

פרשת ויקהל

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

“ויקהל משה את כל עדת בני ישראל” (לה, א)

**“Moshe assembled the entire assembly
of the Children of Israel”**

Chazal note that there is no other *parsha* in the Torah that begins with an assembly. Why? HKB”H was telling Moshe, “Gather a huge assembly and teach them the laws of Shabbos publicly - to establish for future generations to gather and congregate in the *shuls* on every Shabbos to teach *Halacha*, so that my name will be praised and lauded among my children.”¹

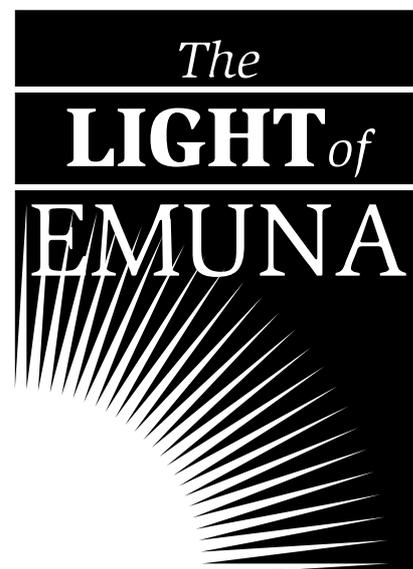
“ויהיו הכרובים פרשי כנפים למעלה ... ופניהם
איש אל אחיו” (לז, ט)

**“The Cherubs were with wings spread
upward ... with their faces toward one
another”**

There was so much beauty in the *Mishkan* – the vessels were so spectacular. It was a splendor of holiness – an exquisiteness that inspired the soul towards Hashem. The *Aron* represented Hashem’s Throne of Glory, plated in pure gold. On top of the *Aron* there sat two golden Cherubs – from in between whom, Hashem spoke to Moshe – “And I shall speak with you from atop the Cover, from between the two Cherubim.”² The faces of the Cherubim were fashioned in images of babies. The utterances of babies are the holiest thing in the world – they contain no sin. The *Etz Chaim* said that the Cherubim are the source of Creation – all of Creation, the entire Torah and all of the worlds were created and formed from between the two Cherubim. And in which direction did this Cherubim spread their

¹ מדרש אבכיר

² ודברתי אתך מעל הכפרת מבין שני הכרובים (כה, כב)



Based on Harav Menachem Azolai’s “Ohr Ha’Emuna”

wings? Upwards – towards Hashem. **A Jew lifts his eyes and spreads his arms upwards – towards Hashem.** Is there a more breathtaking motion than this? “Master of the World, I want You! I need You! I cannot without You!”

Serving Hashem is the source of joy and satisfaction in life. We are in this world to serve! When a person serves Hashem, he experiences such pleasure and joy in this world. One who serves Hashem is alive. If things are not going well, we can turn them around, we need only change course in the direction of Hashem. We must nullify our base urges, our negative characteristics – we must do *teshuva!* We must follow the proper route! When we perform *hisbodedus*, we experience such a good life!³

Before anything, we must strengthen our emuna. That is the good from which all other good stems. That is where we begin. **Emuna is the Aleph Beis of yiddishkeit.** It is our relaxation and our peace of mind. A good life in this world is only possible via *emuna*. Without *emuna* life is filled with remorse – blaming ourselves and others. “If only I had compromised a little on the price of that apartment, maybe I would not have lost the deal. If only I would have gone to a private doctor instead of the clinic, maybe my I would not have

³ המברך את עמו ישראל בשלום

suffered complications. If my parents had not been so stubborn about where we should live, maybe that *shidduch* would not have been broken.” So much frustration, guilt, regret. “With one small change – everything could have been so different.” *Emuna* is the singular antidote to this type of thinking. **Whatever was done and whatever was not done – was all from Heaven.** It is how Hashem wanted it. We do everything we can, trying our best, more *davening* and pleading. But, in hindsight – everything is the Divine Providence of the Master of all Actions, the Master of all Souls.

Our first task is to fortify our *emuna*. When a person attains an elevated level of *emuna*, he is not afraid of anyone, he is never angry at anyone, he is never insulted by anyone and he worries about nothing. He sees only Hashem before his eyes. He realizes that Hashem is the King and there is no other. He knows, with absolute clarity, that Hashem is always with him, Hashem always loves him, Hashem never abandons him. **And he will never abandon Hashem.** Whatever happens – he remains with Hashem. Even when Hashem afflicts him – he never forsakes Hashem.

