

פרשת תצוה

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

ולרפואה שלימה ל' זעלדע ברכה בת חוה לאה רחל

”ואתה תצוה את בני ישראל ויקחו אליך שמן זית
זך כתית למאור” (כז, ט)

“Now you shall command the Children
of Israel that they shall take to you
pure, pressed olive oil for
illumination”

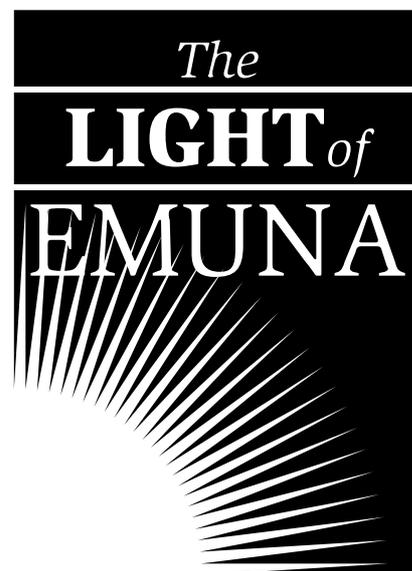
Why does the Torah not use the more common expressions of “speak” or “tell” and chooses the term “command” in this instance? HKB”H said to Moshe, “I have made you a king! Just as a king, his nation fulfills his decrees – you too, you pronounce and they perform.

אתה תצוה

You Shall **Command**

The word for “command” (תצויה) is of the same derivation as the term for “join” or “attach” (צוותא). It connotes living connected to HKB”H. **A person deludes himself into thinking that the wealthier and more comfortable he is the happier he will be – that is patently untrue.** Happiness is bound to the soul, which is eternal – it is never satiated by the pleasures of the transient body. **One’s contentment depends on his proximity to truth, to the Creator of the Universe, the source of serenity.**

When a person is devoted entirely to the service of his Creator and recognizes that absolutely everything is under the dominion and control of the One Who is filled with limitless compassion and wishes to bestow only good and kindness – then, whatever happens to him and whatever occurs in his life – is agreeable to him – all is for the best because Hashem loves him. The nature of love is that one wishes to do everything in his power to benefit his loved ones. **Whatever we have is precisely what is required to fulfill**



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

our destiny in this world – and everything else that we see in the possession of others, even if they draw us in and seduce us – can only hurt us. If we genuinely believe that we need something – we turn directly to Hashem, with ultimate virtuousness – for that is what Hashem loves most. A simple man once approached the holy Rebbe of Berdichev zt”l and asked the Rebbe to judge a claim that he had against the Master of the World. Upon ascertaining the man’s pure intentions, the Rebbe donned his *tallis* and convened his court. The man recited his allegation: “I am destitute and impoverished – yet I am obligated by Torah law to marry off my adult daughter. Is it not basic justice that Hashem is required to provide me with the means to arrange a wedding?” The Rebbe ruled that the law was on the man’s side and even went so far as to issue his verdict in writing. The man was overjoyed, in his untainted *emuna*, to be holding the decision. Suddenly, a strong gust blew the paper from his hand. Panic-stricken, the man chased after the piece of paper as it flew through the air until it landed in the lap of a non-Jewish Duke sitting in his carriage en route to his palace. The Jew begged the Duke to return the judgment. The Duke, discerning the Jew’s alarm and fright, grew curious as to the paper’s content. The Jew was too embarrassed to tell him what it said so the Duke called for a translator. The interpreter explained it in Polish and it was very pleasing to the Duke. He saw the fact that the paper had

landed in his lap as a sign from Heaven. Therefore, he graciously presented the poor Jew with the entire sum necessary to marry off his daughter.

The life of a Jew is the most pleasant and sweetest thing on Earth. So much sweetness is infused within serving Hashem, within Torah and within holiness. Rebbe Nachman said, "How fortunate is one who merits experiencing the pleasantness of Torah. That is the essence of life."¹ **Our lifeblood is in remembering that Hashem is above and in constantly introspecting as to whether He is found within our hearts.** If it does not descend to us, if it remains above – the essence is missing.

Closeness to Hashem is goodness. Things are only good for us when we are with Hashem. Only there do we belong. If we are near Hashem, it is good – if we are distant from Hashem, it is not good.

אתה תצוה

You Shall Command

You, Moshe, the *tzaddik* of the generation – you connect the Jewish people to their Father in Heaven.

