

פרשת אמור

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

"ויאמר ד' אל משה אמר אל הכהנים בני אהרן
ואמרת אליהם" (כא, א)

"Hashem said to Moshe: Say to the Kohanim, the sons of Aaron, and tell them."

Said ... Say ... Tell ... all in one *pasuk* - why is it so important to say? When a person *davens* or asks a particular request of Hashem, he must express and utter the words from his mouth. Thought alone is insufficient. Even though Hashem knows all of a person's thoughts – **the vessel by which abundance is gathered is speech**. Thus, the speech that we express must be proper and wholesome – so that it will be worthy of bringing forth abundance. For this reason, we must enunciate every prayer for whatever we are lacking, both material and spiritual – and then Heaven will provide what is missing.¹

"והניף את העמר לפני ד'" (כג, יא)

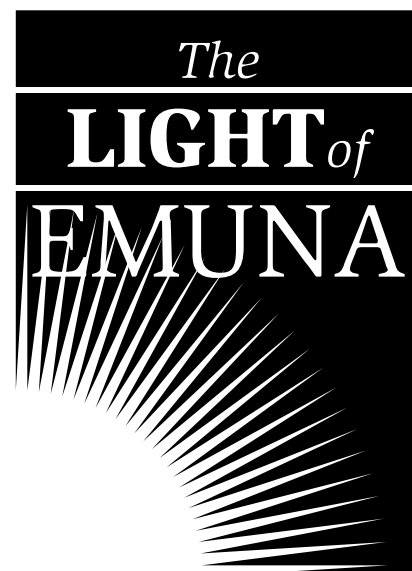
"He shall wave the Omer before Hashem"

Everything that we request and everything that we need is encompassed in the first *bracha* of supplication that the Men of the Great Assembly instituted in *Shemona Esrei* (after the opening three *brachos* of *Avos*, *Gevuros*, and *Kedusha*) – "You Graciously Endow Man with Knowledge."² In other words, the first thing we must plead for is knowledge – **where there is knowledge, there is everything**. "If you have acquired knowledge, what are you lacking - if you are lacking knowledge, what have you acquired?"³

¹ אור הגאולה

² אתה חונן לאדם דעת

³ נדרים מא.



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

What is knowledge? It is knowing Hashem - having *emuna* in Hashem, learning to live with Hashem, beginning to understand how good we have it when we live with the reality of Hashem, beginning to feel the embrace and kiss of the Creator of the World. All of this is hinted to with the promise of the *Mishkan*. HKB"YH promises that He will reside in our midst – in all circumstances, in all moments, in all difficult emotions that a person endures. When everything is dry and we feel as if we cannot revitalize ourselves – we must remember that Hashem is still with us. **Hashem does not abandon us even for a second. He is with us at all times and in all places.**

How is this connected to this week's *parsha*? The Torah does not permit us to eat new produce before we bring an *Omer* of barley to the *Kohen*. And what does the *Kohen* do with it? He waves it in every direction. "By waving the *Omer*, the *Kohen* reveals that **Hashem is found everywhere and with everyone, even with those who are most broken and distant from Him** – the *Kohen* shows them that Hashem is still with them and close to them - constantly. We wave the *Omer* up and down: to the One to Whom Heaven and Earth belong; in the four directions: to the One to Whom the entire world belongs – in this way, we reveal and publicize that the entire world is filled with His Glory."⁴

⁴ ליקו"ה פסח ט, כ

Drought within a soul is so trying. But there is something even more difficult – when a person does not even notice the parchedness, when he does not even realize that Hashem is obscured from him – concealment within concealment. What is concealment? A person does not feel Hashem, things are very difficult for him - he must cry out to Hashem: “What will be, I feel nothing, I am so dried up, what will be with me, what is going on with me, is this how I am meant to continue to live? Hashem, I am unable to produce anything good while You are hidden from me, I cannot even *daven* when You are not with me.”

But there is an even more troublesome situation – when a person does not even know that he is behind a veil, he does not realize that he does not know, he does not appreciate that he is suffering, he does not understand that he must cry to Hashem, scream to Hashem, *daven* to Hashem. There is a solution to every problem except for this central crisis – the lack of knowledge – i.e. if one does not recognize what is hidden from him, he does not know what he is lacking; he does not grasp how distant he is.

