

פרשת מקץ - חנוכה

This adaptation is dedicated in honor of my wife, Devorah.
Thank you for 20 wonderful years, and counting.

ולרפואה שלימה ל' זעלדע ברכה בת חוה לאה רחל

חנוכה Chanukah

The light of Chanukah is the light of *emuna*. *Emuna* and *bitachon* are the salve of the heart of the one who trusts; who knows, with his entire heart, that everything is orchestrated by the hands of Hashem, and, consequently, everything is for his very best, at all times – he is in the hands of the Creator of all Worlds. That is not to say that the one with *bitachon* has faith that everything will turn out exactly as he wishes and will be precisely a certain way – rather, he trusts Hashem that whatever He did and does is the best for him – therefore, he is calm and relaxed.¹

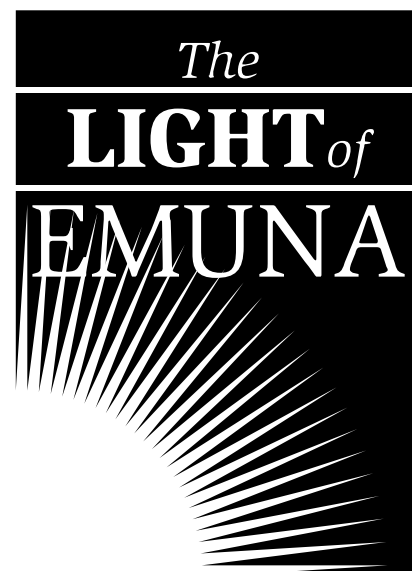
באנו חשך לגרש We Came to Banish Darkness

Upon lighting even a small candle - darkness immediately disperses and dissipates. The light of Chanukah is the light of truth – and truth is Hashem. Only the light of Hashem can so illuminate the great darkness that we usually find ourselves in and show us that we are chasing after an illusion, after falsehood, after emptiness – **only the light of Hashem can dispel such darkness.**

“Master of the World, I know that you are the truth. All of my base urges are phony – there is no substance to them. In those rare moments of clarity that You send to me on occasion, I feel like I want nothing in the world, except You! That all of the silliness that I have pursued until now is meaningless, a mirage, does not exist. Master of

¹

חובות הלבבות



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

the World, help me see this constantly, help these moments endure forever.”

Help me to choose only You and to realize that it is a delusion to think that it is possible to choose two worlds at the same time. **Help me comprehend that it is one or the other – the body or the soul.**

Give me the strength to overcome all of the foreign desires and to never forget that **the light is found inside of us** – we need only seek it out. We are forbidden to despair.

Just as we light the candles each day anew throughout the eight days of Chanukah – we do not give up on You, Father. We have *emuna* that if we continue to yearn for You with all of our strength, we will merit clinging to You. We are at war, every moment in dire straits, every second has its challenges, every minute, its burden – but, we acknowledge that it is all to build vessels with which to draw closer to You. **In the merit of all that we endure, we will ultimately cling to You.**

After the first seven candles - we ignite the eighth - which represents the infinite, above nature. According to *kabbalah*, the eighth candle is the light of Yosef Hatzaddik – it increases and continues – it is the light of the righteous. It is the light that shines even for those who have ruined and destroyed everything – to show them

that there is no despair – no matter how badly they appear to have failed. **We can always return to You, Father.**

In a display case in the salon of the home of a certain wealthy man who lived Holland, there was a strange item: a broken bottle of oil. A fundraiser from Israel once inquired as to the nature of the display – a broken bottle exhibited in such an esteemed manner. The homeowner explained, “Much to my regret, I used to be non-observant. One day, I was walking in the street and I noticed a young child crying. I approached him and asked him what was wrong. He told me that he had gone to purchase a bottle of olive oil with which to light the Chanukah candles – but the bottle had fallen and broken! In the midst of talking he started to cry again... ‘What will I tell my father...? What will I tell my father...?’

“I was filled with compassion for him, so I gave him a sum of money with which to buy a replacement bottle. I took the broken bottle home. When I arrived home, incisive reflection began pervading my psyche, ‘It is Chanukah today. **On these days, HKB”H executed miracles for our forefathers who wished desperately to perform *mitzvos* – while I do not even try to do any *mitzvos*...**’ The words of the child reverberated in my ears, ‘What will I tell my father...’ – as if to say: ‘What will I tell my Father in Heaven...? What will I tell my Father in Heaven...?’

“A glimmer of *teshuvah* was sparked within me and I lit Chanukah candles. The next day I donned *tefillin*... until I eventually returned to keep all of the *mitzvos*. In order to remind myself of the moment that I began my return to the yoke of *mitzvos*, I placed the broken bottle of oil on display in my salon. It constantly reminds me of that young boy’s words: ‘What will I tell my father...?’”

