

פרשת פקודי-שקלים

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

“אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדות” (לה, כא)

“These are the reckonings of the
Mishkan, the *Mishkan* of Testimony”

Hashem had took pity on us and preceded the affliction with the cure - He commanded the Jewish people to build the *Mishkan* that encompassed all of the sanctity of the *Beis Hamikdash*. This was an amazing *chesed* in that He taught Moshe this remarkable technique of drawing along the holiness of the *Beis Hamikdash* with them as they traversed the desolate desert filled with snakes and scorpions. This too would be the solution for future generations who would live after the *Beis Hamikdash* would be destroyed. **It gives us the ability and the strength to extend the holiness of the *Beis Hamikdash* via *shuls* and *yeshivas* that we build post-churban - for they are *mini-mikdashot*.**¹

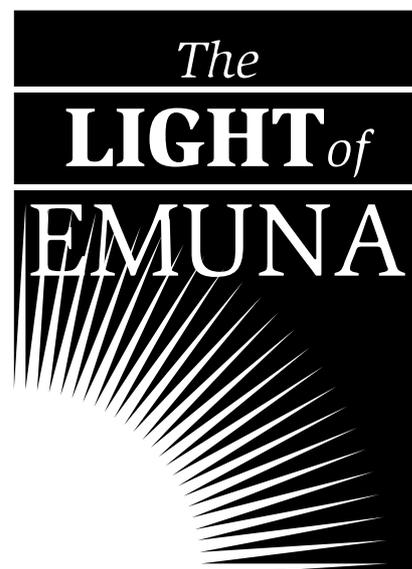
“ככל אשר צוה ד' את משה”

“Like everything that Hashem
commanded Moshe”

This notion is reiterated eighteen times in this week's *parsha*. Exactly as Hashem wanted - so they did. The crown of the Jewish people is “we will do and we will listen (נעשה ונשמע).” **First, we do - then we ask questions.**

Submissiveness is the key element in the service of Hashem. It is the highest level. Obedience to the King, the King of the World. Even if we are tired - we get up; even if we are hungry - we overcome. **We do not do what pleases us, we defer to the King.**

¹ ליקו"ה, חול המועד ד-יב



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

HKB”H instructed Avraham Avinu to leave all that he had accomplished in Charan and go. Begin to travel. True, you reached marvelous heights with your intellect - but now, I want you to cast aside your intuition, abandon everything and set off to where I will send you. Deference is one of the great secrets of life - to know when to forego, to bow one's head, to abstain and not retort, even when people say upsetting things. We accept, with mellowness, even when what occurs is precisely the opposite of what we prayed and pleaded for. **We remember that everything is from Hashem and for the very best.** We entertain countless delusions, that bad things only happen to us and not to others, and worries about what will be - as if something is defective in Hashem's plan - as if He built such a beautiful world and was only unsuccessful at solving our particular problems. When we view things this way, we are essentially getting angry at Hashem. We are really telling HKB”H that He is not conducting the world properly.

We require much servility. Who says that things should be a certain way? A person constantly makes plans and they are continuously disrupted - because they were never the proper goal. **In truth, nothing at all has been disrupted.**

Hashem desires submissiveness. Hashem wants us to arrive at the understanding that it is all from Him, and without Him, there is nothing. “Hashem, I acknowledge that everything is as

You want it, not as I do.” We must incessantly tell ourselves: there is a Conductor of the palace. Whatever happens to us at the moment – is orchestrated by the Conductor. That is what Avraham Avinu taught us – no matter what he endured, he never became confused, he never blamed others – he always sought to connect.

A person thinks that he is smarter and wiser than everyone else – he forgets that everything is from Hashem. If one is smart – it is from Hashem! **Wisdom is not ours – it is a gift from Hashem. There is no cause to be boastful.**

Whatever we have is kindness and compassion from Hashem. We need HKB”H at every moment, for without Him, we cannot accomplish anything. Therefore, **before undertaking anything we must preface it with a prayer and a request. After any endeavor, we must conclude with gratitude** – “Thank You, Father, for being with me, for helping me, for protecting me. Thank You that everything went so smoothly, beyond our expectations.”

