

פרשת וארא

This adaptation is dedicated in honor of my wife, Devorah;
and in honor of my daughter Ariella's birthday.

ולרפואה שלימה ל' זעלדע ברכה בת חוה לאה רחל
ושלמה בן רייזע גיטל

"וארא אל אברהם אל יצחק ואל יעקב בקל שקי
ושמי ד' לא נודעתי להם." (ג, ו)

**"I appeared to Avraham, to Yitzchak,
and to Yaakov as Kel Shakkai, but with
My Name Hashem, I did not make
Myself known to them."**

The pivotal purpose of the true revelation of Hashem's G-dliness was through the forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. But, **it is not possible for to reveal the entire truth at once.** Truth must be clarified in this world of free will, in precise measure, in each generation, until Moshiach arrives and reveals the complete truth. Therefore, "but with My Name Hashem, I did not make Myself known to them."¹

" לא נודעתי להם " (ג, ו)

"I did not make Myself known to them"

Our raison d'être is to know Hashem - to connect to Hashem - to attain an inner harmony with Hashem. Hashem is not content with a superficial union of the laws of the Torah, *Halacha*, stringencies, matters that are unmovable, set - what we refer to as *Daas Torah*.

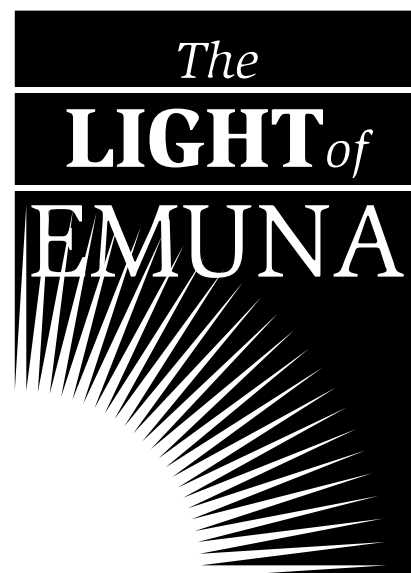
Hashem desires our internal service - our attaining inner unity. After we have merited knowing that Hashem exists in the world, that there is Torah, that there are laws that we must obey, that we may not deviate from the Torah, right or left - after all that, we must arrive at the inner essence of the matter - the soul within each thing. Why is it so difficult for people to perform the *mitzvos*? Because they have not yet revealed the inner essence of Torah, the pleasure

¹

ליקו"ה, ריבית ה, לא

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המברך את עמו ישראל בשלום



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

of being bound to Hashem. If everything is superficial - there is no vitality, strength - and then people skip, shorten - and then there is even less vitality and more distance.

The connection to Hashem is the gratification in *yiddishkeit* - the personal, simple and natural relationship.

"Purify me to know that bonding with You is connecting to the light of the world, the pleasantness of the world, the sweetness of the world! Grant us the intellect to not become confused by this world - so that our entire goal may be to connect to the light of the world - the good of the world!"²

Within every Jew there is such a tremendous aspect, such a point of G-dliness - it is unlimited and HKB"Y cannot forego it. We must dig and dig until we connect to it, to the G-dly portion that is found within each of us. Alas, we wish to reach Hashem, attach to him - **where is He to be found? Inside of each and every one of us.**

In our culture, we generally do not have issues with the external unity. We are able to be quite exacting in following *halacha*, learning Torah, acting according to G-dly intellect - even when we do not understand, whether we feel anything or not. Our main problem is with inner unity.

Inner unity is our intent during *Krias Shema*, our intent during *Shemona Esrei*, what we invest in maintaining peace in the home, what we invest in properly raising our children, what we invest in ourselves, in our happiness, in our attachment to Hashem, every minute and every hour. We must do much internal work to attain an ever greater inner unity. How? By remembering Hashem. **By foregoing our “rights,” by recognizing that the entire world is frivolity.** By waking in the morning, saying “*Modeh Ani*” and feeling so grateful to be healthy and intact – going to sleep and saying *Krias Shema* – giving a coin to a poor person – performing some *mitzvah* – dealing with a child – overcoming the urge to get angry – working on peace in the home – every little thing that we do, if we combine it with *emuna* (not thank G-d we succeeded, we are so wonderful, we are such good husbands, we provide such good counsel to others – so impressed with ourselves), self-nullification, humility and modesty – then, we can transform the external unity into internal unity. Inner unity is critically important. **Everything that Hashem created in this world is for us to create inner unity.**³

When a person performs inner service, he blossoms, he changes and he draws near to Hashem. He constantly contemplates his status in the world – is he connected or not. He thinks about what he is connected to and he asks, “What will become of me, Father? When will I begin to think about You and not about my own honor?”

