

# פרשת תצוה - פורים

This week's adaptation is dedicated in honor of:  
my dear wife, Devorah.

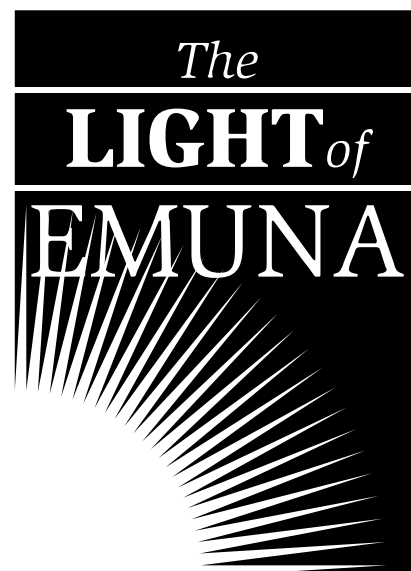
## PURIM

### The Light of Emuna

The greatest joy for a Jew is the knowledge that Hashem is always with him. In the depths of our hearts, deep deep down – we know that Hashem is always with us. Even if we still do not remember or feel, at every moment, that everything is from Him and that everything is for the best, even if at times we are a bit broken by what happens to us – we know that Hashem is with us. Otherwise, we would be completely shattered, we would lose all hope, G-d forbid. This knowledge that Hashem never foresakes us gladdens us and fortifies us and provides us with the strength to continue.

To survive in this world and strengthen ourselves from above, to be here and have *emuna* that Hashem gazes upon us and loves us, to raise our heads to Him – this is the thing that elevates and encourages us.

On Purim, the light of *emuna* illuminates most powerfully – a person can discern how everything is from Hashem and for the very best. Chazal say that the miracle of Purim is considered to be greater than any other miracle in the history of the Jewish people. Really? It involved no alteration of the laws of nature, no splitting of a sea, no flask of oil that lasted eight times as long as naturally designed. But, on Purim everyone witnessed how Hashem's wondrous administration of events is incessantly disguised within nature. Ostensibly, Megillas Esther is as a collection of events and occurrences that coincidentally culminated in a happy ending. In reality, on Purim our eyes were opened to realize how Divine Providence reaches into every little detail of our lives, how Hashem's



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

amazing supervision is always camouflaged as nature. It is not just that miracles can occur within nature – all of nature is miraculous, every second is a wonder, our entire lives are completely extraordinary. The Jewish people repented and everything was instantly transformed into good. That wicked man who issued awful decrees against the Jewish people had the tables abruptly turned on him and was given over into their hands.

On Purim, every Jew is invited to improve and refine his ability to contemplate reality and to see Hashem's hand in every occurrence. That is the true gift of this holiday – that is the *mishloach manos* that Mordechai and Esther took great pains to send every Jew on each and every Purim.

Megillas Esther comes from the word for "reveal" (*מגילה*). It reveals the hidden truth that our lives are filled with miracles, with Divine Providence. The story of the Megillah is the story of every one of us – Hashem is hidden and we must reveal Him. Hashem has infinite ways of communicating with us – and He utilizes all of them. One who truly wishes to know what Hashem wants of him, one who never ceases lifting his eyes heavenward and begging, "Master of the World, show me Your will – for what I want more than anything else is to perform Your will" – Hashem shows him. Hashem is perpetually speaking to us via episodes in our

lives, something that we just “happened” to hear, that has nothing to do with us and was not directed at us, but strikes a chord. He has no shortage of methods. When we identify that something is Hashem’s answer to us, we are so amazed, so happy, so thankful. Mordechai and Esther’s battle against Haman is part of the war that continues to this day – the war against those who deny Hashem’s orchestration of everything in this world. Haman’s downfall is the light that still shines – that light that proclaims, “there is nothing besides Hashem.”

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## The Love of Torah

While the terrible decree of destruction hung over the Jewish people, Mordechai gathered 22,000 children and learned Torah with them. That does not seem to be the responsible course of action. He should have been expending all of his energy trying to figure out a solution to convince Achashverosh to reverse his decree. Instead, he sat and learned with children?! But, Mordechai understood that the key to our survival throughout the generations is the learning of Torah.

