

# פרשת בהעלותך

This adaptation is dedicated  
in honor of my daughter Tehilla's Birthday.  
Happy Birthday!!!

"בהעלותך את הנרת אל מול פני יאירו שבעת  
הנרות" (ה, ב)

**"When you kindle (literally: elevate) the  
lamps, toward the face of the Menorah  
shall the seven lamps cast light."**

When Moshe completed construction of the Mishkan and erected it, a great light, the light of the Shechina, immediately shone. Aharon was humbled before it and declared, "I cannot gaze upon the light because it is so great and yet I am commanded to kindle the lamps?" Hashem responded, "Elevate yourself (בהעלותך) – so that you will be worthy."<sup>1</sup>

"בהעלותך את הנרת" (ה, ב)  
**"When you kindle (elevate) the lamps."**

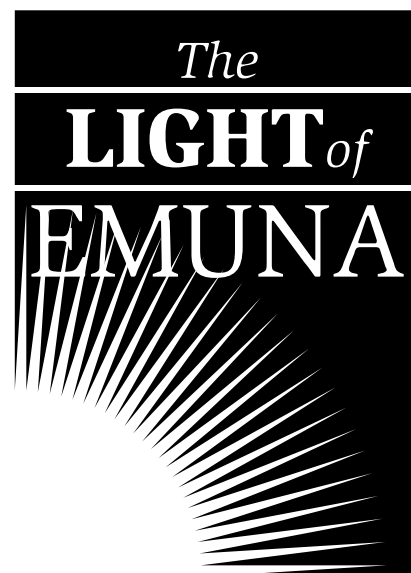
A Jew must constantly be prepared to elevate himself. He must be happy with what he has while yearning and pining for more. More emuna, more holiness, more awe of Heaven.

The soul of a Jew is like a tight spring that strains to return to its origin. Like the flame of a candle that desires to ascend, to Hashem. Just as a blowing wind threatens to extinguish a lit flame, – so too, this world threatens the soul of a Jew – threatening to smother it.

How do we protect the flame from being extinguished?

"This is the workmanship of the Menorah, hammered-out (מקשה) gold."<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew word for "hammered-out" (מקשה) comes from the

<sup>1</sup> מדרש החפץ כתב יד  
<sup>2</sup> וזה מעשה המנורה, מקשה זהב (ח, ד)



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

same root as the Hebrew word for stubbornness (עקשנות). We must be stubborn in our service of Hashem. The success of a Jew is dependent upon his ability to never despair – constantly starting again afresh. There is no such thing as being without hope. If you want it – you will succeed.

When those Jews who were *tamei* and could not sacrifice the *Korban Pesach* cried out, "why should we be diminished"<sup>3</sup> – they witnessed an amazing development – Hashem created a new concept called *Pesach Sheni*. Who would have considered such a possibility?! Such is the way of overwhelming desire. When we cry out to Hashem – anything can happen.

There are crises in life. If we strengthen our *emuna* and *bitachon* in Hashem and remain firm – everything will ultimately be transformed for the best – "one who trusts in Hashem, kindness will encompass him."<sup>4</sup> Everyone faces difficult challenges in life – we must fortify ourselves – for generally, when we reinforce ourselves – things get better. The primary challenge in life is staying strong during a downfall, during the most difficult situations. We must learn from Dovid Hamelech who found Hashem in even the most distant and dark places - "At midnight, I rise to give thanks to You."<sup>5</sup> At the pinnacle of darkness, through the most taxing concealment –

<sup>3</sup> למה ניגרע (ט, ז)  
<sup>4</sup> והבוטח בד' חסד יסובבנו (תהילים לב, י)  
<sup>5</sup> חצות לילה אקום להודות לך (שם קיט, סב)

Dovid Hamelech arose before Hashem with song and praise, with amazing connection.

We need not await great events to open our mouths and beseech Hashem. We need only act like a small child who pleads with his father for something trivial and insignificant – because he is his father – for, if not, from whom shall he ask?!

R' Nachman of Tulchin zt"l, a student of Rebbe Nosson, once hit a nail and injured his finger. When Rebbe Nosson saw this he inquired, "Why did you not pray beforehand that you not hit a nail and hurt yourself?"

One of the students of R' Pinchas of Koritz zy"l once overheard him ask, at the end of *Shemona Esrei*, that "the maid be returned." None of the students, even the *kabbalists* among them, could find any reference to this phrase. What was the Rebbe's deepest of intents? The Rebbe explained, very simply, that the family's housekeeper had quit and his wife was tired and needed help; therefore, he asked Hashem to instill in the heart of the housekeeper the desire to return to work. How fortunate is one who is accustomed to turn to Hashem before any endeavor, no matter how minor. His life is so different.

