

# פרשת מקץ - חנוכה

This adaptation is dedicated  
in honor of my new niece, born to my dear  
sister, Aliza, and my dear brother(-in-law), Ronnie.

Mazal Tov!!! מזל טוב!!!

## חנוכה Chanukah

The festival of Chanukah was not established in the year in which the miracle occurred because the leaders of that generation hesitated to establish a permanent festival while they were yet unsure as to whether the miracle would leave a lasting impression or not. In the following year, when they observed that the light of these days was still shining within them and they were overcome with praise and gratitude to Hashem - they established the days of Chanukah as days of praise and gratitude for all future generations.<sup>1</sup>

### להודות להלל ולשבח

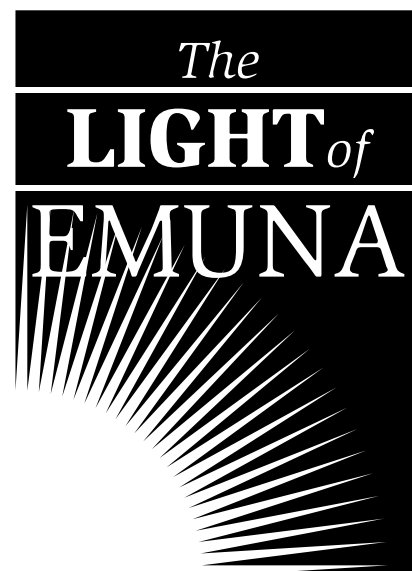
### To Thank, To Praise and To Extol

A person's entire life must be filled with thanking, praising and extolling Hashem. By doing so, we receive life. Chanukah (חנוכה) comes from the word for educate (הנריך). The word Jew (יהודי) comes from the word for thanks (הודיה). We must train ourselves to thank because we somehow forget. We tend to attribute our success to our own efforts. We invested, we tried, we even prayed for this - and so, we received it. We forget that it is all one great kindness from Hashem. On Chanukah, we must face the candles and say to Hashem, "thank You for Your miracles, Your wonders, Your favors that are constant, night, morning and afternoon - for all the good and all the chesed that You do for us so mercifully."

Thanking Hashem is the sweetness of life. When a person becomes accustomed to thanking, he

<sup>1</sup>

התודעה



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

begins to notice how many amazing and beautiful gifts he merits receiving - at every hour and every minute. There is water in the faucet, there is electricity in the house, there is clothing in the closet, there is a refrigerator, there is gas, everything works, and everything performs its function. "Master of the World, You are so good to me - I have no words." Nothing is automatic. Everything is kindness from Hashem. The more that we marvel at everything - the more we cause Hashem to want to provide for us.

We have a tallis, we have tefillin, we have a shul, we have Shabbos (which is a piece of the next world in the midst of this world), and, most of all, we have You Father. There are individuals whose lips never rest, at every moment they bless Hashem, thank Hashem, and praise His name - for every motion and for every step.

We must begin learning to express gratitude at home. A home in which the occupants know how to thank each other is a home in which the *Shechina* rests - it is an abode of peace and love. Children who know how to say "thank you" without being reminded are children who have been raised well - who have successfully had the virtue of gratitude instilled in them. Only when we learn to acknowledge each other can we learn to also thank Hashem. Anyone who is unappreciative of a friend's favor will ultimately be unappreciative of Hashem's kindness.

Be happy with what you have. Say thank you for what you have and you will receive more. We usually do the opposite. We begin with beseeching - crying over what we are missing. You want more? Be happy with the little that you do have. You want something new? Thank Hashem for the old. Are you afraid that if you say thank you and do not request additional bounty - Hashem will not give you? Precisely because we thank more and appeal for less - Hashem arranges it so that we will be lacking nothing.

Chanukah is about **הוד** - glory/splendor. We have so much glory: the *Beis Hamikdash*, the *Menorah*, the clothing of the *kohanim*. The grandeur of a Jew - what a Shabbos table he has, what a *shul* he has, what *siddurim*, what beautiful psalms, songs, acts of kindness, charity, *tzaddikim* - all of this is glory. Rebbe Nosson taught that the source of **הוד** is **הודיה**, gratefulness. When a person learns to express appreciation to Hashem - it is the greatest splendor. The problem is that we focus only on what we do **not** have - we do not have enough money, we are not healthy enough, we have no luck, things do not go well for us, we are not successful enough - we are constantly crying "give us, give us, and give us."