At Har Sinai, we accepted the Torah out of awe – Hashem held a mountain over our heads like a barrel and said, “if you accept the Torah, good – if not, here will be your burial site.” On Purim – we reaccepted the Torah out of love. This light of the love of Torah returns to us every year during the days of Purim. When a person merits revealing this light, he earns a love of Torah to the point that he cannot stay away from it.

In the heart of every Jew beats a pure, clean, G-dly soul – full of love for Hashem and His Torah. “For it is our life and the length of our days.”<sup>1</sup> Every word of Torah that a Jew merits to learn is a diamond, a precious stone. “I rejoice over Your word as one who finds great treasure.”<sup>2</sup>

The Gemara<sup>3</sup> says that there are three people that Hashem cries over each day – the first being one who is capable of engaging in Torah study and fails to do so. The more a person learns Torah, the greater his zest for more and he becomes less interested in worldly urges. A Jew who learns Torah is like a fish in water, he is connected to his life source, he cannot abandon it, only there are things good for him.

**Rav Eliezer Berland Shlita:** The Torah is referred to as “a lovely hind and a graceful goat”<sup>4</sup> – it raises grace upon its pupils, literally. When a person returns home and he has learned Torah, his wife notices that he has a certain charm, the Shechina is resting on him and there will be joy in the home. However, if he returns without Torah – he is graceless, broken and sad – there is no joy in the home. Via Torah all of our prayers and requests are answered. A person has heresy in his heart – when he speaks to his friend he is careful about the words he uses because he sees a physical person before him - but we do not experience Hashem’s presence in the same manner. We must learn Torah to arrive at the understanding of Hashem’s genuineness and then we can properly ask.

True relaxation is the relaxation of the soul – Torah polishes the soul, cleanses it, scrapes off the filth and brings about tranquility of the soul. We can attempt all sorts of strategies for self-improvement – but, without Torah, they will not be effective.

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## Mordechai Left the King’s Presence<sup>5</sup>

Mordechai the Jew left the King’s presence, the King of all Kings. On Purim, the *tzaddik* is revealed. The light of the *tzaddik* fills all of the voids of the world and shines in the heart of a Jew. “And many of the peoples of the land

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<sup>1</sup> כי הם חיינו ואורך ימינו  
<sup>2</sup> שש אנכי על אימרתך כמוצא שלל רב (תהלים קיט, קסב)

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<sup>3</sup> חגיגה ב  
<sup>4</sup> אילת אהבים ויעלת חן (משלי ה, יט)  
<sup>5</sup> ומרדכי וצא מלפני המלך (מגילה ח, טו)

converted to Judaism.”<sup>6</sup> When truth is revealed, anyone can draw close to Hashem.

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## Mishloach Manos One to Another<sup>7</sup>

On Purim there is tremendous resurgence of love for fellow Jews by way of the magnificent *mitzvos* of the day – *mishloach manos* and gifts to the poor – especially the concept of giving to “anyone who stretches out a hand.” If we truly feel some love for these “collectors” – if we truly wish to gladden someone who appears to be a bit lonely and sad all year, if we truly want to ask forgiveness of someone who we unintentionally insulted, if we truly choose to send the message to a neighbor that we feel so fortunate to have them as a neighbor, if we adopt this perspective towards these exceptional *mitzvos* – then, when we begin preparing the *mishloach manos* – our homes are filled with light. When we begin to send and receive the packages, and we begin to hear the songs of Purim in the background and we take the first sip of wine from the bottle that we bought for the Yom Tov – not only will the house be filled with light – the entire world fills with light. For, when there is love between fellow Jews, the Shechina is present. “Master of the World, why isn’t every day Purim? Why must we wait a full year to have a day on which we love everyone so joyously and only notice the positive attributes of each other?”