To protect the flame we must consistently bolster our *emuna*. Even during rough patches – we must have *emuna* that Hashem is planning our personal salvation. Sometimes we understand within a few days, sometimes it can take many years and sometimes we cannot see the entire mystery of Hashem's goodness until we are in the next world – how, at the depths of judgment one discovers the depths of compassion and kindness.

We cannot guard the flame without learning how to express gratitude. To be moved by everything that He does for us. That is how we can experience Hashem intensely – by walking with Him, hand in hand. With gratefulness, a person senses Hashem's vastness – how compassionate, how great.

A person suspects that if he exclusively thanks Hashem and does not implore, his needs and requests will be left unattended. He fails to realize that if a person only thanks, Hashem arranges his life so that he will not be lacking anything – he will not need to request, for he will receive whatever he needs. We must uproot our natural tendency to focus on our lack. When we *daven*, we tend to immediately begin with what we are missing. What about what we do have? What about all of the precious gifts that we have received and continue to receive at every moment? In this week's *parsha* the Jewish people complained to Moshe, "We remember the fish that we ate in Egypt ... the cucumbers and the watermelons ... but now, our life is parched, there is nothing; we have nothing to anticipate but the *manna*."<sup>6</sup> **There is nothing? There is everything!** A certain *kollel* man told that he was once walking and a complete stranger stopped him and said, "I am so jealous of you that you are so learned." Startled, he responded, "you have never met me before, how do you know what I know, how do you know that I know anything worth being envious of?" The stranger replied, "You know how to read Rashi script, do you not?" It occurred to him how insightful this stranger's words were. Millions of Jews around the world cannot read Hebrew, do not know how to *daven*, have no idea what a *Shabbos* table looks like, what the aura of a *Yom Tov* feels like, its holiness. How fortunate are we, how great is our portion and how pleasant is our lot for every fragment of knowledge, for every step and stage. We should aspire for more, desire additional – but we must recognize and express gratitude for the great treasures that we have already amassed.

If we wish to defend the flame that it not be extinguished, we must infuse our hearts into our *tefillos*, into our *zmiros* – not to rush through them – we must be excited, think about the words, and feel them.

<sup>6</sup> זכרנו את הדגה אשר נאכל במצרים ... את הקישואים ואת האבטיחים ... ועתה נפשנו יבשה, אין כל בלתי אל המן עינינו (יא, ה-ו)

**Moreinu Harav:** A person prays thrice daily – he spends two minutes on *Mincha*, five on *Maariv*, goes home and discovers that his child is ill, his wife is sick, his livelihood is meager and he asks, “Why – I am a good Jew?” Everything depends on *tefilla* – where are his *tefillos*? Did he beg Hashem for health? Did he pray for income slowly and deliberately? We must begin to open our mouths, say the words carefully, without hurrying. All nature of miracles and wonders await every Jew – we must merely begin to ask, not to look for the quickest *minyán* and run home. A person makes excuses that he must run home because his wife is waiting for him, only to discover that she is not feeling well, May Hashem Protect. We must say *Shemona Esrei* thoughtfully and then come home to find a healthy wife, healthy children and witness miracles and wonders.

The father of R’ Dovid of Lelov was once asked how he merited to have such a holy son. He explained that when he used to sing “may we merit seeing children and grandchildren occupied with Torah and *mitzvos*”<sup>7</sup> in *Shabbos zmiros* he would sing the words with such tears and attachment to Hashem for at least half an hour. If we want our children to be excited about *yiddishkeit* – we must show them. If a child sees his father sleeping all *Shabbos*, getting up to eat and then sleeping some more – what will he learn? A child who observes his father singing excitedly, dancing with his children, inspiring them – would not seek to avoid *yiddishkeit* or get involved with negative influences. Children want to serve Hashem – but too often they do not see what service of Hashem looks like. If a person prays conscientiously, filled with clinging, constantly singing “may we merit seeing children and grandchildren occupied with Torah and *mitzvos*” – he and his children will be good Jews, engaged in Torah and *mitzvos*.