How much compassion must we have for people who live in a way that is so detached from truth and knowledge? How much sympathy must we have for ourselves when we, at times, forget this awareness?

We must employ much effort to draw near and come close. Only that is called good life, only that brings calm to the soul.

The *Gaon*, R' Yaakov Ades, zt"l was exceedingly poor and endured much suffering. In 1936, his eldest son, Avraham Chaim, died after minor surgery. Even at the early age of sixteen, young Avraham Chaim was renowned for his Torah acumen. R' Yaakov was inconsolable for months - until one night he had a dream in which an old man handed him a letter that said, “Why do you involve yourself with Hashem’s secrets?”⁵ When he woke up, he understood that it was a message

from Heaven that the tribulations that Hashem inflicts must be accepted with love, because Heaven’s calculations are beyond our comprehension. Every event that a person suffers is part of Hashem’s plan and has a reason and an explanation - even if we so often do not understand. **It is incumbent upon us to have *emuna* and accept with complete *emuna*.** From that moment on, R' Ades accepted whatever happened to him with love.

People think that world was created for them to drink, be clothed and get what they want. They enjoy everything that life has to offer. They have needs: a home, a livelihood. They have children and need: success for the children, success in learning, good schools, to marry them off. Even if they do consider that Hashem delights in all of these things – the concept that everything must be for the Glory of Hashem is still beyond them. Therefore, every action that we undertake, every thought that crosses our minds, must be assessed – if it is extravagant, superficial, for our own honor – it must unsettle us. **We want and need so many things – but what we truly need is the desire to do everything for Hashem’s honor. That is called knowledge.**⁶

In the middle of his famous journey to Eretz Yisroel, the holy Baal Shem Tov stayed at the home of a wealthy Jew in Istanbul, who had been unable to have children for many years. The Baal Shem Tov decreed that he be blessed with progeny. The man’s wife was physically incapable of bearing children and so the Baal Shem Tov’s pronouncement directly contradicted the laws of nature. Heaven revealed to the Baal Shem Tov that because of his actions in “forcing” Heaven’s hand, he had forfeited his share in the World to Come. At that moment, he experienced an ethereal sense of joy. He excitedly told his daughter, “From this moment on, I can serve Hashem without any thought of reward – only for Hashem’s sake” - at which point, a Heavenly voice rang out proclaiming that he re-earned his entire portion.

⁵ ברכות י'.

⁶ באור פני מלך.

There is much joy when we walk this path, when we conceal our own deeds and act only for Hashem's honor – we act only because we love Him – because we begin to comprehend that Hashem created the world to reveal His Glory, not ours.

When we experience a deficiency, we must not look at one who has what we want begrudgingly or with jealousy – we need merely turn to Hashem. **Our problem is that we do not see Hashem, we see ourselves and therefore we constantly look around us to see what is on the plates of others – instead of lifting our heads upwards, to Hashem.**

Envy is a terrible disease, it is the absence of clear understanding. Benevolence is connection to Hashem, attachment to the source. We look at the possessions of others generously – this is what he received from Hashem and this is what I received. **Each person receives exactly what he needs. Knowledge is not being jealous – we do not need everything. Knowledge is a caring outlook – doing our part without agonizing over others.** Hashem gives what He gives and what is withheld - we must request – not forcefully – with gentility and compassion. **Knowledge is knowing that our path is towards Hashem and no one can touch it - it never collides with that of anyone else.**

We must be ecstatic with our lot - even when our conduct is so far from perfect, even when we are missing so much. For one who has wisdom understands that only by way of his deficiencies can he attain his correction, fulfill his mission – they are the best for him.

A person who attains knowledge no longer blames himself and does not persecute himself. He comprehends that whatever happens is Hashem's will, he is happy with his portion, with whatever happens to him - because whatever Hashem does - even our flaws - is best - all to bring us close. He is pleased with whatever bond he has with HKB"Y, with every *mitzvah* that he performs. **He does not drag all of his past failures around with him, nor the**

worries over the future. He lives in the moment, he is happy with what he does, total joy, without a thought as to what will be and what was. In the merit of this joy, he experiences many salvations.

