

# פרשת כי תשא

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

ולרפואה שלימה ל' זעלדע ברכה בת חוה לאה רחל

“וידבר ד' אל משה לאמר כי תשא את ראש בני  
ישראל” (ל, יא-יב)

“Hashem spoke to Moshe saying: When  
you take a census of the *Bnei Yisroel*”

Moshe asked: Master of the World, You have so many nations in the world and You do not bother to count them, yet You constantly command us to be counted - why? HKB”H responded: All of the multitudes that you observe - they are not Mine; they belong to the other side. But, the Jewish people, who I repeatedly count - they are my treasure<sup>1</sup>, as it says, “you shall be to me the most beloved treasure of all peoples.”<sup>2</sup> **Just as a person’s treasure is so beloved to him that he continuously counts it, so are the Jewish people cherished by Me.**<sup>3</sup>

כאיש אחד בלב אחד

**Like a One Man with One Heart**

HKB”H instructed Moshe Rabbeinu to not count heads, rather each person should donate a half *shekel* and a count should be made of the *shekalim*. “When you take a census of the Children of Israel ... every man shall give an atonement for his soul.”<sup>4</sup> Why not count them directly? Counting individuals highlights division and separation and that is the greatest danger to the Jewish nation - **we can only survive with *achdus* (unity).**

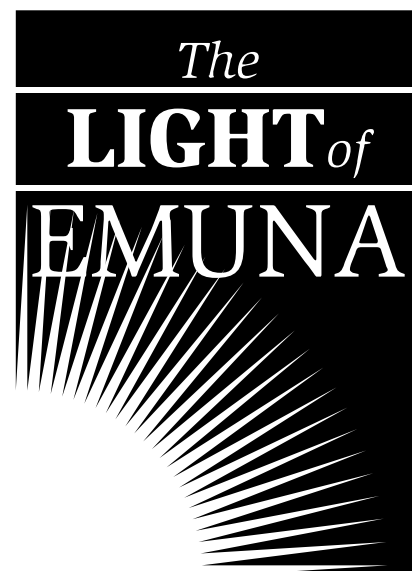
HKB”H wants us united. Every individual Jewish soul is a part of the communal soul of the Jewish

<sup>1</sup> אוצרי החביב - רש"י

<sup>2</sup> והייתם לי סגלה מכל העמים (שמות יט, ה)

<sup>3</sup> פסיקתא רבה פיסקא י'

<sup>4</sup> כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל... ונתנו איש כפר נפשו (ל, יב)



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

nation. Hashem desires the completion of all as one. Every Jew has a spark and each spark is a separate piece of the whole - **each one of us has something unique - that no other has, under any circumstance.**

A Jew who manages to love all of *Klal Yisroel* is so commendable. **The more one clings to *Ahavas Yisroel*, the more he clings to Hashem.** We all have the same G-d, the same Father, the same Torah and the same law. Why should we fight with our brothers? So what if they have different accents? What difference does it make if one speaks with an Ashkenazi pronunciation while another has a Sephardi articulation? Does it really make any difference?<sup>5</sup>

There are burdens of the heart that no one else sees. Every single Jew, even if his actions are not very laudable - has a good heart, his desires are noble and his soul is worthy. When he acts improperly, he is immediately remorseful. HKB”H sees all - we do not. **We must exert ourselves to connect to the holy essence of others and not allow external appearances to interpose between our souls.**

Moshiach will declare: “Humble ones, the time of your redemption has arrived.”<sup>6</sup> Moshiach will not call out “Ashkenazim, Sephardim,

<sup>5</sup> פלא יועץ

<sup>6</sup> ענווים הגיע זמן גאולתכם (ילקוט שמעוני ישעיהו רמז תצט)

Lithuanians, Chassidim, etc... the time of your redemption has arrived.” Absolutely not. **He specifically calls out to “humble ones” – exclusively those who are humble, those who exhibit humility and respect for others. Only those will be redeemed.**

We must have *emuna* that every Jew is precious and that with the challenges that each one has endured, they are unquestionably stronger than us. **Even if they have sinned, do we know how difficult things were for them before they sinned?** A person is familiar with the afflictions of his own heart: “I have not overcome, I am still so beguiled by food and sleep, I still constantly criticize - can I really invalidate others?”