If we wish to taste the true flavor of *yiddishkeit* we must seek out *tzaddikim*. A *tzaddik* can bring us close to Hashem, he can instill excitement for Hashem in our hearts and he can disperse sadness from our emotions and transform it into joy.

We need not settle for *tzaddikim* who can perform miracles and salvations – we must seek *tzaddikim* that will help us serve Hashem, who can show us the way to escape our base urges, to attain *emuna*, to attain *dveykus* (clinging).

A Jew must incessantly strengthen his connection to Hashem. Otherwise, he will become disheartened by every incident. We are quite adept at bolstering others in the midst of

their difficulties – but, the moment that we face the same challenge – we forget everything. **We must sacrifice to achieve in this arena – to learn to perceive Hashem in every moment. Everything that we witness must be recognized as deriving directly from Hashem.** We need guidance to maintain this outlook. *Tzaddikim* provide this guidance and set examples as to how we can attain elevated levels. They teach us how to avoid our passions, how to *daven*, how to learn Torah, how to guard our eyes and preserve sanctity. *Tzaddikim* inspire such desires and longings to emulate them, to overcome cravings. But we must still do our part – self-sacrifice to the limit of our capabilities.

When a person acknowledges that he can speak to Hashem about anything, he is never again alone in the world – he has a path and counsel as to how to cope with all that occurs. It is an amazing gift that we are able to converse with Hashem about anything and everything – much as we would with a trusted friend. It cleanses the soul, it calms us, and it is so sweet.

Alone, a person is incapable of overcoming the *yetzer hora* or his own improper impulses. **Only with Hashem's help can we triumph.** When we recognize this, we do not cease *davening* and begging Hashem for His assistance.

At the current pace of life, we need a pause, some quiet – alone with Hashem. At those times we receive answers that we do not ordinarily receive and we speak such warm words that we cannot typically conjure.

Hisbodedus is not just "I am lacking this, thank You for that, forgive me for this." ***Hisbodedus* is clinging with a longing of the soul.** It is looking Heavenward and subjugating our hearts to our Father. It is a direct and warm bond with a Father. It is speaking to Hashem in our own style – simple words, from the heart. Rebbe Nachman's young grandson once visited his grandfather when he was sick and Rebbe Nachman asked the boy to *daven* for him. The young boy simply said, "Hashem, please send

¹ לוקו"ת עא

Zaidi a complete recovery.” Rebbe Nachman pointed out to those around him that that was exactly how we are supposed to talk to Hashem – without cunning, with innocence.

We are given mouths with which to thank Hashem for every kindness that He showers upon us. We must be so careful with guarding our mouths – not to utter any *loshon hora*, *rechilus*, irritation, anger, arrogance or falsehood. We must take care to only emit holiness.

We were given mouths with which to pray, to recite *Tehillim*, to learn Torah, to speak to Hashem. That is our entire vitality – so how can we squander this life force on baseless hatred?! How can we use it to talk about the inadequacies of others?! How can we take this holy breath and, rather than utilize it for prayer, Torah, loving each other – and use it for *loshon hora*, speaking negatively of others?!

When the mouth is sanctified, any blessing that it issues is fulfilled. R’ Dovid Dov Tierhaus zt”l told the story of his neighbor, a man by the name of Breslauer. In his youth, he worked in the kitchen for Rebbetzin Kluger, a”h. She was the wife of the great Gaon, R’ Shlomo Kluger zt”l, the Rav of Brodt for over fifty years. One Erev Shabbos, there was no fish available in the entire town. Knowing that the Rav was particular about eating fish every Shabbos, he went through great trouble, visiting nearby villages, until he was able to procure fish. On Friday night, when the fish was brought to the table, Rav Kluger was told of the young man’s valiant efforts. The Rav blessed him: “you should live 100 years.” A little while later, R’ Meir’l Premishlan visited the city of Brodt. Young Breslauer longed to get a glimpse of the *tzaddik’s* face. Due to his poverty, he walked to the home in which the Rebbe was staying and waited for two days until he had an opportunity to go in. As he opened the door to enter - and before he said a word, R’ Meir’l said, “Tell me, did the Rav of Brodt promise you 100 years? Meir’l concurs.” The young man fainted from excitement. Many years later, when he was a very old man, testified R’ Tierhaus, he still walked on his own, healthy and completely lucid.

