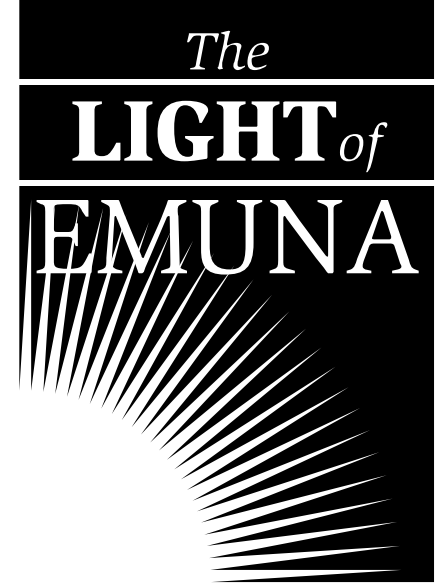


פרשת כי תצא

This adaptation is dedicated in honor of:
the wedding of our dear cousins
Mindy & Shlomo Shurin
מזל טוב !!!



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

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,

Do

"כי תצא למלחמה על איבך ונתנו ד' אלקיך בידך"
"If you go out to war against your enemies, and Hashem, your G-d, will deliver them into your hands" (כא, י)

"It is impossible to be victorious in battle without firm resolve. This is the primary glory with which Hashem takes pride in the Jewish people. Hashem boasts about the intensity and tenacity of a Jew who is repeatedly knocked down and relentlessly strengthens himself with great obstinacy and refuses to allow himself to fail."¹

¹

ליקו"ה בהמ"ז ד, יב

"כי תצא למלחמה על איבך" (כא, י)

"If you go out to war against your enemies"

Our enemy is anything that distances us from Hashem – anything that separates us, any impediment, anything that causes us to suddenly not experience Hashem's Presence. We must wage war against this enemy, for a Jewish life without Hashem is not viable.

Our bond with Hashem is our bond with our own vitality, our own soul.

Nothing can gladden a person more than closeness to Hashem. Our entire mission in this world is to form a connection and attachment to Hashem. Without it, there is no purpose to life. The evil inclination fights this with all of his might. Every small gesture that a Jew seeks to achieve in the direction of holiness causes the evil inclination to dispatch thousands of obstacles and confusions. That is the struggle of life – the struggle between man and his eternal enemy. Chazal teach, "A person's *yetzer* overcomes him every day and were it not for Hashem's assistance, it would be impossible."² The implication is that according to the natural order it would be extremely difficult to conquer the evil inclination and it would be poised to

² יצור של אדם מתגבר עליו בכל יום ויום, ואלמלא הקב"ה עוזר לאדם, לא היה יכול לו (קידושין ל).

weaken us in our war with him. Therefore, our *pasuk* says, "If you go out to war against your enemies" – if you begin to wage war – you can be assured that Hashem will help you succeed – "and Hashem, your G-d, will deliver them into your hands." One, who begins to purify himself, is afforded aid from Heaven.

Man was created below to remember that Hashem is above. The lower one finds himself, the greater the merit for remembering Hashem. Rebbe Nachman taught that when a person embarks on his service of Hashem, he is greeted with inaccessibility, but, if he is perseveres, refuses to give up, constantly chases Hashem – he will succeed.³

The *pasuk* says, "I was strange to my brothers, and alien to the sons of my mother."⁴ Chazal explain that Dovid Hamelech's family thought that he was not fit to be part of the Jewish nation; therefore, they sent him to the desert with the sheep, hoping that he would die there. This continued for twenty-eight years. He suffered dreadful humiliation – but he remained silent, constantly strengthening himself with Hashem – talking and conversing with Hashem. No one wished to speak with him, no one wanted to be around him – but he used this solitude positively – and *davened* to Hashem. When Shmuel arrived in Bethlehem, at Yishai's home, on Hashem's mission to select one of Yishai's sons – Yishai assumed he was looking for his eldest son, Eliav – a great person, righteous, handsome. Shmuel, too, thought Eliav was the proper choice and wished to anoint him. But, Hashem told him that he was not the one. Then, Yishai presented his other sons, one after the other – Hashem rejected each one. The son that was suspected of being unfit was the anointed one. When Dovid entered, Hashem told Shmuel, "arise and anoint him, for he is the one."⁵