A Jew's magnificence is in his ability to view life with a generous outlook. That outlook provides us with a good, pleasant, happy and satisfying life. Every time that something negative occurs we must recognize that it stems from our begrudging attitude. Chanukah instructs us in seeing life benevolently. Having a generous outlook means valuing life differently - to begin realizing how proud Hashem is of us, of each and every Jew who overcomes his evil inclination. A munificent outlook seeks out the good aspects that are hidden within, in the depths of a person's soul. Even if they are not visible, even if it appears as if someone has no favorable qualities, that he is entirely unsuccessful, that he has nothing positive to contribute - Hashem still perceives him as good, *tzaddikim* still identify the good within him - and so must we learn to treasure everyone, to judge everyone favorably, to love everyone - that is a generous outlook. If

a person is connected to Hashem, he will not have a begrudging attitude. We only resent others when we believe that they stole our luck or our success or our honor. But, if we fully recognize Hashem's presence in the world- no one can take anything from us.<sup>2</sup>

Ingratitude is the root of evil. Hashem does so many favors for us and yet we remain indifferent. We act as if everything is coming to us, everything is owed to us. We do only the bare minimum, just enough to satisfy our minimal obligations. We must sacrifice; do more than required - for Hashem's honor, because we love Him. The entire story of Chanukah is of one great self-sacrifice. A handful of Hashmonaim decided to wage war against a mighty country - it is indescribable, it cannot be grasped logically, it is counter to all rationality. It was only possible because they had *emuna* that it was Hashem's will that they light the *Menorah* in the *Beis Hamikdash*. Chanukah itself is not commanded by the Torah, it is of Rabbinic origin - the Rabbonim established it to bring us back to Hashem. This is an expression of gratitude. Gratitude is a most powerful emotion that must be guarded, fostered and we must incessantly seek ways to return, even just a little, to the One Who gives us so much.

We must thank Hashem for everything. When someone treats us well - say "thank You" to Hashem. We managed to say a few kind words to a friend, we managed to express a few admiring words at home - thank You Hashem for allowing me such wonderful words. We suddenly experience happiness in our hearts without understanding why - thank You Hashem for gladdening my heart. We lost something and then found it, something fell and didn't break, we arrived late and there was still enough for us, we arrived and there was no line - we say thank you. When we learn to thank for everything, our lives become paradise.

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<sup>2</sup>

באור פני מלך חיים

"ויהי מקץ שנתיים ימים" (מא, א)

## "It happened at the end of two years [to the day]"

Shabbos Chanukah is always *Parshas Mikeitz*. Why?

Yoseph Hatzaddik endured so many difficult tribulations but never ceased expressing gratitude. He was imprisoned for twelve years and never stopped skipping and dancing. He was called a "man of success" because he succeeded in bringing joy to people in the wretched conditions of the prison – he never lost his *emuna*. He did not ponder his misfortune – he was relentlessly happy and thankful. "Whatever Hashem wants to do with me, I understand nothing – whatever Hashem wishes to provide me with, he will give me. Whatever Hashem does not want me to have, He will withhold from me. I do not proceed with strength, I proceed with self-nullification, humility – if this is how Hashem desires my service, with these difficulties, with these deficiencies, with these hardships, exactly the opposite of what I would have chosen – but, if this is what Hashem wants, I concede – I will not be depressed, I will not be angry, I accept Hashem's stewardship with love and gratitude." This was the light of Yoseph Hatzaddik and this is the light of Chanukah – **the Light of Emuna**. Accepting, with *emuna*, the trials that we withstand in life - with joy and with submissiveness. If Hashem chose this for me, it is definitely in my best interest – for everything that He does is only for the best. Even for things that appear to be negative, not as we would like – we must thank repeatedly and everything will truly transform for the good. We can thereby sweeten strict judgments.

