

פרשת כי תצא

This adaptation is dedicated
in honor of my wife, Devorah.

"כי תצא למלחמה על איביך ונתנו ד' אלקיך בידך"
(כא, י)

**"When you will go out to war against
your enemies, and Hashem, your G-d,
will deliver them into your hands"**

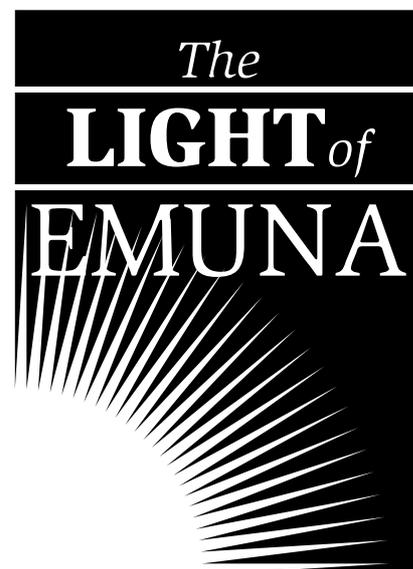
As soon as one experiences a self-initiated "lower-world-type" inspiration and goes out to war against the evil inclination – Hashem surely delivers him into our hands. As Chazal teach, "Open up an opening the size of the eye of a needle, and I will open for you an opening the size of an auditorium."^{1 2}

"כי תצא למלחמה על איביך ... (כא, י)"
**"When you will go out to war against
your enemies..."**

There is no greater or more pronounced pleasure than prevailing over our evil inclination. When a person overcomes a challenge, he experiences marvelous, true, soulful gratification that no material indulgence can compare to. By conquering our urges we draw near to Hashem and that is our primary task in this world – we "go out to war against our enemies." By bonding with Hashem we resist our *yetzer hora* with all of our might. Every small gesture that we make towards holiness disrupts the "other-side" with a myriad of distractions and confusions. That is the battle of life, between man and his eternal foe.

We attempt to fortify ourselves and then we fall. So, we start again – and again, we fall. It is not

¹ פתחו לי פתח כחודו של מחט ואני אפתח לכם פתח כפתחו של אולם (שיר השירים רבה ה)
² דגל מחנה אפרים



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

easy to defeat all of the oppositions that we face in serving Hashem – but we may never despair. It is the *yetzer hora* that attempts to instill desperation and inertness within us and we must be warriors to withstand it.

We must "go out to war" – if we merely go out, begin – Hashem takes up our fight. If we engage, Hashem helps us be victorious. "Hashem, your G—d, will deliver them into your hands." It is the most difficult of all battles; we must employ subterfuge in our countermeasures.

When the Steipler Gaon zt"l was young, he was sent to a Siberian labor camp. The temperature would drop to forty-degrees below zero. Utilizing various schemes, the Steipler managed to keep Shabbos in that awful place. One Friday, he encountered a particularly cruel and malevolent officer who ordered him to remove his coat. The officer then hung it from a high branch. By the time the officer left, with an evil laugh on his lips, Shabbos had begun. The Steipler was faced with a conundrum – it was forbidden to remove the coat from the tree on Shabbos, but, without it, he would freeze. He decided to wait five minutes without his coat and then he would retrieve it because he would be faced with a threat to his life, under which circumstances it would be permissible to violate Shabbos. Five minutes later, he was shivering, but decided to wait another five minutes. Thus, he continued every five minutes until after the

conclusion of Shabbos.

We must never give up or become dejected. Momentary humiliation over our failures is all the best – to infuse more humility and unpretentiousness into us – to remind us that only Hashem truly has the ability to rescue us. In the merit of our prayers, our desires, our longings, and our broken hearts – we will eventually merit – our time will come.

Hashem saves us – in precise accordance with our level of *bitachon*. “May Your kindness be upon us, Hashem, just as we awaited you.”³ If a person, G-d forbid, does not have *bitachon* in salvation, it remains beyond him. Therefore, the Torah, in last week’s parsha, warns soldiers who are about to enter battle, “let your heart not be faint; do not be afraid, do not panic, and do not be broken before them. For Hashem, your G-d, is the One Who goes with you, to fight for you with your enemies, to save you.”⁴ Of fundamental importance is not to be afraid, not to feel hopeless. If a person feels that something is too difficult for him, beyond his capabilities, outside his reach – he must, at a minimum, yearn for it. We have free-will. No one can affect our desires. Just wanting it is a great level. The power of will is astounding. If a person wishes, with the essence of his being, to approach holiness – he will ultimately attain it. If he does not allow his aspirations to weaken – he will certainly surmount all obstacles.