Every mishap in life serves to remind us that we are not in charge. Yet, we are still arrogant – Hashem have mercy on us. He constantly beckons us: “abandon your egos, forsake your visions of grandeur, cease your smugness as if the entire world is yours, discontinue your attitude that you have accomplished on your own. If you truly wish to draw near to Me, begin to hum “it is not me, it is not me.” That is the only way to get close to Hashem – by recognizing that it is all Hashem’s doing, nothing is us. Connecting to Hashem is the primary task. **The essence of prayer is to merit closeness to Hashem. That is the only thing truly worth stubbornly pursuing.**

There are times at which we must remain silent – when silence is gold. There are times at which every extra word only destroys. **Most of the pain in life is over words that we have uttered and later regretted.** The prescription is to remain quiet at certain times – until we can figure out what we can say to fix what we have previously ruined.

Our mission in this world is to reveal the secret that “Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is One.” HKB”H conceals this secret in such a place that a myriad of things obscure it. The worst camouflage is we ourselves – our desires, our perspectives, our demeanor, our outlook, our egos – these all hide the great secret of creation – that Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is One – there is nothing aside from Him. We must escape the concealments of sadness, of fantasies, of being enamored with our own brilliance or dejected by our failures in life – the thoughts that life is so difficult, that luck has frowned upon us – to escape all of these concealments and arrive at that point that is latent deep within the hearts of every one of us, the point that longs and yearns for Hashem, **the point that reveals to us that there is only Hashem in the world.**

Submission is *tefilla* over every matter – the feeling of inability without Hashem. It is fear of commencing anything without first turning to Hashem and beseeching our Father for assistance. **“Help me, be with me, guard me.”** We tend to think that we are okay even without Hashem. Even if we would never say it – we think it. Do we really feel as if we are powerless without Hashem? Behold, everything proceeds, we work, we make a living, we learn, the children are settled – do we really think that we are not okay without Hashem?

When a Jew truly comprehends that results are not at all in his control, but in Hashem’s – then, he progresses with humility and modesty and his prospects for success are greatly enhanced.

How did Moshe Rabbeinu merit erecting the *Mishkan*? By recognizing that it was not within his control. A person must be mindful and have *emuna* that he does not do anything – it is all in Hashem’s power. As Hashem warns us, “Lest you eat and be satisfied ... and you may say in your heart, ‘My strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth.’”² At every moment in

² פן תאכל ושבעת ... ואמרת בלבבך כוחי ועוצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה ... וזכרת את ד' אלקיך כי הוא המתן לך כח לעשות חיל (דברים ח', יב – יח)

life “you shall remember Hashem, your G-d: that it was He Who gives you strength to make wealth.”² **A person who walks alone, without Hashem, trusting his own acumen, cannot succeed.**³

Submissiveness and humility = I cannot accomplish alone, **I need Hashem**. Arrogance = **I** did, **I** accomplished – separated from Hashem. No one likes feeling dependent on others. We want things to work out on their own. But, what can we do – this is how Hashem created the world – that at all times, **at every age and stage in life – we are dependent upon Him?!**

When a person is subservient, Hashem is with him. If we diminish our own importance – we enjoy a good and pleasant life. **Humility is a sure sign that a person has emuna.** He recognizes that he is weak, limited – that he cannot do it alone. He realizes that he has deficiencies, he notices the dangers all around him, both physically and spiritually, and he constantly turns to Hashem. He understands that there is only Hashem – there is no “me,” “him,” “neighbor,” “this” – there is only Hashem.

We must learn from those holy and righteous Jews who nullify themselves completely, nullify their egos – their entire existence is only Hashem.

“To give My essence (יש) inheritance to those who love me.”⁴ **This is the gift that Hashem grants to human beings – Himself.** If we are lacking something – Hashem gives us His own essence (יש). If we remove our own sense of being – Hashem gives us His own essence (יש).

When a person sets out on this path, he casts everything else aside – and he thereby receives an even more elevated world. When he disconnects from everything, he does not wish to bring along anything that he had before. He abandons and detaches from it all. When he persists in this manner, he receives renewed life.

