

# פרשת צו – שבת זכור

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

## פורים

**On Purim, the tzaddik is revealed** – “and Mordechai left the King’s presence”<sup>1</sup> – the King of all Kings. The massive disguises that the *tzaddik* tolerates all year - vanish on Purim. The light of the *tzaddik* fills the void in the world and shines in the heart of every Jew. **On Purim, we merit the great revelation of the light of the true tzaddikim of each and every generation and, thereby, merit drawing close to Hashem.** Even those who are very distant from holiness have an aspect of “and many of the people of the land professed their *yiddishkeit*.”<sup>2 3</sup>

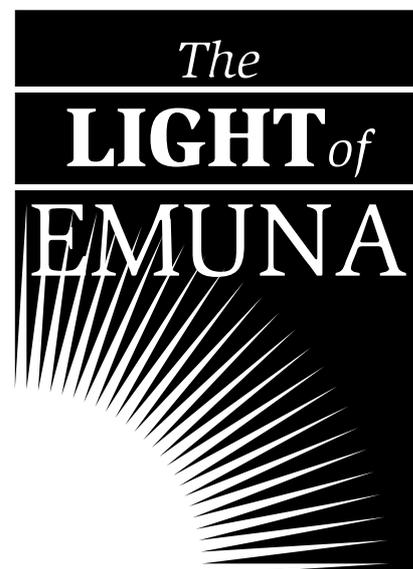
## שמחת פורים

Our mission in life is to remain happy under all circumstances - no matter what happens. How do we do that? We do it with *emuna* - **pure and complete emuna that fills the soul with peace, tranquility, calm, vitality and joy.** There are no doubts, there are no complaints against Hashem’s methods, there is no becoming dejected, and there are none of the all too familiar questions of: (i) why did I not succeed, or (ii) why have I not experienced salvation yet. Those types of questions and complaints are the very opposite of *emuna*. Purim is capable of fixing the crooked heart and reinforcing weakened *emuna*. It opens our eyes to see how Divine Providence extends into every detail of our lives. Hashem is even in control of the hearts and minds of people. If we find ourselves in the midst of suffering, G-d forbid, we must do *teshuva*, we must pray from the depths of our

<sup>1</sup> ומרדכי יצא מלפני המלך (מגילת אסתר ח, טו)

<sup>2</sup> ורבים מעמי הארץ מתיידיים (שם יז)

<sup>3</sup> ליקו"ה, מתנה יא



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

hearts – and everything will be transformed for our benefit. **Hashem can convert and enemy into a friend, a dreadful and frightening decree that was instituted against the Jews into a complete and amazing salvation.** In place of sackcloth and ashes, Mordechai went out in royal garments, with much glory and splendor. The evil one who instigated the horrible decree against the Jewish people was suddenly given into the hands of the Jews and they received permission to kill those who had sought to kill them.

It is an oft repeated maxim that the miracle of Purim was greater than any other. That seems somewhat perplexing – the miracle of Purim did not include any modification of the laws of Creation as were witnessed during the Exodus from Egypt, the Splitting of the Sea, or the jar of oil that burned for eight days. The difference is that those sorts of publicized miracles that change nature can only be short-lived, at specific times in history - and then Hashem resumes conducting His world by concealing Himself within Creation. **On Purim, everyone observes how HKBH's wondrous providence is embedded in nature constantly.** It is not that a miracle occurred within nature – it is that all of nature is miraculous, every second is a miracle - all of life is one great miracle. The title “*Megillas Esther*” is exactly what it represents: it reveals (מגלה) the concealment (הסתרה) of Hashem; it exposes the true reality that there is nothing

except Hashem. In the story of Purim, everything was lost, there was only cause for despair, there was a cloud of the decree of total destruction – and **in the midst of the darkness, the point of G-dly revelation is shown and the darkness is illuminated.**

**On Purim, every Jew has the ability to improve and enhance his capacity to contemplate true reality and observe the hand of Divine Providence in every event - the hand of HKB”H.** That is the true gift of the holiday; it is the *Mishloach Manos* that Mordechai and Esther send every Jew every year.

The *Megilla* is not some ancient story that happened once, long ago – it is the story of every one of us. **When a Jew falls to a destitute level but continues to hope and plead - he will merit a transformation for the better.** The celebration of Purim is not of events that transpired thousands of years ago – it is a present day festival. “To make known that all those who place their hope in You will not be shamed; nor ever humiliated, those taking refuge in You.”<sup>4</sup> Purim is a fresh start, a new hope, it is renewed *emuna*. Purim declares, “enough” to the veil of secrecy that hides Hashem’s Providence. We must see how everything that happens in life is all from Hashem, with wondrous Divine Providence. **There are no mistakes in Hashem’s plan.** No one is ever ejected from Hashem’s computer. Who causes us to fail to see Hashem’s hand in every single occurrence? We ourselves!

