לחצרות ד' ... גם ציפור מצאה בית ודרור קן לה (תהלים פד, ג-ד)

⁸ *Beis Hillel's* opinion on the candles of *Chanukah*: מוסיף והולך

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באור פני מלך חיים

ourselves entrapped – we recall those moments of authentic connection, those moments of love – we are not worthless, unsuccessful or downtrodden – we are with the King.

Reawakening must be with fortification. In the month of mercy and forgiveness, *Elul*, we must endeavor to feel shame – for how we damaged and ruined, how we fell and degenerated – but only from a place of encouraging ourselves – from the recognition of our virtues and the hope of correcting our souls – from within the recognition of the eternal love with which Hashem loves us.

"תמים תהיה עם ד' אלקיך" (יה, יג)

“Be wholehearted with Hashem, Your G-d.”

Whoever acts wholeheartedly merits being with Hashem. The very first accolade accorded to Yaakov Avinu is “a wholehearted man, dwelling in tents.”⁹ Purity is integral. Hashem’s desire and pleasure is for a person to cast aside his intellect and wisdom, nullify himself completely, ignore all questions and perceptions – and want only to be close to Hashem.

A sincere Jew speaks to Hashem with innocence. Simple words, true words - create a natural, simple, healthy bond with the Master of the World.

Wholehearted means complete, not missing anything – for if one clings to Hashem he reaches the highest level that can be reached – consequently - what can possibly be missing? Wholeheartedness is completeness and completeness is happiness. Happy for the fact that Hashem exists and there is nothing besides Him. Of primary importance is knowing that You are with me. Of primary importance is that You are in my heart.

We seek truth - absolute truth. We want to know what Hashem wants of us at every single moment, in the context of our mission to

ourselves and to those around us. When we understand – we are happy. Real joy is a person whose self, ego, honor, and all of those things that hinder and confuse him are neutralized – he grapples with them and is able to cast them aside. Only then can we appreciate what Dovid Hamelech meant when he sang, “And I shall rejoice with Hashem.”¹⁰ The wholehearted person is one who loves Hashem, rejoices with Hashem and embraces Hashem.

Hashem placed His soul into the Torah. Therefore, one who learns Torah or does a *mitzvah* – is as if he hugs Hashem - even if there are still barriers – for even if a king wears many layers, one who hugs him is still embracing the king. We must always remind ourselves that Hashem gave us Himself as a gift and begs us to hold onto Him. Whenever we are not sure what to do and seek Torah advice, we hug Hashem.⁶

Hashem loves pure-hearted innocence. There was once a simple, innocent ignoramus who was not even able to read the words of *davening*. He had over ten children but did not know the words with which to bless them on Friday nights. He would attend *shul*, but, since he could not read, he would merely sit and listen. Once he heard the *chazzan* sing the *tefilla* of “איזהו מקומן” in a particularly beautiful way and he noticed that the *chazzan* spent much time on the phrase, “both these and those are burned in the place of the ashes.”¹¹ Based on the distinction afforded this phrase by the *chazzan*, he assumed this phrase to be a blessing to the congregation. He returned each day until he memorized the phrase, then, started blessing his children with it every Friday evening. One week, a *talmid chochom* was a guest in the home and upon hearing the “blessing,” screamed and asked why he was cursing his children. He immediately instructed his host to cease and desist using this inappropriate phraseology. That same night, the *talmid chochom* had a dream in which he was told that he had acted improperly. Hashem had loved the simple devotion of the host so much

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ואנכי אשמח בד' (תהלים קד, לד)

¹¹

אלו ואלו נשרפין בבית הדשן

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איש תם ישב אהלים (בראשית כה, כז)

that, each week, He rearranged the letters of the “blessing” to create a real blessing. Such is Hashem’s love of pure innocence.

Wholeheartedness is acting solely for Heaven’s sake. Doing so is difficult - our egos get in the way. It is for this very reason that *Chassidus* places a premium on receiving help from those who act purely for Heaven’s sake - *tzaddikim*. We visit them, ask of them, connect to them and invoke the merit of those who have passed. We wish to be close to a *tzaddik*, for he constantly clings to Hashem, never becoming distracted, completely humble – the *tzaddik* is the beauty of the world. What is this beauty? – Truth. There is nothing more beautiful than truth.

A wholehearted person is always happy with his lot. Even if something is lacking – he is happy. He never sees deficiencies as negatives because he knows that Hashem directs everything and anything is possible for Hashem – everything can

change in the blink of an eye.

When a person is content with whatever he has, he fulfills the words of Rebbe Nosson, “a person can merit having his life be exactly as he wishes it to be – by simply wishing for his life to be exactly as it is.”¹² If we wish for things as they actually go, then they will go as we wish.

True wholeheartedness is in knowing that there is nothing aside from Hashem, that everything is from Him – then, we can accept whatever happens with joy. We have not reached this yet – but intellectually we get it, understand it, learn it and we try to fill our minds with it – each of us according to our own level.

Hashem orchestrates the world and everything is possible for Him – it is forbidden to ever lose hope, even towards those matters that seem completely hopeless.

תפילה

Master of the World! I want so badly to gladden You today, like You gladden me – You are owed so much, every day, but especially today. Help me, Father:

To successfully please You for all of the things that I have wanted to for so long but have not succeeded. Help me begin anew and draw strength from this strong desire that I have today to give You gratification.

To successfully cheer You up with all of the little things that we do - not do for our own sakes but for Your honor, like those things that that no one sees or knows about – only You and us.

To successfully express much gratitude, at all times and in all places – never to forget to thank You. It should emanate from the depths of our hearts, not as mere lip service – for I have become so accustomed to Your gifts so that even when they are big and great I forget to thank You, I forget to acknowledge how good You are to me.

To successfully be worthy of Your gifts and never forget that everything is Yours and from You. Nothing is mine.

May I never become arrogant as a result of everything that You give me. May I always remember that it is not me and they are not mine – it is all You and it is all Yours. The precious and amazing gifts that the beneficent Father provides to His children are all unearned treasures, for we truly deserve nothing.

Have an awesome, uplifting and wonderful Shabbos,

דוּב

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 adaptation 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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To receive this adaptation by weekly email, email me at LightofEmuna@dovelias.com

¹² The beauty of this prose is lost in translation:

אדם יכול לזכות שחיינו יהיו כמו שהוא רוצה, על ידי שירצה את חיינו כמו שהם (שיח שרפי קודש ח"ב תקט"ז)