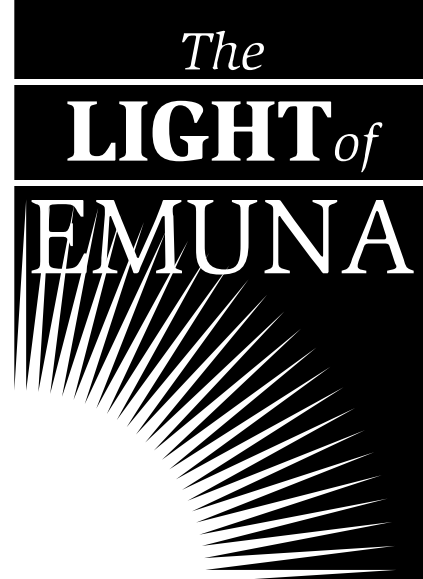


פרשת כי תבוא

This adaptation is dedicated in honor of:
my dear wife, Devorah's Birthday
Happy Birthday!!!



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

"והיה כי תבוא אל הארץ ... ולקחת מראשית כל
פרי האדמה ..." (כו, א-ב)

**"And it will be, when you enter the land ...
and you shall take of the first of all the
fruit of the ground"**

What is the connection between the *mitzvah* of eradicating the memory of *Amalek* (at that conclusion of last week's parsha) and the *mitzvah* of *bikkurim* (that opens this week's parsha)? This question is even more compelling because this week's parsha begins with the letter *vav* - the letter of connection - indicating that there is more than just a casual connection that the Torah seeks to highlight. We might suggest that the nexus of these two mitzvos signifies that the basis of the *mitzvah* of *bikkurim* lies within the same root as the purpose of obliterating all vestiges of *Amalek*. The *mitzvah* of erasing all reminiscence of *Amalek* essentially seeks to distance us from the wretchedness that is *Amalek* - at its core - a nation of ingrates. Ingratitude stems from haughtiness and coarseness.

Bikkurim is diametrically opposite thanklessness - thus, the proximity of the two *mitzvos*. We are taught that by way of uprooting this disgusting trait, we merit performing the *mitzvah* of *bikkurim* - whose basis lies in gratitude. The declaration that we make to the Kohen upon the bringing of the *bikkurim* specifically acknowledges that Hashem brought us to Eretz Yisroel and has done so much for us¹ - as if He just did so today. That is the ultimate in gratitude - to recognize and acknowledge the

true value of the amazing gift that is Eretz Yisroel.²

"ועתה הנה הבאתי את ראשית פרי האדמה" (כו, י)
**"And now, behold, I have brought the
first of the fruit of the ground"**

A Jew does not look back, only ahead. In *yiddishkeit* there is only "from this moment forward." Hashem only seeks a small moment of inspiration - right now. That flash of inspiration is more valuable in His eyes than anything that has happened in the past.

To a Jew, there is no past. One minute can be filled with tears and a moment later we may laugh as if nothing has happened at all. We fall and immediately rise again. "One who strengthens himself in this, to constantly begin anew - will never truly fail. No matter what has happened in the past, even if he has failed thousands of times, even if he has made so many unsuccessful attempts to begin again and draw close to Hashem, even if he repeatedly missed his goals - he must pay no attention to the past - because this very moment (the "now") that he faces never existed before and the potential for what can be achieved on this day, at this moment

¹ הגדתי היום ... כי באתי אל הארץ (כו, ג)
"I declare this day ...that I have come to the land."

²

is unlimited."³

Bikkurim is a symbol of renewal. We bring the new fruits to Hashem's house, we thank Him for them and we confess our sins over them.

The soul of a Jew always wishes to begin afresh. Our entire lives revolve around renewal - new years, new months - new weeks begun from the sparks of the splendor of Shabbos.

Rebbe Nachman said that it is forbidden to become an old person – one must never fall into routine. Despite the fact that there are positive elements to routine – it organizes our lives, settles our minds, helps us fulfill our obligations and accomplish - we must, nonetheless, look for ways to escape monotony. We must find ways to refresh, renew. We must seek additional vitality and inspiration in the service of Hashem. We must live with excitement – like Sara Imeinu who was barren for ninety years and suffered terribly – yet, the Torah testifies that she recalled a good life and had the vitality of a twenty year old when she reached the age of one hundred.

All of creation is constantly renewed. We must recognize that Hashem recreates the world every minute. There is no such thing as nature.

Hashem wants us to maintain a child's attitude – wholesome, happy, and curious. Exactly like a child. The pasuk says, "For, when Israel, was a child, I loved him."⁴ Our love for Hashem must never become stale.