HKB”H created unlimited grandeur in His world – vast, formidable and marvelous splendor **that we obscure.** We constantly complain: this hurts; someone said that; we wanted something and we could not obtain it – and we are so aggrieved by these incidents. It makes no difference if it is over matters of spirituality or materialism – **our indignation confuses and blinds us to the boundless majesty and light that exists in the world.** We must avoid the camouflage caused by

<sup>4</sup> להודיע שכל קויוך לא יבשו ולא יכלמו לנצח כל החוסים בך (שושנת יעקב)

sadness and the depression that results from the attitude that we are unsuccessful, that things never go well for us, that our lives are very difficult, that fate has not smiled upon us. **The happiness of Purim is the revelation that Hashem is with us at every moment,** even when something negative occurs, G-d forbid. Undesirable events are signs and hints – they are Hashem speaking to us – Hashem is constantly connected to us, intimately. Every Jew is an individual and an only child of HKB”H. That is the miracle of Purim and that is the great cause for joy on Purim.<sup>5</sup>

**On Purim, we soar to great heights – to a place where there is no distinction between “cursed is Haman” and “blessed is Mordechai.”** We thank for the bad with the same joy with which we thank for the good. That is a taste of the ecstasy of the World to Come, where we will express gratitude for everything with the blessing of “Who is good and does good” (הטוב והמטיב) – we will understand that everything was Hashem’s doing and for the best. **On Purim, the light of *emuna* illuminates this very powerfully, to the point that human beings can comprehend that everything (literally everything) is from Hashem.** If so, Haman did not do anything on his own – rather, that is the way Hashem wanted it! Therefore, we can even say: blessed is Haman.

**On Purim, Hashem’s Kingship is on full display.** We recognize that everything is Hashem’s doing and there is nothing aside from Hashem. We are not afraid of anyone, we are not angry at anyone, we do not worry about anything and no one can harm us. We see how, within our regular daily lives, Hashem is the King and there is no other.

**On Purim, the secret is revealed.** We gaze down from above at the maze of life and realize that all of the roads and twists lead only to eternal good. We realize this clearly, without any doubts: Hashem is always with us, He loves us infinitely, and He never abandons us. That is

<sup>5</sup> באור פני מלך

how we obliterate the remnant of *Amalek* from our hearts and minds. **There is no uncertainty as to Hashem's compassion, love or supervision.**

**Moreinu Harav:** The enlightenment of Purim is the *emuna* that there is nothing besides Hashem. There may be an Achashveirosh, there may be a Haman and they may institute all sorts of decrees – but they do not really exist, they are mere vapor and all of their words and actions are only to inspire us to do *teshuva*. Purim is meant for *teshuva* - not just for having a good time and causing mischief. There were great men, throughout the generations, who would shed rivers of tears when the *Megilla* was read and while they sang and danced. For, who is *Amalek*? *Amalek* is within each and every one of us; Haman is within each of us - and for us to bring redemption, we must overturn ourselves and change ourselves. Purim is “and it was overturned.”<sup>6</sup> Every person must transform themselves. **On Purim, each person discovers love of Hashem and awe of Hashem. On Purim, everything bursts forth and we want to dance, out of an abundance of love for Hashem, from so much clinging - we get high from the excitement and the attachment.**

**On Purim, there is such an inspiration for *Ahavas Yisroel* - it is indescribable and immeasurable.** All of the *mitzvos* (*Mishloach Manos*, Gifts to the Poor, giving to whoever stretches out their hand) instills so much genuine *Ahavas Yisroel* into our hearts. The story of Purim began with Haman's assertion, “There is a certain nation - scattered and dispersed.”<sup>7</sup> However, Purim concludes with phenomenal unity that led to the nullification of the decree of destruction.