³ ספר המידות

⁴ להנחיל אהבי יש (משלי ח, כא)

The holy forefathers were the chariot of the *Shechina* – what does it mean to be a chariot? It means nullifying oneself completely, they did not exist, they were mere chariots, doing whatever Hashem instructed them to do. They were the wheels that carry the wagon. We must learn from them. We must ignore our own desires. We must relentlessly seek signs as to how to do Hashem’s will. Avraham Avinu performed so much *chesed* and, suddenly, Hashem said to him: listen to Sara’s voice, evict Yishmael, because he can damage the education of Yitzchak. Child-rearing comes first – before *chesed*. This was so humiliating – “how can I show my face in public, people will avoid me – all of my *chesed*, all of my students – they will all repudiate me, deny all of my service. I taught them to be kind and generous, to be patient – to the point that even my own wayward son developed *emuna* slowly but surely - and now I am to eject him from my home? They will all say, ‘Has he gone crazy? Throwing out his own son? His own progeny? He is merely 16 years old!’” No one knows what the future will bring – maybe things will change even more. But, **a challenge is beyond the intellect – there is only G-d’s will.**⁵

The ultimate self-nullification is the moment of death, the soul leaves and the person understands that there is nothing to this world and all those around him cry out: “Hear O Israel, Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is One.” At that moment, everyone grasps that there is nothing aside from Hashem.

When a person begins to come close to Hashem and hears that he is nothing, he can become upset and depressed, as if his life was taken away from him. The opposite is true, **all of his vitality and joy derive precisely from his humility.**

When a person expects dignity from his accomplishments – he is repeatedly disappointed. Even when he achieves, it never feels as he expected. This is because he seeks satisfaction in the wrong place – from his ego. One who looks for it in his own humility and

⁵ באור פני מלך

knows that everything is Hashem – is always filled with vitality and joy because he receives them directly from Hashem. **That is true vigor - it stems from his connection to Hashem.**⁶

A person who feels important is living a lie and is punished. If things go well for him, it may be that Heaven is providing him with his reward in this world. What will be of his eternal life?

One who constantly recollects his own shortcomings and avoids arrogance knows that he is vulnerable to sin and he speaks with Hashem all day, asking to be saved from sin.

The more we are dishonored and humiliated, the happier we ought to be, because, via disgrace, we receive such great light that no *mitzvah* can even provide. Embarrassment purifies us and provides so much abundance.

While lying in bed at night, the Chofetz Chaim would thank Hashem for all of His kindness. He would recount every individual favor of that day and all of the benefits throughout his entire life – the fact that Hashem helped him bear his sadness as an orphan in his childhood, helped him learn and author *sefarim*, gave him good sons-in-law, who were *talmidei chochomim* and G-d fearing, and on and on.

Humility is the source of all holiness and positive attributes. A humble person believes others to be more righteous than he. Every Jew is amazing in his eyes.

This week is *Shabbos Shekalim* – everyone contributes half a *shekel* – **to teach us that there is no completion without others. No one is whole on his own. Humility means having generous eyes and judging others favorably.**

תפילה

Master of the World! Help me have *emuna* and constantly remember that every change, every new event that initially threatens me, worries me and ruins my mood because things were so good until now and now it might change – is from You, my Father in Heaven. If so, it is certainly for the best. **If it was good until now, it will be even better going forward.** Do not allow me to panic because of any variation in life, to be concerned about any new faces in my life. Help me, Father, remember, at every moment, that I always have You and I can tell You, take counsel in You, ask You to help me – and You always help.

Master of World! It is so wonderful to be able to remain silent, to not answer, to not argue, to not retort – rather, to forego, to lower my head, to run to You, Father – because it is better for me by You than anywhere else – with You I am relaxed, I am not worked up by anyone, even those who wish to hurt me. When I run to You and do not become ensnared in controversy, quarrels, arguments, disputes – I am so ecstatic, so calm. Anytime that something happens that jeopardizes my connection to You – remind me, Father. Give me Your hand and draw me to You. Soothe me. **Do not allow me to forget that humility, quiet and forbearance are the secrets of life. They are unattainable unless we are with You, Father.**

Master of the World! Help me run away from all “politics” – those events that almost everyone is consumed with – discussing, arguing, taking personally and forgetting that we are in this world to attach ourselves to You, and these things distance us from You. **Help me, Father, that my vitality, my joy, my pleasure originate in my speaking to You, in my *davening*, in my learning Torah, in my writing Torah thoughts.**

Have an awesome, uplifting and wonderful Shabbos,

Dov Elias and Tehilla

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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For previous issues and/or to receive this adaptation by weekly email, visit www.tloe.us or email me at LightofEmuna@doveliass.com

⁶ המברך את עמו ישראל בשלום