We must realize love for every Jew – by remembering that Hashem delights in every Jew. We must acknowledge that others also accomplish productively, often better than what we have achieved. **We may never consider ourselves to be so successful that we have no strength or tolerance for anyone else.**

We must realize that even the simplest Jew, from the water carrier to the wood chopper, has some element that we do not possess. Even if we are the most successful people in the world – we do not have what they have and we need them for that. The reason we contributed a half *shekel* and not a full *shekel* was to teach us that **no Jew is complete until he partners with others, with connection and with brotherhood. Moreover, even the simplest of the simple has the ability to complete the greatest among us.**<sup>7</sup> Hashem desires all of Israel to be together in friendship. **If there is lack of camaraderie anywhere, it is an indication that there is a lack of awe of Heaven in that very place.**

**Love and honor afforded another is the greatest gift - and by giving – we never lose.** The word “וּנְתַנּוּ” from the opening of the *parsha*<sup>8</sup> is a palindrome – it reads the same forward and in reverse. That teaches us that **whatever one**

**gives, ultimately returns to him.**<sup>9</sup>

There are days that a person wants to be left alone – he does not want to see anyone or pay attention to others and he does not want their attention. He just wishes to be left alone in quiet. That is perfectly natural, it happens to everyone – but it must not become a regular pattern. **Every Jewish soul is a part of the communal soul – the soul of the Jewish nation.**

We must flee from disputes! A person must never get involved in any controversy in the world. The Chofetz Chaim *zy”a* sacrificed greatly to maintain peace and literally cried, begged and screamed to avoid disagreements at all cost.

R’ Shlomo Zalman Aurbach *zt”l* was once home and a group of people gathered outside shouting and disparaging him horribly over a recent *psak* that he had issued. He sat through it calmly and smiling. When asked how he could remain so composed, he told the following story: when he was young, his neighborhood, Shaarei Chesed, received news that R’ Aharon Cohen, the son-in-law of the Chofetz Chaim, was planning to move into the neighborhood. The locals were very excited. They arranged a nice apartment for R’ Cohen and received him with much honor. One Shabbos, several months later, R’ Aharon failed to show up to *shul*. Some people went to look for him and found his apartment empty. They inquired and were told that a few days earlier he had been seen leaving with all of his belongings on a wagon bound for Yafo. They sent a delegation to Yafo to ask him to return. He explained that before he had left Europe to move to Eretz Yisroel, he had asked his holy father-in-law where he should settle. The Chofetz Chaim responded that it did not matter where - **so long as he promised that he would immediately bolt from any place with strife!** Recently there had been a fight over the position of Gabbai in the shul and he remembered the promise he had made to his father-in-law. Terrified of breaking his word, he left immediately. R’ Shlomo Zalman concluded, “At that moment, I decided that I too

<sup>7</sup> תולדות יעקב יוסף

<sup>8</sup> See footnote 4

<sup>9</sup> בעל הטורים

would avoid discord. Therefore, do not be so impressed that I maintained my composure and did not engage those who insult me.”<sup>10</sup>

**Peace is incredibly important:** (1) the Kohanim conclude their blessing of the Jewish people with it (לך שלום וישם), (2) the final *bracha* of *shemona esrei* focuses on it, (3) we conclude *bentching* with it (ד' יברך את עמו בשלום), (4) Chazal instituted many regulations for the sake of peace (משום דרכי שלום). **Whether between spouses or between friends – the most important thing is that there is no friction.**

**Peace in the home is the most important thing in life.** All abundance, spiritual and material, depends on the peace in the home. All blessing depends on harmony. Rebbe Nachman taught that all of a person’s money arrives via the wife, through the light of her soul.<sup>11</sup>

The Torah is so concerned with the happiness of a married woman that for a full year it exempts her groom from his communal obligations. “When a man marries a new wife, he shall not go out to the army, nor she he be obligated for any matter; he shall be free for his home for one year, and he shall gladden his wife whom he has married.”<sup>12</sup> **The wife’s contentment is his compass – if she is happy, he is headed in the right direction. If he is still criticizing, she cannot be happy.**

**With every criticism, a husband kills his wife!** Every censure creates another fissure in the home! They are not easily discernible, but the cracks build up until they destroy the home. **A Jewish home is one that contains joy in *yiddishkeit*, a warm home.** A home protects its occupants – teaches good *middos*. The children absorb from the home. If they witness dancing, joy, singing – a father who is truly happy, not just for show, to be a Jew, to learn Torah, to *daven*, to thank Hashem – they will also be happy to be

Jewish, for *yiddishkeit* is joy. A child instinctively loves his father but if he observes no joy and is only rebuked: learn, learn, *daven* – constantly harassed – he sees no light in *yiddishkeit*. **If we treat them with love - they will eventually be inspired.** We must not extinguish their *yiddishkeit* – we must not torment them and abuse them with it. If they are not Torah scholars yet, they will be – **if** they love *yiddishkeit* – eventually they will be inspired to learn. But, if we snuff out the light with disparagement and humiliation – how will they find inspiration?<sup>13</sup>

**The main ingredient of peace in the home is gratitude – and there is no shortage of things to acknowledge.** Our problem is that we expect too much and do not appreciate what others do for us. By thanking, we bring the *Shechina* into the home and teach the children to be grateful and to thank Hashem. If we do not learn to thank others – how will we learn to thank Hashem?