If we truly desire Hashem, we must love each other. The thing that most endears us to Hashem and shields the flame from being snuffed out is unconditional love. When souls connect, we

immediately experience Hashem’s presence. *Mitzvos* between man and G-d are much easier, even enjoyable. But, to watch someone else’s success and to be thrilled for him<sup>8</sup>, to forgive someone who hurt us, to not speak negatively about anyone – these are much more challenging. The primary observance is in matters of interpersonal relationships. We need a lot of *emuna* to succeed. We must have *emuna* that no one does anything to us, only Hashem. No matter what others do to us, we must remember that it is what Hashem wants, it is Hashem’s decree and Hashem’s decrees are undeniably for the best. When a person has *emuna* - he can love every Jew; without *emuna* – it is impossible. Without *emuna* we see people, not Hashem. Then, we demand, we speak *loshon hora* and we get upset. Without seeing Hashem’s hand in everything, we cannot love all Jews.

Regarding interpersonal relationships there are no limits, we must yearn for the maximum, without exception.

We must clean all of the recesses of our hearts of any self-centered thoughts or interests and unify our hearts to provide a home for the *Shechina*, for the Jewish people – to be filled with a powerful love for every Jew - for that is the actual revelation of the *Shechina*. We must seek peace, pursue peace and love all of Creation with all of our resources, to pray for all of our brothers and kin, to distance ourselves from all strife, controversy and dissension, to beseech for complete unity amongst Jews, to literally feel as if every Jew is our brother, all children of Hashem, all are beloved by Him and He pines for all of them and He wants them all close to Him. We must awaken ourselves to this precious unity that is greater than anything else – it is the source of all blessings for the Jewish people. We must never instigate discord for any reason or purpose – for unity among Jews and unity with Hashem are one. Therefore, we must increase love, forgiveness and patience between brothers, relatives, spouses, parents and children, neighbors, acquaintances and all Jews. We must

<sup>7</sup> יזכו לראות בנים ובני בנים עוסקים בתורה ובמצוות

<sup>8</sup> Could not translate the *Yiddish* word פארגין.

initiate greetings to everyone, like R' Yochanan who would always be first to extend a salutation even to a stranger in the street.<sup>9</sup> We must be nice and loving, not demanding and quarrelsome. We must contemplate that the source of blessing in our business and our spirituality literally depends on loving other Jews and our *davening* for unity. One whose heart is filled with the request for harmony is blessed with abundance, like Yoseph Hatzaddik who forgave his brothers and became the source of blessing for the Jewish people.<sup>10</sup>

Hashem created this world primarily so that we could perform the *mitzvos* that are relational. The entire Torah can be summarized as “you shall love your fellow as yourself.” Peace and

love among us is Hashem’s greatest joy, exactly as a father who is gladdened when his children get along. Honoring others, not causing pain to others, acknowledging the good that others do for us – these are the greatest deeds. With every expression of love between people, Hashem is revealed. Loving His creations is connected with loving Hashem.

We must relate to each other, to brighten our countenance towards others, to draw them near, to pray for them, to bring them joy – to whatever extent we are capable of, and, to the extent that we are unable to – to want it for them. One who lives in such a manner will experience the amazing pleasantness of Hashem. He guards the candle from ever being extinguished.

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## תפילה

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**Master of the World!** Help me be more internal – focused on and found in my home, *yeshiva, shul* and not listening to or paying attention to this world – focused on holy matters. It is so much better when I am inside and nothing distracts me and I hardly notice the time fly. I have no strength for the tumult of this world, Father. Everyone is running, travelling, buying, standing in line – give me a little rest, Father – without internal struggles, without urges and negative attributes. At least for a short time.

**Master of the World!** Grant me a period of solitude. I have no strength to meet certain people that I do not want to see and who do not wish to see me (usually being the very same individuals). I know that this is not the proper mindset, that I must *daven* that I merit loving everyone and thinking positively about everyone and seeing their inner beauty – but I am a bit exhausted from this, Father. Give me a short respite. I wish to see only You, to speak only with You, to think only of You – for a little while.

**Master of the World!** Allow me to be enveloped in the tranquility of holiness, without yelling, without cars honking, without all of the surrounding commotion. Like in a field - where I can lift my head heavenward and hear only the stillness. Like early *Shabbos* morning when most people are still sleeping. Like a *shul* in middle of the night when all that can be seen is the flickering light of the *yahrzeit* plaque and the curtain on the *Aron Kodesh* that welcomes a person to draw close, to cling, to breathe in the absorbed holiness deeply and be alone with it. Absolute silence.

**Master of the World!** Permit me a short break from the battles of this world. Just a short break.

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*. Thank you Mordi Blass for your help with some of the Hebrew expressions.

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ברכות יז,  
באור פני מלך חיים