For every single person, until one’s last day – the very fact that Hashem gives us life is a sign that we must still purify ourselves and break all of our negative aspects. That is why we are here. That is why we are given life.

A person must conduct much internal contemplation – for, if we do not, we will remain with mired in our banality. We feel deprived, we complain, we get angry, we are depressed, we blame ourselves, we blame others. We constantly feel as if things are not going well for us and it is definitely so-and-so’s fault or we are inadequate – **we fail to recognize that we are essentially angry at Hashem**, even if we do not say as much explicitly.

In the manner in which we complain, are unsatisfied and get angry that things are not exactly as we want them – in that precise manner we are distanced thousands of miles from our objectives that we are tasked with attaining. We are separated from Hashem. How do we expel the darkness and illuminate the fog?

We must connect to: “there is nothing aside from Hashem.” In all forms, at all times, in all situations – we do not sink, get confused, feel insulted or become excited by issues with families or our wider social circles or even what is inside of us. We connect to a higher element, to the *emuna* that Hashem orchestrates everything here, He is the cause of all causes – therefore, we must never blame ourselves or others – **we are connected to Hashem’s will, the will of the Master of the Universe and that fulfills us, calms us, makes us feel good** – we quickly realize that our lives are worthwhile, we do not just merely exist.

If “there is nothing aside from Hashem” is true – how is possible to become sad? So I did not succeed – Hashem created me as I am, with these tendencies, shortcomings and deficiencies – what can I do about it – should I be depressed about it? I will choose to be happy and continue - begin anew and things will become more and more amazing, because essentially, **Hashem’s desire is that we be happy and that we wish to do good things.** Once we want to do good, even if we have already ruined things and acted negatively, we cannot become dejected.

At the moment that we are detached, even for a second, from Hashem’s desire – it is bad for us.

Then, we start afresh. We begin to speak to Hashem. We thank Hashem for His Manifestation in the world and His Presence within our challenges. We recognize that no one else endures the exact same challenges as we do and there is no one else with the same Divine Decree with which we were sent into the world. **Everyone is unique, every person has an individual holy mission that is unique and distinct – each person is a sequence in a chain directly from HKB”H.** We work for this our whole lives, for “there is nothing aside from Hashem,” until we attain some measure of it and our children must continue the task, as will our grandchildren and great-grandchildren, until the end of all generations.²

When a person has *bitachon* in Hashem that everything that He does to him is best – then, even when things do not always go the way he would like, he remains serene. He accepts every occurrence with humility. Hashem created the world with such twists and turns – today we are here and tomorrow there – we never would have thought that something like this could happen to us. When we reveal humility - we earn light.

Yosef Hatzaddik spent twelve years in jail – never ceasing jumping and dancing. **We cannot understand Hashem’s plans for us, we understand nothing.** If this is what Hashem wants from us at this moment - we lower our heads and do it.

If we want light, if we want joy – we must sacrifice of ourselves. We must give 101%. We must give a bit more than it appears that we are capable of. **When we go above and beyond our abilities – we reveal the greatest light of all.**

In the times of the Greeks, the Jewish people risked their lives for every *mitzvah*, even Rabbinic commandments. They circumcised their sons, shook *lulav* and *esrog*, kept Shabbos - even when they were technically exempt! The Midrash expounds the verse “This is the

generation of those who seek Him”³ as referring to those who sacrifice themselves for every *mitzvah*, not generations that are focused on materialistic pursuits.

Tzaddikim have shed countless tears over every *mitzvah*. When he was in Concentration Camp, the Kloizenberger Rebbe wept so fiercely to not lose the opportunity to do any *mitzvah*. Rivers of tears were shed to prevent the desecration of Shabbos, to not eat non-Kosher. One day, as soon as he arrived at a camp, they announced that it was mealtime. The Rebbe refused to take any food. He entered a small shack and began to sob bitterly that he did not want the repulsive foods of theirs! Suddenly, he was summoned from outside. He assumed that it was the capo looking to kill him, since that was the penalty for refusing the food proffered. He encountered an elderly Jew with a loaf of bread and a plate of jam who offered to share. The Rebbe later testified that he had witnessed an immediate miracle and instantly understood that Hashem was protecting him - that Hashem was with him.

Keeping the Torah requires monumental effort and enormous restraint. “If one claims to have toiled and achieved – he is believed.” Otherwise, he is not. R’ Akiva returned to *yeshiva* for twelve additional years without even stopping into his house for a minute. **Accomplishment in Torah takes self-sacrifice.**

Humility is a prerequisite of light. When we consider ourselves to be insignificant, we become vessels of light. If we are self-centered, we cannot receive light. When we flee from honor, honor pursues us. **Reverence and humility are the highest light, above all else.**

When a person does a lot but does not feel excessive pride, when he believes that he is less important than others – he enjoys such delight – such G-dly light is illuminated upon him.