Wherever there is love and unity – there is happiness. Nowhere in the world and at no time in life is there a joy equal to the joy of the Jewish people on Purim. As soon as night falls, it is as if a wind from another world descends and transforms us all into something we never were. Our hearts suddenly expand until they long to drown the entire world in packages and gifts. No one is embarrassed to jump up and down in the streets and shout out the truth at the top of their lungs. In one moment, everything is so good, so holy. Our legs unexpectedly start dancing. There is so much light and joy – it looks so much like

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<sup>6</sup> ורבים מעמי הארץ מתיהדים (מגילה ח, יז)  
<sup>7</sup> ומשלח מנות איש לרעהו (מגילה ט, כב)

the days of Moshiach.

But before we get there, we fast.

Fasting precedes all joy and all service of Hashem. We always have to work first – to purify ourselves, to transform ourselves into proper vessels. We forego and refrain from eating – we *daven*, we cry and we work on breaking ourselves down. Then there is the light of jubilation, the amazing things – because we are appropriately prepared. If we were to continuously eat, drink and sleep and then arrive at joy – it would result in debauchery. A person purifies himself, purifies his heart – and only then, when cheerfulness arrives, is there room to receive its true light.<sup>8</sup>

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## “ואתה תצוה את בני ישראל” (כו, ב) “Now you shall command the Children of Israel”

The word for command (תצוה) is similar to the Aramaic word for attach (צוותא). Our journey in life is to live a life of attachment. When we talk to Hashem all day, we connect to Him. When we acknowledge His kindnesses, we connect to Him. The grave error that the Jews made in the story of Purim was attending the royal feast of Achashverosh. They indicated a desire to be part of the rest of the world, not limited to some ghetto. We must be so careful not to disconnect from Hashem in favor of the “outside” world.

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## “זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק” (דברים כה, יז) “Remember what Amalek did to you”

This Shabbos is Shabbos *Zachor* – we are obligated to remember what Amalek did to us and to erase his memory. Why specifically Amalek – we have had many wars with many nations – why Amalek? Amalek is a doctrine. It is a doctrine that seeks to instill doubt in a person’s heart, to subvert his *bitachon*. “Maybe

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<sup>8</sup> באור פני מלך חיים

there was some natural phenomenon to explain the splitting of the Reed Sea and there was no miracle.” Amalek attempts to chill enthusiasm – that is most dangerous. Amalek seeks to chill a Jew’s heart. Amalek endeavors to attack the most precious possession of a person – his will. I may be unable to accomplish something – but at least I want to. Once we desire, we can pray for.

I desire, Father, know that I desire – but, I am unable, I cannot change on my own, help me, Father.” A person must have many desires and strong yearnings for Hashem – that is most

treasured. Nothing can stand in the way of desire and if a person remains persistent, Hashem will help him become a *tzaddik*.

Rebbe Nachman taught that we must be very stubborn in the service of Hashem because there are so many journeys with so many ups and downs. If there is force of will then there is drive, strength, happiness – we can pursue, we can work hard. Hashem loves us for every tiny moment of longing because it is limitless. The will is the soul.

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## תפילה

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**Master of the World!** Help me to learn to live with You, to constantly be bound to You. Before everything that I undertake – help me to beseech of You, Father, for assistance. After everything that I do – help me to thank You, Father, for helping me. This is how I want all of my days to be.

Before I begin my day – to ask You, Father, that I merit being happy throughout the day and to remember that everything that happens is from You and for the best.

When I get into my car – to appeal that I arrive safely and return safely and that my trip be successful and that I merit feeling Your presence and be moved by everything that You do for me.

When I sit down to learn – it should be with energy and joy.

When it is time to *daven* – that I *daven* with concentration, excitement – that I merit experiencing Your presence in the holy words of the *tefillos*.

Before every phone call, before every meeting – to implore You that it be fruitful, that I say the appropriate words and perform well.

Before entering my home each time – help me manage to be cheerful and speak positively. Before going to sleep – to beg You for good dreams. Before walking in the street – help me to remember to lower my eyes a bit.

Before eating – to merit eating in holiness, only what I need and not to overindulge.

Before every paragraph that You allow me to write – that You be with me, help me, show me what to write. When I get stuck, open the flow of words for me.

To always remember to thank You – thank You for being with me, thank You for helping me, thank You for protecting me, thank You that I have You.

**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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