Avraham Avinu brought the entire world close to Hashem and his very own son (Yishmael) went astray. Avraham was powerless to bring him back. Avraham Avinu suffered greatly, especially when he was commanded to send the boy away, to throw him out of the house. But Hashem told him not to view it negatively, that everything is premeditated in Heaven – **we do not always understand, we do not always comprehend – but everything has a reason.**

Rebbe Nachman would say that to the rest of the world *emuna* was trivial and unimportant but to him, it was of monumental importance. **To reinforce *emuna*: we must close our eyes and repeat three words: “אין רע בעולם” - “There is no evil in the world.”** Whatever Hashem does is for the best. **Hashem is entirely good and does only good.** We do not always understand Him. Woe to us, were we to understand Him. We are so tiny and Hashem is so great – we cannot

understand what the Creator does but we have *emuna* that it is for the very best. Just because we do not understand, does not make it bad. Even when things are very difficult and seem terrible to us – we still have *emuna* that they are good. We must repeat these words incessantly until we fully recognize that everything is compassion – all of life, every event. Whether events unfold as we would like or not – they are entirely generous. We must have *emuna* that Hashem is always planning our private salvation. Sometimes we understand after a few days. Other times, it takes several years. **And sometimes, only after one hundred and twenty years can we see the complete puzzle and realize how good Hashem is.**

When the expression “everything is from Hashem” becomes our mantra – our lives are entirely transformed. The more a person manages to focus on “there is nothing aside from Hashem” – the more he nullifies his suffering. A person makes plans and Hashem overturns them. It appears to be bad luck, but if he bolsters his *emuna* that everything is in accordance with Hashem’s plan, that nothing happens that does not need to happen – he realizes that **the challenge that he is enduring are designed to draw him nearer to Hashem.** When a person has *emuna* that all of his trials are all for the best – he beholds how everything is changed for the best. If he also learns to say thank you for whatever he is lacking and whatever is difficult for him – he attains perfect *emuna*. “Thank You HKB”H, all that You do for me is so good for me.”

When a person learns to express gratitude for everything, he bears his challenges with ease, even without a change in circumstances. When we learn to thank, to be moved by what is done for us –we feel Hashem so powerfully – we walk with Him, hand-in-hand. By expressing gratitude, we realize how infinite, compassionate and great Hashem is. We are not owed anything. **Every *mitzvah* that we perform, every *tefilla* that we *daven*, every minute of Torah that we learn, every good deed – are all gifts that we received from the Creator.** That makes us so happy.

Moreinu Harav: If a person has *emuna* that everything is from Hashem and that everything that happens is for the best – he has no need to get agitated about any problem or ever react in anger. If something happens – it is for the best – it is atonement or a means for even greater miracles. Hashem only benefits us. We must receive everything with joy, singing and dancing. Rebbe Nachman taught that one who is happy will always succeed, like Yosef Hatzaddik, who was called a “Man of Success.”

There are constant mishaps, incidents and problems in life – and we must greet them with a positive attitude – with delight and dancing. This requires self-sacrifice. But we must do so, even at the pinnacles of disappointment and despair. The more difficult and frustrating, the more we must thank, sing and praise. Then, we will see amazing miracles. **The more we acknowledge that everything is for the best and we express gratitude, the more miracles we will witness.**

The two Cherubim spread their wings Heavenward – but their faces were “toward one another.” One who desires Hashem cannot conceal himself from his brothers. We must long for their success and elevation. “Such is the way of true and complete *tzaddikim*. Their souls are bound to each other with great love and affection, loving their friends more than themselves, with no jealousy towards each other. When they see the greatness of their fellows, they exult in their souls and rejoice in their hearts and long for more greatness for them – that they grow and rise more and more.”⁴

We must think about others sympathetically. “Master of the World, I do not wish to think negatively about any Jew. I know that disapproving thoughts derive from the *yetzer hora*. Help me, Father. Help me run away from any hint of discord.”

Once, when the Ponovicher Rav was in England, someone vilified him in a very coarse manner. The local Rabbonim wished to ostracize the man.

The Rav insisted that they not defend his honor and not punish the insolent man. They countered that it was necessary to defend the honor of Torah. He explained that the Chofetz Chaim had promised him success in anything that he attempted - except in one area: conflicts – where he would never be productive ...