Chanukah is an amazing revelation of *chesed*. Hashem’s light descends to us, to our place,

²

באור פני מלך חיים

³

זה דור דורשיו מבקשי פניך יעקב סלה (תהילים כד, ו)

where we find ourselves, below ten *tefachim*, to a place where the *Shechina* does not stoop. And that is what is expected of us as well – to brighten our faces, to smile, to extend a hand.

One of the things that cause pain to others is our failure smile at them. When we hold back a smile, the other person immediately begins thinking about why. They wonder what they did wrong. Many people can be broken by our withholding a smile. We must smile at everyone – greet them with a hearty “Hello! What’s Up? Welcome! Good to See You!” It is so amazing to respect others – how much we earn in this world – and surely in the next world. Already, in this world – everything will be opened up for us – success will be ours. **Nothing gladdens HKB”H as much as one who gladdens others and Hashem repays that person with such incredible abundance.** Rebbe Nachman taught

that a person who smiles regularly – literally revives others. Sometimes a person is so depressed that he wants to die and a smile from another can give him strength to continue living. **When we smile – HKB”H smiles!** We all want Hashem to smile – so we must smile! Hashem treats us as we treat others.⁴

We must know that the essence of every Jew is tremendous and unlimited light - the light of HKB”H Himself. A Jew can transform his body into a holy body of radiance – from Gan Eden itself – and escape all of his negative attributes.

Shabbos Chanukah is always Parshas Mikeitz. Mikeitz (מִקֵּץ) comes from the word for end (קֵץ) – an end to the darkness. To illuminate hearts – we need not battle the dark, we need only kindle a small lamp and the gloom dissipates and dissolves.

תפילה

Master of the World! When I pray or request something multiple times - Help me, Father, to know when to stop and desist, to comprehend that maybe it is not good for me right now or for the person that I am *davening* for – maybe You have a different plan for me, a better plan. Help my heart not be crooked, G-d forbid; that I not have doubts or skepticism regarding the efficacy of prayer. Help me remember all of the myriad times that You performed miracles and wonders for which I prayed and was answered – in which I experienced such salvations.

Master of the World! Help me self-sacrifice – without excuses, without reservations. Not only in matters that are easy and agreeable to me (even if it would be real sacrifice for others) – but even in grueling areas that are not always suited to my talents, desires and plans.

Master of the World! Help me, that every time I feel my anger stir, to manage to refrain, to remember that I always regret losing my temper, I become ashamed. What right do I have to yell at anyone, offend anyone – who am I that I expect everything to go according to my will? Whenever I suffer, to remember that you sent me this pain – and, if it is from You, Father – how can it really be painful? And, whenever I feel the need to repeat something in my house or to a friend – to examine it a thousand times to determine if it contains any *loshon hora* or *rechilus* – and, if so, to abstain, to seal my mouth – to remember what I have to lose. **Master of the World!** Help me continue to improve constantly – for if I do not, for what purpose am I here?

Master of the World! Allow me to proceed with the small vial of oil, not only on Chanukah, but all year. To oil the squeaks, to illuminate my countenance, to gladden, to encourage, to help – to do good in Your world.

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

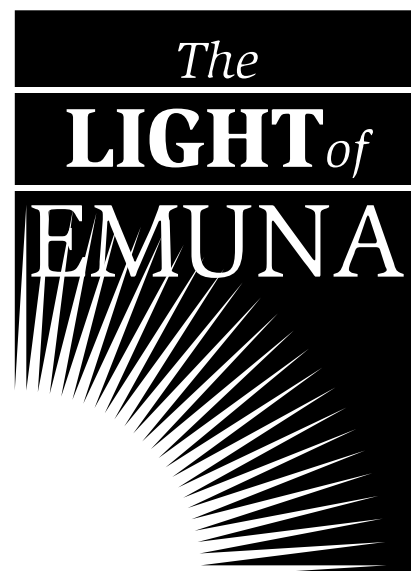
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פרשת מקץ - חנוכה

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in honor of my wife, Devorah.
Thank you for 20 wonderful years
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ולרפואה שלימה ל'
זעלדע ברכה בת חוה לאה רחל



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

סגולה נפלאה ונוראה לחנוכה

An Amazing & Wonderful Segula for Chanukah

An amazing and wonderful *Segula* at the time of the lighting of the candles on Chanukah is to sit and do *hisbodedus* with Hashem - to thank Him and make requests of Him -it is an extremely propitious time.

One should sit by the candles for the duration of their being lit [or, at least a half hour] and communicate, with Hashem, in a colloquial manner. One should articulate to Hashem - in one's normal mode of conversation - all that is in his heart and offer gratitude and appreciation for all of Hashem's kindness towards him since the day that he was born.

This will expand one's heart and lead him to beseech and entreat for the future - and Hashem, Who Hears the prayers of every mouth - will listen and accept our *tefillos* and deliver salvation. *Amen.*