But, this did not end Dovid's humiliation and

suffering. They scorned him, they pursued him – he was hounded his entire life – his family, Shaul, the Philistines, his son Avshalom, cursed horribly by Shimi ben Gera. Until his final day he suffered degradations and torment – but at the end of the road, Moshiach emerges, Tehillim emerges (the book that is the redemption of the world). Only through Dovid Hamelech could the book of Tehillim be revealed – because he ran to Hashem, because he wept to Hashem, because he had such a broken heart. There is no one who does not find himself in these *tefillos*. What he cried to Hashem, spoke to Hashem, with tears, with heart – that is what he wrote.

There is no way to win the war unless we flee toward Hashem. Where else should we escape to? Who will give us counsel and guidance? Who will encourage and bolster us at those moments during which we are completely broken, when we find it difficult to breathe? Who will provide the answers to all of our questions and confusions? Who will we ask to help us become better, to enlighten us, to make us go beyond ourselves? Who will lead us to such high plateaus, where will we finally understand, where we will finally feel that the true flavor of life lays not with urges that always leave us with a sour taste – the true taste of life is the pleasantness of Hashem, proximity to Hashem – the spirit, not the matter. Only one in the world can – He can do anything, nothing is too difficult – Hashem.

To win the war we must fight with joy, because without joy there is no power, no health, no peace of mind, no life. Happiness is the spearhead in our war with the evil inclination. Being happy with our lot is of paramount importance. True, we do not have everything, but we do have a lot. A truly wealthy person is one who is missing nothing – and this is only possible for one who is happy with his lot. For Jews throughout the generations, this was the secret to bliss. "Things are good for me and I am happy with what the Creator has given me. My lot contains no negative at all."

Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa said that if everyone's

³ תורה מ"ח ח"ב
⁴ מזר הייתי לאחי ונוכרי לבני אימי (תהילים סט, ט)
⁵ קום משחהו כי זה הוא (שמואל א, טז, יב)

lots were mixed together; each person would run to choose his own lot again.

Being happy with one's lot does not mean being unable to strive for more. At many times in life, we definitely want to increase our share. But, our primary focus must be on what we have, not on what we don't have.

Hashem loves this joy of being content with our portion. "Hashem has done great things with us; we were happy."⁶ Because we are happy for all the good that comes our way – Hashem does great things with us.

We must fight for happiness. We must not give in to all of the challenges that face us and allow them to topple us. Every challenge lasts only five minutes. We must fortify, guard our joy, not worry, not despair, not become depressed – and we will see salvation. When we remain cheerful, we draw salvation to ourselves. The challenge lasts five minutes. The Kotzker Rebbe advised that when a person is faced with temptations and he craves sin, G-d forbid, he should delay for just five minutes – he should not run to commit a sin. Wait five minutes and watch the evil inclination fade. The evil inclination lasts no longer than five minutes. That is what occurred to Adam Harishon. Hashem did not reveal how long it would be forbidden to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. The moment that Hashem forbid it, an awesome and frightening inclination overcame him to eat specifically from that tree. Chazal tell us that had he waited three hours until Shabbos, he would have been permitted to eat from the tree. The trial is that it is not revealed to a person that his challenges will last only a finite amount of time, so he begins to believe that they will last a lifetime. Had Adam known that the prohibition would expire in three hours he would most certainly have withstood the temptation. Challenges are only for a short time – withstand for a brief moment and the enticement passes.

Rebbe Nachman taught that happiness is

⁶ הגדיל ד' לעשות עמנו, היינו שמחים (תהילים קכו, ג)

impossible without peace of mind. Each of us is capable of amazing and wonderful accomplishments. Simple people, who have not learned much and who do not have any special aura about them, can quietly achieve amazing and wondrous things – with peace of mind.