At the age of 96, he was hit by a speeding car ... somehow, he fell between its wheels and oddly enough – nothing happened to him! At the age of 98, he fell seriously ill. Two expert doctors warned his wife that they should prepare for the end – he had two weeks left to live, at most. Overhearing this, Mr. Breslauer responded loudly, “even for a hefty sum of money, I will not forego the two years that I have left.” Indeed, he recovered fully. R’ Tierhaus concluded, “I’ll never forget that wintery Motzei Shabbos that Mrs. Breslauer came into our house crying, ‘I am terrified because tonight is my husband’s one hundredth birthday.’ And indeed, he passed that same night.” Such is the power of a holy mouth.

When a person accustoms himself to speak with Hashem, the spiritual bliss is indescribable. **The core of serving Hashem is prayer, conversing with Hashem.** A Jew must experience such closeness to Hashem so that before anything he undertakes, he speaks to and seeks counsel from Hashem, tells Him everything that he has endured, down to the smallest detail. One who proceeds this way, experiences paradise in this World.

If it is difficult to speak – say thank You. Everyone is capable of expressing gratitude. That is the greatest power that a person possesses. We receive so many gifts, both material and spiritual, that we hardly even need to inspire ourselves to thank Hashem. Thank You Father – You are so good to me that I cannot even find the words.

כתיב למאור

Pure for Illumination

To be pure and clear like olive oil, a Jew must undergo much adversity – many difficulties and challenges. When he learns to accept whatever transpires in his life with *emuna* and love – he attains closeness to Hashem. The tribulations cleanse and purify him, polishing him. We must never think that some event was bad luck or unjust – we must accept them lovingly. That is the only method by which we connect to Hashem.

In order to extract pure olive oil from olives, they must be crushed. For our souls to illuminate our dark physical bodies, we must press them.

We must constantly remind ourselves that the One who brings suffering is the same good Father Who is filled with compassion. Rebbe Nachman taught that **the goal is entirely good, even the pain and negatives are ultimately of great benefit. Hashem only does what is best.**

If we adopt this outlook – pain hurts less. The day will come when we will see that, at the depths of judgment, was even deeper compassion and kindness. **Light is not revealed when everything proceeds smoothly.** When we struggle with our urges, when we wade through the murky waves of fantasy and nonsense, fighting them – the challenges

combine to purify us, cutting and peeling away the wickedness, drop by drop.

Any place in which we lack understanding, we must have *emuna*. When we cannot fathom how certain things can happen to us – we must know that it is first choice (לכתחילה), predestined, this is the plan, it is the path that we must traverse on the way to our ultimate correction – it is not a bad break – **nothing happens to us that does not need to happen to us.**

When people break us or crush us – we are compelled to realize that we have nowhere to turn except towards our Father in Heaven. There lie our successes, our salvations, our consolations. Every incident is part of the G-dly program of building us – a building of connection and attachment to the Creator.

תפילה

Master of the World! Help me to not have any interest in talking about others and their shortcomings. So often, I notice that it becomes the most important thing in our lives – talking about others. Despite the facade of concern and commiseration that we feign to flaunt – **when we look deeper, we know that is nothing more than idle gossip.** Help me, Father, that rather than speak about them, that I lift my head to You and beg You to have mercy on them and help them - absolutely never to speak about them. Help me, Father, to hold back, to tightly close my mouth – to speak only words that bring me closer to You, not distance me farther, G-d forbid.

Master of World! Help me that I not be dependent upon others – not on their smiles, not their kind words nor their money or support. Help me not be broken by their scowling faces, indifference, disrespect or ingratitude. Help me fully grasp that everything is from You and only You decide who will help me and who will not, who will smile at me and who will grimace. Help me, Father, that my honor derive from what You have entitled me to do for Your glory, that I be gladdened by things I manage to accomplish and to not get upset by people. **I wish to love them all, honor them all, be friendly to them all, but not be too provoked by how they act in response.**

Master of the World! Help me remember that everything that happens to me is from You – even minor mishaps that occur throughout the day, like buying the wrong item and having to run back to the store to exchange it when I am tired and short on time – it is just annoying. Help me, Father, to remember that they too are part of Your plan, they too are predetermined and we must accept them with love, *emuna* and patience. Help me remember that You, Father, are looking down on us to see how we react – **and what You love most is when we say thank You, Father – when we recognize that this too is from You. Master of the World, do not allow us to become detached from You for even one moment.**

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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