It begins in thought – there it is clarified. Thought has tremendous power. From thought it becomes speech – beseeching, praying, **“Hashem, help me change – for, without You, there is no possibility. Hashem, have mercy on me, show me the way.”**

Thoughts harass us and we do not know how to escape them. Whether sadness, anger, worry, nitpicking, hatred, confusion regarding *emuna* or the idea that fortune is so cruel to us – we do not know how to contest these concepts. What do

we do? We must continually associate with positive thoughts. How? We do so through speech. We must endlessly murmur – persistently talking to Hashem. When we arise in the morning, we immediately say “*Modeh Ani*” and throughout the day we speak, thank, request – repetitively saying that everything is for the best, we are happy with Hashem. **Speech progresses to action. And slowly, we change – and life becomes amazing.** We will feel pity for those who remain with their silliness until the end. We feel sorry for the old man who remains a child. We must have much compassion for ourselves when there are things that we have been begging, praying and pleading for for years and nothing changes.

Inner service begins with self-contemplation. **Therefore, we must do much *hisbodedus* – contemplating and meditating on subtleties and nuances.** Did I give that *tzedaka* wholeheartedly or was I reluctant to part with my money? Am I still too particular or have I realized that there is no reason to be because everything is from Hashem? Do I smile at others or am I too self-absorbed? Have I accepted the fact that ultimately all of this world is emptiness and therefore I do not get excited when others irritate me? Do I not get angry at them? Do I judge them favorably – whether my spouse, my children, myself? Do I not get angry with myself and understand and accept that everything is Divine Providence?

We must perpetually judge ourselves. There are times that we do so with serenity and self-awareness. We perform *hisbodedus*, we take stock of our soul before we go to sleep. But there are many additional instances of self-assessment. We may suddenly realize that we did not treat a friend properly and we immediately set out to fix the situation. We raised our voice at someone and we realize that we might not have considered the possible effects it had on them – we rush to apologize. We regularly judge even without being aware that we are doing so.

A student at the Yeshiva of Chevron personally invited the Rosh Hayeshiva, R' Simcha Zissel

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באור פני מלך חיים

Brodie zt"l, to his wedding. R' Simcha Zissel was older and rarely attended weddings anymore. He wished the groom well but explained that due to his weakened state he would not be able to attend. To everyone's surprise, R' Simcha Zissel attended the wedding and actually stayed longer than would have been his habit years earlier. He even sat and conversed with the groom's father for an inordinately long time. He explained his actions to his puzzled students. When he had learned the groom's father's name, he had remembered that he had been a student at the Yeshiva years earlier. There had been a disagreement between the groom's father and several other boys. R' Brodie had taken the side of the other students and the groom's father had been very upset. Therefore, when he realized that he had the opportunity to appease him for that event from years earlier ...⁴

The main element of contemplation and self-assessment is self-nullification. **A person must not attribute good to himself or become arrogant for his accomplishments.** "*Baruch Hashem, I succeeded, Baruch Hashem I did well and Baruch Hashem I took care of things.*" Even though he says "*Baruch Hashem*" he is focused on the word "I." Rather than be enamored with "I," we must be like Dovid Hamelech who said, "My heart is a hollow within me"⁵ – our hearts must not be blocked by self-centeredness – **we must have room in our hearts for HKB"H.**

What remains in the end is what we have done for Hashem. That is our World to Come. That is why Hashem created us – to reveal His Glory in the world. The Creator does not need honor from the angels. **He loves the reverence that He receives from simple people like us.** He wants us to act for His splendor.

If a person manages to pray with concentration, with inspiration, with song and melody; or, if he manages to do a kindness for another – any time that he overcomes his urges and does something spiritual, he immediately feels: "I am a *tzaddik*."

We must instantly annul this vanity. "Master of the World, I forgot, I know that everything is You, help me *daven* with devoutness, help me do *chesed* for Heaven's sake, without receiving any honor – that it genuinely be only for Your honor.

It is impossible to attain inner unity without joy – we know that joy is the touchstone of our inner service of Hashem.

