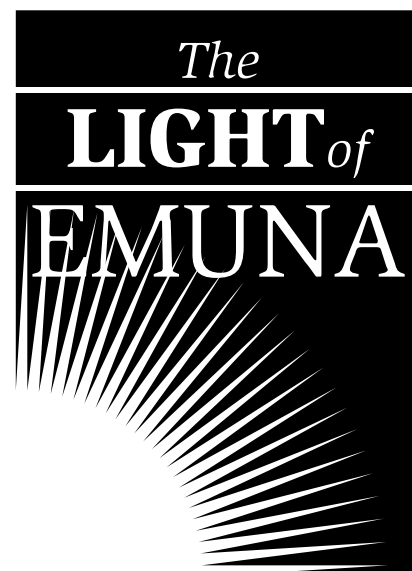


פרשת בא

This week's adaptation is dedicated in memory of:
our dear grandfather – Ilie Elias a”h
לז"נ ר' אליהו ב"ר אברהם שלמה אליאש ז"ל
- נפטר ב' שבט תשל"ט תנצב"ה - January 30, 1979



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

"ויאמר ד' אל משה בא אל פרעה כי אני הכבדתי את לבו ואת לב עבדיו" (א, י.)
"Hashem said to Moshe, 'Come to Pharaoh for I have made his heart and the hearts of his servants hard (stubborn)'"

What is meant by, the hardening of his heart? Did Hashem not want Pharaoh to do *teshuva*? Why would He toughen his heart to the extent that he absolutely refused to accept the word of Hashem? Reish Lakish taught that this is the way of Hashem - He warns a person once, twice, three times - but if a person pays no heed, Hashem seals his heart from *teshuva* in order to exact retribution for his sins. Such was the case of the evil Pharaoh - after ignoring Hashem's warnings five times - Hashem pronounced, "You were stubborn and coarsened your heart - I shall now add defilement to your impurity" - and so the *pasuk* states, "for I have made his heart stubborn."¹

"... וידעתם כי אני ד'" (ב, ז.)
"...that you shall know that I am Hashem"

This is the second week of amazing and wondrous signs and miracles. Hashem continues to reveal His control to all. The Exodus was not a mere relocation from one geographical location to another - it was a complete change of mindset: from being subject to the rules of nature to living with Divine Providence. The Jewish people were chosen to be the nation of Hashem after being extracted from the depths of the false belief in

observable nature and happenstance and replanted within a framework of pure *emuna* that there is nothing aside from Hashem. The redemption from Egypt is the redemption of the soul of every Jew, in every generation. It is redemption from the ravages of nature, the restrictions of space and time - it is a clinging to the orchestrations of Hashem and His miracles.

What is a person? A person is one who can discern and comprehend that there is a master, an administrator, a ruler, a conductor from Whom everything emanates. Rebbe Nachman taught that the primacy of man is in his thoughts - one who does not think does not deserve the title "man." Moshe Rabbeinu opened our mind and revealed that there is a G-d who rules the Earth.²

All of the plagues that Pharaoh endured were intended to illustrate Who was in charge, to convey that there is a King of the World, a supervisor. "... That you shall know that I am Hashem." "In order that you shall know that there is none like Me in all the land."³ Just as Pharaoh required this message, so do we. We are not ready to thank at all times. We find ourselves in the King's chambers but do not realize that there is a King. We do not recognize our limitations. We fail to integrate the fact that

¹

שמות רבה לג, ג

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ליקות"ז

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בעבור תדע כי אין כמני בכל הארץ (ט, יד)

at every moment we are completely dependent on Hashem and must turn to Him for everything we wish to undertake.

We do not understand that this world was created so that we are able to coronate Hashem. Coronating Hashem means nullifying our egos into nothingness - recognizing that there is only Hashem. All of the plagues (difficulties) that we receive are only to remind us that everything is exclusively in accordance with His will and nothing can exist outside of His decrees.