Bikkurim, the symbol of renewal – means doing everything with enthusiasm and happiness as if it is our first time - just as we brought the new fruits to Hashem's house - with song, praise and gratitude.

Renewal means being connected to Hashem at every moment. We do not find our vigor in memories of the past or in plans for the future. Our joy is in the present moment, in the

attachment that we experience now. When we walk in the street, we walk with Hashem. When things are difficult and we lift our heads and plead, "We cannot continue, please help us" – we are definitely with Hashem. When Hashem hears the outcry of a broken heart, He immediately descends to us.

We build from broken-heartedness. All of the difficulties and all of the brokenness form a person's personal path and allow him to build. When a heart is broken, there is room for G-dliness to enter. There is nothing as whole as a broken heart.⁵

Newness is being like a *tzaddik*, whose light is pure – never affected by age or rote.

Chana *davened*, for many years, to be blessed with a child - Shmuel. She declared, "I prayed for this child"⁶ – she *davened* that he maintain a child's enthusiasm throughout his life.

Every *tefilla* is completely new – like meeting a loved one – each encounter is entirely unique.

Renewal at home. A husband and wife must be like a bride and groom forever. We do not find our *bashert* only once – we must find our soul mates anew each day. Every day that is filled with peace and love in the home is a day on which we found our spouse again.

The most important is the renewal of aspirations. When we have the proper hopes – we have everything. Renewed ambitions – to desire Hashem, to want holiness, to yearn for stronger *emuna*, to crave doing Hashem's will and, above all, to long to talk to Hashem. This is the infinite source of joy and vitality. This is our primary *teshuvah* – forming a personal, intimate relationship with Hashem.

Hashem created the world for the purpose of renewal – for the Jew who is having a rough day, stuck in the midst of his routine, tired of life –

³ אוצר היראה, יראה ועבודה נה
⁴ כי נער ישראל ואוהבו (הושע יא, א)

⁵ באור פני מלך חיים
⁶ אל הנער הזה התפללתי (שמואל א, א, כז)

yet, raises his head heavenward, says a few words to Hashem and renews himself. The eighteenth day of Elul was the birthday of the holy Baal Shem Tov – who forever changed the ways of *teshuva*, introducing tremendous joy and vitality, enthusiasm and renewal into our service of Hashem.

Self-sacrifice also brings renewal.

Our *Ahavas Yisroel* (loving our fellow Jews) must incessantly be rejuvenated. We must learn to love each other, not to harm anyone, not to cause any pain. If a person interacts with others with compassion, forgiveness and pardon – if he commits to never harming others, honoring everyone, listening to those in need – Hashem treats him in the same manner. More than anything, Hashem wants us to love each other.

Elul – the winds of new beginnings blow in *Elul*. We must start over in the area of interpersonal relationships. We must commit and declare that we do not want to hurt any creature or cause anyone any pain – even those who have hurt us

or caused us pain. We want to learn to forgive and forget – ALWAYS, with no exceptions.

In the month of mercy, we wish to learn to be compassionate. There is no greater compassion than bringing others closer to Hashem through joy and love.

Our primary preparation for the Day of Judgment is in our interpersonal relationships. We must open our eyes and hearts a bit – to remember that when souls connect to each other, they immediately feel Hashem; to remember that nothing brings us closer to Hashem than *ahavas Yisroel*.

How often do we forget those who are alone and have no place for Shabbos and Yom Tov? We must open our eyes and hearts and consider those outside of our immediate surroundings. There are so many broken hearts that are desperate for a little warmth, concern, love. Each of us holds the keys. We must open our hearts and connect them to hearts of other Jews.

תפילה

Master of the World! Help me remember well, in the depths of my heart, never to forget, that what most draws me near to You, the thing that can truly make me righteous is: self-nullification. Help me accept humiliations in silence. Help me accept degradation and be happy – as if I received a precious gift. Help me have *emuna* to know that the more people disgrace me, insult me, poke fun at me, yell at me – the more gifts I receive.

Master of the World! Give me the strength to endure humiliations – not merely to not respond, not only to refrain from getting angry, not just to not feel hurt – but to be truly happy. To express my gratitude to You at that moment of truth – at the very moment that they disparage me, dishonor me. How many wonderful gifts have I received from you today? Not just to pay lip service, to feel it. Not just to feel it, to be glad for it. If possible, to even sing and dance from great joy. Father, may I please merit this – for I am so far from this, for I feel such pain that I cannot even look at the person who hurt me so many times.

Master of the World! Help me – because I am incapable of anything alone.

Have an awesome, uplifting and wonderful Shabbos,

Do

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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