Hashem loves our ambitions more than all of our success. Hashem loves someone who fails and stumbles, who is humiliated and oppressed - but refuses to be destroyed – he starts afresh, never relinquishing his determination. We dream of guarding our eyes, we long to make peace with that person who we have not spoken to in two years – even if it seems beyond our capacity at the moment.

“If Hashem wants it – we want it. If Hashem does not want it – neither do we. That is Hashem’s first demand – that we alter our goals to match His. ‘Make His will into your will, so that He will make your will as His will. Nullify your will before His will, so that He will nullify the will of others before your will.’⁵ Hashem wants us to know all of *Shas* – we must not say that we are incapable – we must not eradicate the desire. We should not consider whether or not we are talented enough – if Hashem wants it, we want it! Alas, we do not know how to learn, there are other obstacles – but we are capable of aspiring. First, we must want it! We must never limit our desires to our perceived abilities. Our first mistake is failing to desire that which Hashem desires. Our second mistake is not realizing that if we truly desire, we will accomplish. ‘On the path that a person wishes to travel, he is led.’”^{6 7}

There are times when Heaven discards us to the lowest loci, to places where we would not have believed we could have plummeted to. We face such confrontations, such penchants – we feel so sullied, degraded, ashamed – that the words just burst forth from the very depths of our hearts, with such stubbornness that is so appealing, that expresses such love for Hashem, connection with Hashem and proximity to Hashem.

The war with the *yetzer hora* is a continuous one with many difficult challenges. Conquering these trials is the essence of our service. They are the only means to elevate ourselves spiritually. Through them, we build ourselves. We actualize our hidden potential that cannot be revealed when things go smoothly. When we quash our desires in favor of Hashem’s, we are much more satisfied – revealing a greatness that was not there before. Even when we fail and descend to the depths, but we feel badly and do not wish to return there and we commit to rectify ourselves and clothe ourselves in *bitachon* – we earn such tremendous light and incredible joy.

³ יהי חסדך עלינו כאשר יחלנו לך (תהילים לג, כב – ואומרים אותו כל יום ב'תחנון)

⁴ אל ירך לבבכם אל תיראו ואל תחפזו ואל תערצו מפניהם כי ד' אלקיכם ההלך עמכם להלחם לכם עם איביכם להושיע אתכם (ג, כ)

⁵ עשה רצונו כרצונך כדי שיעשה רצונך כרצונו. בטל רצונך מפני רצונו כדי שיבטל רצון אחרים מפני רצונך (אבות ב, ד)

⁶ בדרך שאדם רוצה לילך בה מוליכין אותו (מכות י:)

⁷ המברך את עמו ישראל בשלום

When we encounter a difficult tribulation, we must thank Hashem for the receipt of such a precious gift. Without such tests in life we would never be able to realize our full potential. People attain all sorts of amazing planes and lead wondrous lives – particular with the observance of *mitzvos*, incredible prayer, never missing a *tefilla*, with supplementary supplications – *Perek Shira*, *Nishmas*, *Tehillim*, performing acts of kindness, etc. But, if they never withstand challenges - their entire adherence is superficial. Their natural instinct is that they love to *daven*, do *chesed* – so they do it. When they are suddenly required to do something that goes against their ingrained mindset, if they have to break a tendency – the barrier between them and Hashem is removed and their very body and flesh is transformed into soul. “And from my flesh I see G-dliness.”⁸ Such intimacy and such sweetness are generated. We feel elevated.⁹

From where do we acquire the strength to endure life’s challenges? Rebbe Nachman provided us with guidance:

חדות ד' הוא מעוזכם (בחמיה ת, י)

“The joy of Hashem is your strength”

Joy is our spearhead against the *yetzer hora*. We must be happy with our lot – even if we do not have everything, we have a lot. We must be pleased with the *mitzvos* that we have managed to execute, our good points, anything positive that we have accomplished, even if insubstantial. Every small motion or movement from negative towards positive is so precious to Hashem. Hashem loves our satisfaction with our portion. “Hashem has done greatly with us, we were gladdened.”¹⁰ In the merit of being delighted with our share, Hashem acts greatly with us.

Moreinu Harav: Happiness saves us from sin. At the moment that we experience any form of depression because we have sinned, we are

poised to sin even more gravely. We are naturally drawn to sadness and must valiantly guard our joy. We must force ourselves. We become sad to help us deal with our suffering, which leads us to depression, anesthetizing our minds, paralyzing our feelings – deceiving us into a fantasy of peace and quiet. In reality, melancholy intensifies the misery, magnifying it. Our main task is to contest depression, with self-sacrifice, never allowing it a foothold. Happiness is not achieved on its own; the *yetzer hora* does his best to make it elude us. We are intuitively inclined towards grief, but joy remedies so much. If we sing and dance to Hashem, we receive copious amounts of abundance – downfalls become ascents, judgments are sweetened. Ecstasy can cure all.