Rebbe Chanina ben Dosa's daughter lit Shabbos candles with vinegar in place of oil. It is not oil that ignites; it is whatever Hashem commands to burn that kindles. Vinegar is just as able to burn as oil.⁴

Much *emuna* was needed to escape Egypt. The Jewish people still did not recognize Hashem or even know His name. "I Shall Be As I Shall Be"⁵ - that is My name at the moment and you must have *emuna* in Me - forsake everything that you know and follow Me. Everyone else follows statues and idols - you follow Me. Hashem sent them great sparks so that they would have the desire to abandon everything and bolt. There was no time for preparations, "Nor had they made provisions for themselves."⁶ When we left Egypt, we ate *matzos* because *matzos* are made hurriedly, without additives for flavor. *Matzo* is *bitachon* in Hashem's direction without any work or involvement on our part. When we flee from Egypt there is no time to contemplate, to worry - if we would stop to ponder, we might remain, G-d forbid. This is what essentially happens to every *baal teshuva* - they receive an invitation that does not recur often - a great light is dispatched to them for one moment - they start to pursue the light and desert everything else behind them - for it is not every day that Hashem sends a person these flashes of inspiration. At these moments, when a person receives these illuminations, he recognizes that

there is nothing aside from Hashem. He then proceeds to spend the rest of his life struggling to internalize this concept. Similarly, when the Jewish people received the Torah at Har Sinai they observed that there was nothing aside from Hashem - but only for a moment in time. When a person merits to not only say it, but to feel it as well, to live with it, to incorporate it - he is then connected to true reality. Then, he is compelled to act positively. He can no longer do differently, he has seen the truth. Truth is giving *tzedaka*, *davening*, smiling at another, loving each other, gladdening others, judging others favorably, loving Hashem and thanking Hashem - all of the wonderful acts of serving Hashem. When we lose sight of the fact that there is nothing aside from Hashem - we become depressed or haughty. If we are successful, we become conceited and if we are flailing, we despair. We must work on this our entire lives for we do not fully comprehend it. Whenever we experience any feelings of depression, anger, worry or if we feel as if we have not received what we deserve or we perceive occurrences as negative - it is a clear indication that our awareness of the fact that there is nothing aside from Hashem is lacking. We may know it so that it bolsters us at times, but it is not yet a part of us. From the moment that a child is born we must teach it to him, repeatedly. We teach him *Shema* - "Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is One" - he learns the concept along with his parents - that everything that happens in life, whether obviously good or less obviously so, is all essentially good because Hashem is all good. Our discernment between good and less good is a result of our lack of comprehension that it is all from Hashem.

In this world, it is most difficult to attain complete recognition of this. We constantly strive for it, rung by rung, every moment - a struggle. The Baal Shem Tov bemoaned the fact that our eyes are obscured by pettiness from seeing the light of Hashem - they did this to me, he said that to me, I did not get what I deserve - we are stuck in darkness, which we must illuminate with the realization that there is nothing aside from Hashem.

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תענית כה

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אקיה אשר אקיה (ג, יד)

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וגם צדה לא עשו להם (יב, לט)

A person can complain about his wife for years, or complain about his children's teachers or his neighbors and he attributes his suffering to them with absolute certainty. If he would regard life differently, everything would appear otherwise. He would acknowledge that it is not because of his wife or his neighbor or his children. "If you have wisdom, nothing is lacking – if you are lacking wisdom – you have nothing." Wisdom is the proper outlook. Such is the way in which Hashem created the world – there appears to be darkness and yet, within the darkness we seek light.

The intellect that brightens the darkness is the knowledge that there is nothing aside from Hashem. This is the great secret of Creation. Hashem is hidden within everything. We are a part of G-dliness, everything is. If everything is Hashem – we can always be connected. We must detach ourselves ever so slightly from silliness, anger, desires – always yearning higher. A person who clings to Hashem is never in exile. Wherever he is, he is attached to Hashem – always in redemption.

Our primary service in this world is to nullify our egos – not to attribute anything to our own abilities – to recognize that everything is from Hashem. We must be the exact opposite of Pharaoh - who had the supreme arrogance to claim that he had created himself – the pinnacle of pomposity and heresy.