We all have different opinions, different customs and different attitudes – but we are all the children of one Father. “All Jews are relatives because our souls are all connected. Thus, it is befitting to wish each other well, with a kind view towards their best interest. **Their honor should be like our own – because we are them, literally.** We should desire the dignity of our friends and not speak of or wish for their disgrace – just as HKB”H does.”⁵

The second *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed because of baseless hatred. The third *Beis Hamikdash* will iy”h be rebuilt due to baseless love.

The cure for the world is a benevolent eye. When someone exhibits begrudging eyes, his troubles begin – because he subjects himself to the harm of the envying eyes of others. Yosef had generous eyes and was immune to the evil eye. When he faltered momentarily and looked disapprovingly at his brothers – he was thrown into a pit. **When a person is attached to Hashem and does not need the approval of others – he does not seek honor, he is not jealous – their evil eyes cannot harm him.** When we look at others with warmth and caring, the evil eye is powerless against us. But, it is impossible to have a “good eye” towards others if we do not display one towards ourselves first. If we feel worthless, we can only see negativity in others, so as to assuage our feelings of inadequacy. **If we learn to see our own value, we can learn to see worth in others as well.**⁶

We must be so careful with the honor of others. When we wound someone’s pride, the

⁴ נועם אלימלך, פרשת חוקת

⁵ תומר דבורה

⁶ באור פני מלך

color drains from their face. Someone once asked the Chazon Ish how he should walk out in the middle of a *shiur* on Shabbos when he suddenly realizes that he had not yet *davened Mincha* and *shkia* is rapidly approaching. The Chazon Ish responded that he did not understand the questions. "Leaving in the middle of a lecture is embarrassing to the lecturer and shames a *talmid chochom*. Clearly, *Mincha* does not supersede or permit such sins.

Love, peace and unity is *yiddishkeit*. There is no room for envy. Torah can only be obtained with love and harmony. The secret of *Matan Torah* was that 600,000 Jews were joined together in love and camaraderie - like one man, with one heart. "**When all of Israel joins hands - all of the hands combine and reach the Throne of Glory.**"⁷

We have no prerogative not to love each other. HKB"Y is the Father of all of us and if we reject a single soul, we are picking a fight with Hashem. This is basic - it is the reason we are still in exile. With all of our Torah learning, we have not yet mastered "not doing to others what we hate having done to us."

We cannot love Hashem without loving each other. A spiritual person is one who puts others first. If we cannot tolerate someone - we must search for his good points - no one is all bad. Nothing brings us closer to Hashem more than loving each other. It is easier to do those *mitzvos* that are between man and G-d than it is to be happy for another's success or forgive those who hurt us. It is hard, but if we can remove personal interest and fill our hearts with intense love for every Jew - **we literally reveal the *Shechina*.**

תפילה

Master of the World! Help me to be happy for those for whom things are going well for, who are successful. It is much easier to exhibit love and concern for those who are having trouble. But, as soon as things turn around and things start working out - I cool off slightly. Help me, Father, to desire that everyone succeed, that they all have it good, that they all be happy. Help me cleanse my heart of all personal interest, of jealousy that destroys all of the good. **Help me be truly happy for the joy of others.**

Master of World! Help me to finally learn how to forgive. When people hurt me or treat me improperly or avoid me - I am insulted, I become distant, I sever ties. I do not forget. It is hard for me to draw a line and continue my day as if nothing happened. I admire *tzaddikim* who react to insults and humiliation **by immediately forgiving and offering *tefillas* to You that You too should forgive their attackers.**

Grant me the strength, Father, to tell the other person the truth: "you hurt me, you insulted me, I don't know how I can ever forget what you did" - and thereby remove it from my heart and proceed as if nothing happened. More than anything, I implore You to **give me the strength to be happy when I am humiliated, to remember that it is a precious gift, that it is what builds me.** And not only forgive the other person but say thank you for what he did for me.

Master of the World! Help me be happy for every good deed that I manage to do. Not to become too accustomed, not to turn the day into mere routine, on autopilot. **Help me feel joy in every *tefilla*, every *mitzvah*, every word of Torah, every act of *chesed* - that I merit thanking You, Father, for everything that I manage to do and help me be constantly connected to You.** Help me experience my service of You with freshness and be overjoyed for all of Your gifts.

Have an awesome, uplifting and wonderful Shabbos,

Dov Elias and Chaviva

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 and Aliza & AJ Rowe for your help with some of the Hebrew expressions.

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⁷ רבי ישראל מקוזניץ