Moshe Rabbeinu arrived and spoke of redemption with delight, with song and melody, while clinging to Hashem. But, the Jewish people had already despaired, lost patience – they did not have *emuna* that they could come close to Hashem with pleasantness and happiness. "But they did not heed Moshe, because of shortness of breath and hard work."⁶ "For with joy shall you go forth"⁷ – be happy, dance and sing – that is how we break out of suffering and misery, **that is how exile is transformed into redemption.**

We must be delighted in our *yiddishkeit* and in Hashem. **"We are Your children – we cannot live without You. Our lives are pleasant in Your company."** It makes no difference whether or not we have received what we have requested. **If we are connected to Hashem and we have a bond with Hashem – we have received everything.** Our job is to guard and protect that bond and that will gladden us more than anything else. Even though we enjoy other things (for we are not ascetics) – in our depths, in those moments of clarity – we know the truth – the greatest gratification is when we love Hashem. Hashem expresses His love for us with four separate expressions of redemption in this week's *parsha*. A father can never be severed from His children, no matter how low they may have fallen. He has no choice – a Father will overturn the entire world for His children.

A Jew's major challenge is to always remain happy. We must all endure challenges, descents and ascents – throughout life. That is how Hashem created the world – in this manner –

⁴ נסיך ממלכות התורה
⁵ לבי חלל בקרבי (תהילים קט, כב)

⁶ ולא שמעו אל משה מקצר רוח ומעבדה קשה (ו, ט)
⁷ כי בשמחה תצאו (ישעי' נה, יב)

that there be darkness – and from within the darkness – we seek the light. The darker it is, the more Hashem has compassion and brings down light – not due to our merits, simply out of His kindness.

Our primary need to strengthen our joy is precisely in those moments of downfall and trial – to maintain *emuna* that we will emerge.

Our primary task is to avoid sadness, even momentary sadness, because there is no reason for melancholy. We must have *emuna* that every Jew is capable of attaining complete goodness, materialistically and spiritually, every success imaginable. We must be elated that we are Jewish – that we merit to keep Shabbos, don *tefillin*, *daven* – it is as if we found a diamond worth millions.

We must incessantly extend our joy, limitless joy. If we cannot think of cause for joy – we must be

delighted that Hashem created us as G-dly creations – that is the greatest treasure. “Israel will rejoice with its Maker; the children of Zion will exult with their King.”⁸

When Hashem observes us rejoicing genuinely, with Him – He nullifies all decrees and all suffering. The choice is clear: begin to rejoice in Hashem! Hashem is everlasting and He loves us. Hashem created us and He believes in our *teshuvah* – **He will never abandon us – He will give us everything.**

We are not meant to understand everything. There is the portion of “I did not make Myself known to them.” The holy forefathers did not merit a clear revelation like Moshe did – but they nevertheless did not have doubts. With eyes shut they followed Hashem’s commands. When we face life’s challenges with understanding, courage, without complaining – we merit closeness to and inner unity with Hashem.

תפילה

Master of the World! Help me not to become confused when something that I have *davened* for a lot (begging and pleading) turned out exactly opposite of what I wanted – help me, Father, to remember the countless times that I have witnessed the efficacy of prayer – actual miracles and wonders. Rather than think, even for a split second, that there is no point in praying if it does not help – to think that we have to endure exactly what has occurred and it is for the very best – and to do *teshuvah* for that split second.

Master of the World! Whenever things work out and we receive gifts from you – help me not forget to thank You with my entire heart. Although I remember that I *davened* for this and was answered, I often forget to thank You – and, even when I do express gratitude, it is not with the same fervor with which I requested the matter.

Master of the World! I plead before You to give me many moments of spiritual delight, of feelings to the point of tears, emotions from the revelation of love between people, of longings and yearnings for You, Father. Like when I hear the song, “My soul yearns, it pines for the courts of Hashem” – at that moment I so badly wish to be in Your courts, I so badly want You.

Master of the World! I wish to experience that every donning of *tefillin*, every *davening* with a *minyan*, every Shabbos and everything else that we do in holiness are gems that are worth millions. I love all of these amazing matters, but I do not always feel an elevation of the soul and **I want to! I want to! I want to!**

Have an awesome, uplifting and wonderful Shabbos,

Dov Elias

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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ישמח ישראל בעושי בני ציון במלכם (תהילים קמט, ב)