Knowing Hashem means *emuna* and *bitachon* in Him. Fortunate is such a person – aside from his reward in the World to Come, he enjoys tranquility and pleasantness in this world – nothing shakes his *emuna*. One who has *emuna* and *bitachon* understands that what he must do is *daven* - everything else is left to Hashem, the most Benevolent. It is not a matter of lack of choice (i.e. “what can we do, it is not in our hands”) - **it stems from great delight, *emuna* and hope that, Thank G-d, our “file” is in the trusted hands of the Creator of All Worlds and the Master of All Deeds.**

Even when discussing spiritual service, where we must be persistent – we must still be patient. One who wishes to enter into service of Hashem must wait - while never ceasing to yearn and pray, until Heaven has mercy on him and opens the gates of *teshuva*. When Heaven observes that a person's desire is strong and real – they will eventually open up for him. **That is the way to Hashem – seeking, desires, longings, ascents and descents, new beginnings and, most important, never despairing.**

When a person loses a precious physical item, there is no limit to the time that he searches for it. The only thing that is important is the moment of discovery. In spirituality, it is different. There, **the search is essential.** Even if we have not yet found, attained, merited – we still desire, we speak to Hashem, we tell him how badly we want - and we will eventually achieve.

There are matters where our only *hishtadlus* is to have *bitachon* in Hashem and pray. An example is our livelihood. We must know that the onus of our occupation is not on us, it is on Hashem. Chazal say that one's income is as difficult as the Splitting of the Sea. Just as that was above nature, so is this – and **just as Hashem was able to split the Sea, He can also arrange our**

livelihood. Trust Hashem! *Daven!* Hashem will provide.

Livelihood is from Heaven. We must know that Hashem has methods that we cannot even imagine. People think that Hashem will provide for them as they expect – but Hashem has means that we cannot fathom. We've seen it happen: people receive income where they never expected it. **Picture yourself as if you are standing at the shore of the Yam Suf and strengthen your *emuna* – that is how we must look at careers and employment.**

Chazal use the same language about finding a marriage partner. It is often concealed – they seem like a perfect match but they do not click – and no one understands why – only Hashem does. We must turn to Him and beg for mercy.

We must feel sympathy for those who do not know, who do not have *emuna*, who do not have

a bond with Hashem. They are fumbling in darkness, lacking vitality.

Our mission is to bring people back to Hashem, to broadcast G-dliness in the world, to spread light – until everyone returns to Hashem, including ourselves.

Moreinu Harav: The holy Zohar says that **one who returns others in *teshuvah* has all of the gates, passageways and doors opened for him. He is handed all of the keys – Hashem honors him in all worlds.**

How does one do this? By presenting an illuminated and holy countenance – by merely looking at him, people are inspired to *teshuvah*. To do this properly, we must learn much Torah – and we must teach it to others.

We must fortify our *emuna* in Divine Providence. Everything is from Hashem.

תפילה

Master of the World! Gladden our souls – happy souls easily overpower the brazenness of the body. Help us, Father, to get a glimpse of the secreted light that awaits us after 120 years so that we will have the power to conquer. Move the curtain a bit, Father, so that we may peek and see something of the unfathomable beauty that we are told exists in the upper worlds. It is so difficult here, Father. There are so many pressures that pull us in all directions and turn us away from our proper bearing. Help us, Father. Return our gaze.

Master of the World! Help us to lovingly accept everything that occurs to us. When things go awry, when there are mishaps, when things get more difficult – it is much harder to remember that everything is in accordance with Your plan, Father, and everything is for the best. We get angry, jealous and hateful – and we forget everything. What will be of us, Father? **When will we manage to remember all of these things at the moment of truth, when things happen? When will we be happy with our deficiencies and remember that they are the vehicles by which we merit getting close to you? When will we overcome jealousy that is more challenging than our other tests? When will we manage to see others receive more than us and accept it with love – remembering that everyone receives exactly what he requires? When will we cease being angry, demanding and holding grudges?**

Master of the World! Acting solely for Your honor is so daunting, it is still so beyond me? There are still so many moments in which I am thrilled that people know good things that I do – not only do I not try to hide it, I endeavor to make it known. Master of the World, what will be of my flamboyance? When will I begin to be happy with things that remain private, that no one knows about and no one hears of – that are only between You and I, Father? Master of the World, help us sever ourselves from the place that we find ourselves and move to someplace a bit more elevated, where we can act exclusively for Your honor.

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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