I, thank G-d, succeeded, I, thank G-d, am okay, I, thank G-d am popular – even when we say "thank G-d," we so often over-include the word "I." This essentially seals the pipeline – leaving no room for the light to enter us – the exact opposite of having a hollow heart to receive. If a person decides to do something for Hashem's honor and, thank G-d, is successful – he *davened* well, he concentrated properly, he managed to fulfill a promise to a friend, he remembered to call and encourage a lonely, elderly man – it is a good day. But then, suddenly, he starts to pat himself on the back, he starts to feel like he is a *tzaddik* – and everything is destroyed. It is transformed into arrogance. He must

immediately quash this feeling and acknowledge to Hashem that it is not him; he wanted so badly to do something for You, without receiving any honor. A person must do much incessant introspection to negate the feeling of ego.⁷

All of the plagues visited upon Pharaoh were designed to inform him of Who was in charge. When the most distant draw near, when they merit seeing the greatness of Hashem – it is most prominent. Yisro, who was as distant as possible, serving every variety of idol that existed - when he left everything behind him and came close to Hashem – he brought so many others along with him. "And so that you may relate in the ears of your son and your son's son that I made a mockery of Egypt and my signs that I placed among them – that you may know that I am Hashem."⁸ The entire world must recognize Hashem.

Rav Eliezer Berland Shlita: The entire redemption is dependent upon returning people to Hashem in *teshuvah*. There is no worse humiliation that living in a generation and not being *mekarev* others. The greatest achievement is bringing people back. The Zohar says that one who is *mekarev* others has no gate closed before him – all gates, routes and doors are opened for him and he is handed all of the keys. There is no greater glory for Hashem.

How can we be *mekarev* others? We can only do so if we have a lively and holy countenance – as is written on the tombstone of R' Aharon the Great of Karlin - he was *mekarev* 80,000 people. How is that possible? How many *shiurim* could he possibly have delivered? Rather, when they observed his visage and felt his warmth – they returned to Hashem.

This appearance is attained by learning Torah, and especially teaching others. As soon as we learn, we must teach it forward. People are desperate for joy and when they witness those

⁷ באור פני מלך חיים
⁸ ולמען תספר באזני בן ובן בןך את אשר התעללתי במצרים ואת אתתי אשר שמתי במ יודעתם כי אני ד' (י, ב)

who learn Torah at peace and happy, they immediately begin to seek the same in their lives. Hashem loves when we reconnect Him with His children.

No one is absolved from the obligation to do outreach, to publicize Hashem, to spread the light. "Foremost in our pursuits and travels must be the aim of sitting in the company of new people and speaking with them about the real purposes in life and engaging them in words of Torah, with great love and peace, in a manner that will help them realize the ultimate truth and return to Hashem in uprightness. This is often the very reason that person has the need to travel.⁹

We are witnessing the expansion of a generation

of lost young souls who have almost no familiarity with the concepts of Torah, *mitzvos*, *siddur* or prayer. But the Jewish souls buried deep in the hearts of each and every one has tremendous strength when it is inspired – there is no greater excitement.

Reb Doyv's Corner¹⁰

When Hashem takes something from your grasp, He is not punishing you - He is merely opening and freeing your hands to receive something better.

Concentrate on this sentence:

"The will of Hashem will never take you where the Grace of Hashem will not protect you."

תפילה

Master of the World! May I merit the emuna that every Jew is capable of returning in *teshuvah*, that in the secreted sections of every Jew's heart lays the desire to return in *teshuvah*, even in those who appear to be so distant. Not just to have *emuna* but to *daven* for them, all of them, that they all may merit drawing close to You, Father.

Help me grasp every hint that one of these precious individuals projects towards me, every sign that one of them wants a bond, wishes to hear, yearns to see.

Help us Father not to panic by their overtures, not to be too suspicious, give us the proper wisdom to be *mekarev* them while still guarding ourselves.

Do not allow me, Father, to feel superior to them because I have merited and they have not yet, because I have uncovered the truth and they live a lie. Help me see the good and the beauty in them, help me recall that they too are Your children – and that when they return in *teshuvah* they will be a million times better than me, as we so often see happen.

Anything but snobbery, self-importance, disdain or contempt, G-d forbid. Help me, Father, to see the good in them, the beauty of their souls, to speak kind words and to demonstrate to them the height of humility and modesty of a Jew who is close to You Father, when he learns to live a life of Torah and *mitzvos*.

Most importantly, to be happy with our *yiddishkeit*, to be glad that we have been worthy of recognizing life from its beautiful side and that this joy should continue and inspire thoughts of *teshuvah* for all.

Have an awesome, uplifting and wonderful Shabbos,

דוװ

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

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ליקו"ה פקדון ה, יג

¹⁰ Not from Rav Azolai – just something I saw that I liked.