We must sacrifice for the sake of peace. **We must infuse our hearts with love even for those who have hurt us – we must judge them favorably.** Some people are so good at this that they do not even notice the offense. We must pray for all of the Jewish people, draw everyone close, offers smiles. We must never feel superior – we must love all and draw them close by valuing every Jew, as Hashem does. Even a simple “hello” with a smile can break the barriers between strangers. Hashem has shown us mercy that we merited recognizing him. Isn’t it fitting that, out of basic gratitude, we do the same for others?

**Moreinu Harav:** Rebbe Nachman taught that with a little time there are no more sinful people - “A short while longer and there is no wickedness”<sup>14</sup> - if we give them a little time – tomorrow, the next day – there will be no wicked people amongst *Am Yisroel*. Some take longer than others – but they will all be *tzaddikim*. Even if we see a thoroughly base Jew and we cannot imagine a more evil being – it is merely a lack of

<sup>10</sup> שלום רב על תתקט"ז

<sup>11</sup> ליקו"מ סט

<sup>12</sup> כי יקח איש אשה חדשה לא יצא בצבא ולא יעבר עליו לכל דבר נקי יהיה לביתו שנה אחת ושמח את אשתו אשר לקח(דברים כד,ה)

<sup>13</sup> המברך את עמו בשלום

<sup>14</sup> עוד מעט ואין רשע (תהלים לז:)

wisdom – deep down there is a fiery passion for Hashem. If we look carefully - we will find some element of good and we can use that to judge him favorably and bring him back to Hashem.

**“Great is peace and despised is conflict.”** There is nothing worse than discord. When it burns in the hearts of the combatants, they see nothing aside from their own interests. **Nothing positive ever results from quarrels. Good ensues only from peace.** Rebbe Nachman warned his sons to avoid conflict because the whole world is so consumed with fighting that they do not even notice that they die a little each day – each day is gone forever once it ends.

**We are not merely individuals – we are part of the community.** Moshiach’s arrival depends on all of us doing *teshuvah* and all of us unifying.

We are only individuals to the extent that we accept responsibility for the entire nation. We are Hashem’s children. A father does not decide to give more to his successful children and ignore the less accomplished ones. To the contrary, he spends more time, deals more with, gives more to and pays more attention to the ones who struggle – trying to lift them up. He loves them all the same, whether they are great leaders or mere water carriers. **He does not love one more than the others.**<sup>15</sup>

Our responsibility to others does not mean that we must go door-to-door to see what everyone needs. We each have our own responsibilities. But in thought, in the heart and soul – we must not think like an only child. It takes work. It is a different outlook. We must care and be concerned – and, where we can, do what we can.

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## תפילה

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**Master of the World!** Help me that when I see someone who acts the wrong way - for example, he is driving inordinately fast and carelessly in a densely populated area or he is standing in the road talking to a driver in a stopped car and does not seem to notice the honks telling him to step aside because he is obstructing traffic - help me not disqualify him completely, help me to believe that he probably does some good things also and if someone gently pointed out his errors - he would probably do *teshuvah*. Help me, Father, to not get angry, because if I am angry – he will definitely not accept my words. **Teach me, Father, how to always judge favorably, speak gently, with humility and modesty** – for I too am not unflawed – even if I take great care in certain particular areas.

**Master of World! Grant me the desire to pray for the People of Israel as I pray for myself and my family and those close to me.** Help me to be like those who constantly recall the Jewish people – that they all do *teshuvah* with compassion, that Moshiach come and that the Redemption arrive. Because even when I do say some such words, it is not in the same manner as I pray for myself - it does not really come from the walls of my heart.

Father, help me think a bit beyond myself. I so cherish my alone time, but I forget that sometimes others need me.

**Master of the World!** Save me from disagreements. Help me to escape them, because even when I am not a party to the dispute, I still listen and speak and I draw vitality from it, as I used to be invigorated by talking politics. Help me, Father, that what will really interest and enliven me is only talk that strengthens my desire to be sanctified, strengthens my *emuna* - all of these wonderful things that comprise the worship of Hashem. **Have I finished correcting myself that I can engage in the disputes of others?** Help me, Father, to be entirely sanctified to Your work.

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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<sup>15</sup> באור פני מלך