אמונה – רפואה לנפש

Emuna - the cure for the soul.

The more we recall that there is nothing besides Hashem – the less we suffer. We do not become haughty when we succeed and we do not persecute ourselves when we fail – we acknowledge that it is all from Hashem. Once we understand that everything is Hashem’s doing, we rise to the awareness that everything that Hashem does is for the best. Therefore, we must express gratitude for everything, even for what pains and aggravates us. Doing so gives us joy and strength.

Emuna and steeling themselves is the key to success of all *tzaddikim*. They never gave up on themselves, no matter what occurred. Everyone has good points; even our *mitzvos* done by rote are good. Someone once approached Rebbe Nachman complaining that he was purely evil and there was no point in trying. Rebbe Nachman concurred and said that indeed he saw nothing good. Defensively, the man started to point out a few good acts and attributes – thereby proving Rebbe Nachman’s philosophy.

When a person believes that Hashem loves him and is close to him, nothing is lost – there is no possibility of hopelessness. If Hashem loves us - even when we stumble, Hashem awaits our

⁸ מבשרי אחזה אלוך (איוב יט, כו)
⁹ באור פני מלך חיים
¹⁰ הגדיל ד' לעשות עמנו, היינו שמחים (תהילים קכו, ג – שיר המעלות לפני ברכת המזון)

tefillos; He wants to help us – because He loves us.

(תהילים קיט, קעו) תעיתי כשה אובד

“I have strayed like a lost lamb.”

A person sinks into the world of falsehood, of base urges – he begins to wander onto detrimental paths, G-d forbid – but he is still nearby, not too far away, he still remembers the appeal, the sweetness of true life. He must not delay until it is too late, G-d forbid! He must return, flee emptiness – before darkness encompasses him.

Rebbe Nachman taught that there is a big difference between doing *teshuva* for a sin immediately and delaying it until later. The

sooner we do *teshuva*, the easier it is because we have not veered too far off course yet. Once we begin to detour, we can be diverted many times and the farther we drift from the proper route, the harder it is to find our way back. When we deviate, Hashem calls us back – the closer we are, the easier it is to hear the call.¹¹

Moreinu Harav: When a person attempts to sin, Creation resists him. “The heavens reveal his iniquity and the earth rises up against him.”¹² Heaven send us hints, like Balaam’s donkey – there are signs – a car blocking our way, an unexpected closed door, traffic, etc. These are all messages to prevent us from transgressing.

Life is constant struggle ... struggle ... struggle ... fleeing bad and drawing near good.

תפילה

Master of the World! What wonderful advice You sent me! To repeat: “I want, I want, I want” all the incredible things that exist in holiness. From the moment I acknowledged this advice, I have experienced such ecstasy, such contentment because there were things I had never dared to desire, believing them to be beyond my grasp, completely unrealistic. Help me, Father, not to forget this concept, to reiterate these desires often – for, in my heart, I feel that if I repeat them and I am tenacious – I will eventually accomplish.

Master of the World! Grant me these desires and longings – to remember You all day, to connect to You, to yearn for You, to converse with You, to take counsel in You, to express my gratitude to You. If that is what my day looks like, the chances of the *yetzer hora* defeating me are drastically reduced.

Master of the World! Save me from tribulations because I am so weak – how can I hope to overcome them? If, nevertheless, they are indeed inflicted upon me – please protect me, be with me, and accord me the strength to shatter my will in favor of Yours in those moments. In those taxing moments, I forget everything - all of the beautiful words and all of the effective advice - I revert to being a small child who needs his father’s guardianship. And if, G-d forbid, I do not withstand a test, fortify me, Father, encourage me, and help me begin anew as if I had never fallen – because despair is so dangerous.

Master of the World! Help me remember the true flavor of life, the pleasure of clinging to You, the beauty of giving, the satisfaction of foregoing, the sweetness of holiness, the joy of seeing the good in every person and every situation.

Master of the World! Help me discern between dishonesty and truth – for nothing is more exquisite than truth.

Have an awesome, uplifting and wonderful Shabbos,

Dov

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 Mordy Blass for your help with some of the Hebrew expressions.

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

11

12

ליקו"מ כו
יגלו שמים עונו וארץ מתקוממה לו (איוב כ, כז)