These are the circumstances in which a person begins to escape his inadequacies, his anguish, his distress and, via this serenity, reach bliss. It allows us to escape ourselves a bit, not to think of ourselves but to consider our surroundings – there is a sun, moon, stars, there are beautiful skies, seas, rivers - so many wonderful things that G-d created – flowers, plants, trees – all of these have a place within our souls. Humans are the epicenter of creation. If there is such a beautiful sea, then it is also found within our hearts. If there are such beautiful varieties of flowers, plants and trees – they all exist in our souls. We simply must reveal them. Man is the essence of creation, the crown of creation is you yourself, for each of us. It is an indescribable beauty. A person must escape himself a bit to see the trees, the flowers, the birds – to remember that he is in fact the pinnacle of all these things, the culmination of it all. If he fails to see this in himself, he must find the time to find it in nature, to do *hisbodedus*, to gaze at the sky and the stars, to open his mind. If he cannot do so within nature, he should sit quietly by himself and ponder. Hashem has instilled His G-dliness inside of us – we must reveal it.⁷

What helps us most to return to Hashem, to return to joy – is our interpersonal relationships. Give charity, forgive our spouse and perform kindness. There was a wealthy man named Orenstein, who lived on the border of Meah Shearim, near Shaar Shechem. He would give generously to every *mitzvah* cause. Once, a poor man, who did not have the funds needed to marry off his older daughter, came to solicit funds. To the astonishment of the poor man, Orenstein gave him the entire amount needed – on the condition that he be invited to the wedding. The poor man replied, "of course I'll

⁷ באור פני מלך חיים

invite you, you made the whole thing possible.” The father of the bride was mortified when he realized, as he was standing under the *chuppa*, that he had neglected to invite Mr. Orenstein. He was very upset until he struck upon an idea. He called the assembled guests to attention and asked the entire wedding party to proceed with him to the Orenstein home. So, they all went – guests, band, waiters, everyone. A few minutes earlier, robbers had entered the Orenstein home, bound the Orensteins and were in the process of stealing all of their valuables. The commotion of the approaching wedding party scared them off and they left all of the valuables behind. Such is the reward for *tzedaka*.

The main impediment in our relationship with Hashem is that we are self-absorbed. We predominantly think about ourselves – what is good for us, what we need. We fail to consider

others. We avoid certain people that we don't enjoy. When we are stressed, we don't have time for others. This is our internal task – to think about others in making our everyday decisions.

We must learn from *tzaddikim*. How does a *tzaddik* differ from others – he serves Hashem, exclusively for Hashem's sake, without any ulterior motives. He seeks no recognition. We must become close to *tzaddikim* and learn from them.

The more materialistic we are, the greater the *tzaddik* we need to guide us. A *tzaddik* does not just bring the Torah to us; he reveals Hashem's light to us. He assists us in the war with the evil inclination, with what separates us from Hashem. His light is the light of *ahavas Yisroel*, particularly regarding peace in the home.

Hisbodedus Corner

Hashem does not relate to His creations reproachfully. Hashem knows that we are not angels. Hashem's sole complaint against a person, every time he commits a sin is, "Why did you not seek My help? Why did you think you could overcome your evil inclination by yourself? And, now that you failed, why do you not confess to me and ask forgiveness? To tell you to never sin? – I know that it is impossible to immediately completely stop sinning. But, I can tell you that every time you stumble – do *teshuva* – that is possible and achievable. Over time, with the *teshuva* that you do and the *tefillos* with which you appeal for My help, you will cease succumbing."

Therefore, when a person blunders, even with a serious offense, he must first remember that "*teshuva*" does not mean persecuting himself and becoming depressed – it means confessing, regretting and petitioning for forgiveness – all of which is impossible without joy.

Therefore, before anything we must declare, "There is nothing besides Hashem, Hashem wants to show me that I cannot succeed without Him because he loves me and wants me to be close to Him. The proof of this is that I attempted to proceed without Him and observe how miserably I failed. Now that I faltered, what does Hashem want of me? That I be depressed? That I persecute myself? As if I am reality, as if I am in control? This is the very miscalculation that caused my original failure - to act independently of Hashem? He certainly wants me to strengthen myself with joy and to have *emuna* that there is nothing besides Him – that will bring me to *tefilla* and *teshuva*."

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 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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