**On Purim, the costumes remind us that many of us are in disguise all year.** At the moment that a person removes his mask, even if he was cynical and self-centered, he is revealed as an infinitely generous person. The enjoyment of

Purim unites us. We discern the good in everyone. We love everyone. We remove the masks. **On Purim, there are no religious and non-religious, Ashkenazim or Sephardim - there are only warm, good Jews who have *emuna* in One G-d and are connected to the same Torah. We are one nation.** At times, all kinds of costumes pop up – but they are all superficial. Deep inside, in the heart of every one of us, there lies a Jewish soul that is clear and pure. By way of the wine that we drink on Purim, we do not see the evil even in Haman – certainly we see no wickedness in any Jew – only good. **That is the power of joy - it engenders love between all - and where there is love, Hashem is found.**

**Shabbos Parshas Tzav.** We are commanded (צו) to persistently strengthen our bond with Hashem. *Tzav* is a *parsha* of sacrifices (קרבנות) which is related to the term for closeness (קרוב) – they come to bring us close to Hashem. It begins with the *Korban Olah*. The word “*Olah*” also means “to elevate.” We must incessantly elevate ourselves, yearn for greater heights – grab another bit of learning, another *tefilla*, another act of *chesed*. “Master of the World, help us to cling to You - like the *tzaddikim* do.”

Our bond with Hashem is our connection to our life force, it is our entire soul. It is our task to guard that bond. It is what fulfills our souls and gladdens us. All other pleasures are fleeting; they dissipate and almost always leave behind some bitterness, an aftertaste that makes it clear that they were not what we were truly seeking.

We must desire. And we must translate those desires into prayer. “I want, Father. You know that I want. But, I am powerless; I do not have the strength to change on my own. Help me, Father.”

We must be determined, with conviction: nothing will confuse or distract me! Nothing will budge me from this objective – that I only desire Hashem! A person who has never once tasted the true light of Hashem is so unfortunate. He is convinced that the only pleasure in the world is

<sup>6</sup> ונהפוך הוא (מגילת אסתר ט, א)

<sup>7</sup> ישנו עם אחד מפזר ומפרד (שם ג, ח)

physical indulgence. If he would experience, even once, the flavor of Torah, of *tefilla*, of *hisbodedus* (isolated meditation and introspection with Hashem), of holiness, of genuine spirituality – it would no longer be possible to deceive him. And above them all is the taste of desire. A person who merely desires Hashem – enjoys such bliss! We must constantly yearn for Hashem! Anytime that we feel some base urge begin to overtake us, we must cry out: “Master of the World, I do not want this urge! I want You, Hashem! I do not want this pleasure! I want only to delight in You! Cling to You! I do not want this artificialness! I seek only Your sweetness, Hashem!” A person must remain fortified in this: that no matter what he endures, we crave only Hashem! We must not allow anything to confound us. **Just as we want good *shidduchim*, good livelihoods, just as we want everything else – we must want Hashem!!!<sup>8</sup>**

**Shabbos Parshas Zachor.** It is a positive commandment in the Torah to remember what *Amalek* did to us. What exactly did *Amalek* do that was so terrible that HKB”H declared an all-out war against them until the end of time?! *Amalek* attempted to damage the most important feature that we have – our desire! “That he happened (קרר) upon you on the way.”<sup>9</sup> *Amalek* attempted to chill (קרר) our hearts – infuse doubts – get us to entertain improper thoughts, such as: “Maybe there was some natural phenomenon that occurred at the Splitting of the Sea and there was no miracle at all.”

The directive to remember the terrible thing that *Amalek* did to us by trying to throw us off base is actually a call to remember Hashem - **to remember the purpose, to remember that everything is from Hashem and for the best, even the humiliations.**

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## תפילה

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**Master of the World!** Thank You for giving me the occasional ability to experience the taste of Torah, the sweetness of *tefilla*, the attachment of *hisbodedus* – but it is not enough, Father. I need something more potent if I am to maintain any hope of prevailing over this world. Often, I feel like only a melody can save me. Like that time recently that I went to *daven* at the tomb of a *tzaddik* in middle of the night and I heard two precious Jews singing in the nearby *Beis Midrash*, such sweet melodies. My initial reaction was: “oy vey, how will I be able to *daven* with the distraction.” But, in the very next moment I understood that You arranged this gift for me, Father, and that I was intended go with the flow. In fact, it was such a wonderful delight that it connected me to You more than anything else.

Or that time, many years ago, when I went into a particular *Beis Midrash* and heard a certain Jew, whose name, not coincidentally, was Dovid, *chanting Tehillim* in such a Heavenly tune. I unabashedly, even though I did not know him, asked him to please record himself singing his *Tehillim* melody. Several months later, I actually received the recording from him – but, it was not the same as when I had heard him sing it that first time.

Or, like when we hear our Rabbonim *davening* and singing to You, Father, for extended periods and we are inspired with such longing to join them in Gan Eden.

**Master of World!** Grant me an inner melody that my soul will never cease humming – and I will never need anything else in the world.

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>8</sup> המברך את עמו ישראל בשלום

<sup>9</sup> אשר קרר בדרך (דברים כה, יח)