When a person has *emuna* he realizes that every little thing is for his benefit. How many times have we seen what initially appeared to be unlucky turn into a treasured gift? With *emuna* one's interpersonal relationships are so much easier – we realize that it is not our spouses, our neighbors or our friends – it is all Hashem. "Master of the World, help me always remember

that everything is from You."

"*Emuna* and *bitachon* is peace of mind for the one who knows wholeheartedly that everything is orchestrated by Hashem and consequently is in his best interest at all times - he is in Hashem's hands. This does not necessarily mean that he has *bitachon* that things will work out the way he wants them to but he has *bitachon* that whatever Hashem does and will do is for the very best – therefore, he is calm."<sup>3</sup>

The Alshich Hakadosh once gave a lecture in which he stated that one who has complete *bitachon* need not work at all. He can simply sit and learn and *daven* and his livelihood will come to him. A certain wagon driver was convinced and followed this course and was sent a box of gold coins from Heaven. When the students questioned why others had also tried this and were not provided for – the Alshich explained that this wagon driver was the only one who had exercised complete and simple *emuna*. Another story is told of one man during the Holocaust who would walk passed the guards to buy bread for starving people and was never spotted because he had utter *emuna* in Hashem's protection on his missions.<sup>4</sup>

Our greatest challenge is not losing hope when things are difficult, when we are floundering. Understanding that everything, big or small, is from Hashem brings us tremendous patience – making life pleasant and sweet. We fear no one. We must constantly reinforce our simple *emuna* that everything is devised with amazing and wondrous precision and all of our affairs, successes and salvations depend only on Hashem – never on a human being. When we believe that we control things, we become broken when events do not unfold as we had planned. If we are still saddened by experiences – it is a sign that we are still distant from holy *emuna*.

One of the fundamentals of *emuna* is knowing that Hashem considers each and every Jew an

<sup>3</sup>

<sup>4</sup>

חובות הלבבות  
עלינו לשבח, בחוקות

only child, beloved and precious.

*Emuna* means not assigning blame to others **or to ourselves**. We must never second guess after the fact. Whatever happened was Hashem's will. Our hopes cannot always be realized and our expectations cannot always be satisfied. Some can accept this with humility and *emuna* while others fight it and get angry. A person can aspire and try – but it must be with calm and tranquility. The results are from Hashem and must be accepted. We may continue to pray and endeavor – but with submissiveness and humility. We do what we can, while recognizing that it is not in our control. We do not always understand Hashem's plan.

Everything is designed to bring us closer to Hashem. Hashem is concealed and we must reveal Him. Our most effective path to *emuna* is

to speak to Hashem. When we merely begin speaking to Him, we see illumination, we receive renewed vitality. Nothing binds us to Hashem more than conversing with Him. Only Hashem can provide for us – after we have made our required efforts, we turn to Hashem.

*Emuna* precludes jealousy. Every person has his own purpose, challenges and path and Hashem provides us with exactly what we need to accomplish our mission.

If a person starts his day with *emuna*, nothing can affect him negatively. We experience joy and we must share it with others. When we help others – we automatically help ourselves too. Hashem gives up on no one. We are here to recognize Hashem, to have *emuna* in Hashem - and to help others do so as well. There is nothing more amazing in the world.

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## תפילה

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**Master of the World!** Help me have *emuna* that whatever happens to me in the course of the day is entirely from You. Whatever goes wrong or fails or annoys me – whatever happens to me, hurts me, damages me, is taken from me – is all from You, not from others.

Give me such strong *emuna* Father so that I am happy and satisfied with every incident – help me accept it all with love.

When I prepare to face the day, may I remember that every episode is from You, Father, and for my very best.

Help remember this immediately when something happens – not only after several hours or days.

Not just to have *emuna* – help me to also be able to thank you for all of these things – the good and even the things that appear to be bad for the moment – to express my appreciation from the depths of my heart.

If it is still difficult to conduct myself in this manner and I feel the necessity to do something to change – help me, Father, to realize that only You can help me. My salvation is in Your hands. Help me understand that after all of my efforts I must reach the primary goal – You, Father.

I beseech You, my Father in Heaven, that only good events happen to me today and every day – for I do not possess the strength to rectify anything.

**Have an awesome, uplifting and wonderful Shabbos,**

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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 - 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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