

פרשת בשלח

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

ולרפואה שלימה ל' זעלדע ברכה בת חוה לאה רחל

"ויהי בשלח פרעה את העם" (יג, יז)

**"It happened when Pharaoh sent out
the people."**

Chazal teach that wherever the term "it happened" (ויהי) is used - it is a reference to pain. It contains the letters וי - Oy or woe. Moshe cried, "Oy! I toiled so hard to bring the Jewish people out of Egypt and I will not enter Eretz Yisroel with them." Thus the term: "it happened."¹

"והיה כאשר ירים משה ידו וגבר ישראל וכאשר
יניח ידו וגבר עמלק" (יז, יא)

**"It happened that when Moshe raised
his hand - the Jewish people were
stronger, and when he lowered his
hand - Amalek was stronger."**

Moshe raised his hands and the Jews overpowered Amalek - he lowered them and Amalek prevailed. What was happening - what secret was contained within Moshe's hands? The secret was not in his hands, it was in the outlook. When Moshe's hands were elevated, the Jewish people looked upwards - to Hashem. When our hearts cling to Hashem we can conquer even the *yetzer hora* which is essentially our own base urges. As the *Gemara* notes, "Do the hands of Moshe wage war or lose war? Rather, so long as the Jewish people gazed Heavenward and submitted their hearts to their Father in Heaven - they were triumphant."²

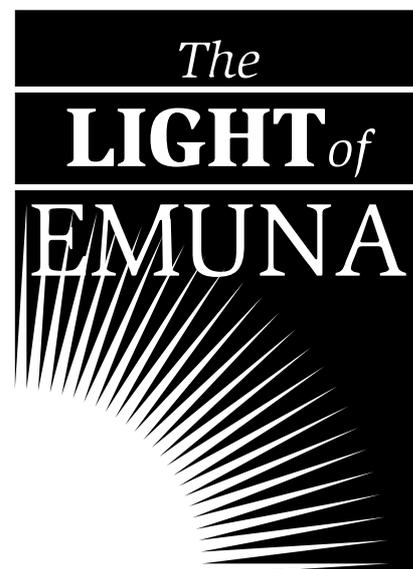
Yielding our hearts to our Father in Heaven is living with *dveykus* (clinging). Only that is

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מדרש רבה

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ראש השנה כט.



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

considered life - when we burn for Hashem, when we do not allow the adversities of life to cool us off.

Our entire lives are clinging to Hashem - that connection is the greatest source of pleasure. Everything else is temporary, partial, it changes - physicality never successfully fulfills us. It is fleeting. The *yetzer hora* is not life. There is another life - true, we cannot constantly live in such an elevated manner, we have difficulty in being permanently attached to Hashem. Our entire life's journey consists of ups and downs - zigzags. One moment we lift our heads and we feel as if we only desire Hashem - and a moment later we are looking sideways ... and we fall. But, **after every ascent, after each inspiration - when we suffer a setback - it is never to the exact same place that we occupied before.** We progress. We fall to a place that is slightly less lower (two steps forward - only one back). That is how we grow.

It is such an amazing thing to bond with Hashem - it is what our souls pine for. **If we cling to Hashem - we need nothing else.** If we continue with heaviness in our hearts, thinking that things are not good for us - we can easily turn it around - we need only speak to Hashem - lift our heads, open our mouths - speak a few words and we will immediately feel better and lighter.

If we are properly connected – our joy will be contagious – spreading to our spouses, children, parents, friends. A person who is connected to Hashem always wants to be happy – to do good for everyone. He imitates the Creator, Who is always giving and influencing. But if a person finds himself with so much light that his wife and children are unhappy by his preoccupation, they feel neglected – it should be a signal to him that he cannot simply say “there is nothing aside from Hashem” and thereby arrive at the conclusion that since there is nothing else, he owes no one anything. That could not be farther from the truth. We must deal with reality – we must be concerned with what is lacking in the lives of our families and do our part, fulfill our obligations – but, all with connection to Hashem – for Heaven’s sake – for Hashem’s honor.

Our bond with Hashem is our ultimate merit. It makes no difference whether we receive or not – our primary goal is our personal connection with our Father. We must continually seek ways to strengthen the bond – even if we pray and do not receive. If we are connected to Hashem and are bound to Him – we have received everything. That is the only thing that can satisfy our souls. We must be mindful of Hashem at all times – thoughts like: this one did something to me, hurt me, I am owed, I am due honor, it is in my merit – originate from forgetfulness. We must elevate and look above ourselves - to change our point of view.

A person must constantly strive, in everything that he does, to do Hashem’s will. If we are unsure of what that will is – we must focus on our desire to do His will and beg Hashem to show us the proper understanding of His desire. Rather than endlessly asking Hashem to do our will – we should beseech Him that we may merit performing His will.

Boundless connection – we must always pursue it – knowing that there is nothing apart from looking up, towards Hashem. We can never disconnect from HKB”H – **HKB”H is our soul, our life.**

At the moment that a Jew merits tasting the flavor of holiness – he immediately understands that it is the taste of truth – that this is what he always really wanted. “This world is like a passing shade and all of its decadences are blended with bitterness and anger, grief and pain. There is no one who pursues this world who has any comfort or pleasure because this world is full of affliction, suffering and worry. Consequently, nothing is better for a person that following his true purpose – his eternal purpose of serving Hashem incessantly – avoiding evil and doing good.”³

Our souls’ entire desire is to live lives of embracing the Divine. The singular effective recommendation for traversing through life peacefully is: **to live with the Creator.** The greatest level a Jew can reach is living with Hashem. **We want nothing more – it is sufficient that we have You.** When we are alone - we are constantly prosecuted, tormented, confused, unsure of when to be stubborn and when to forego, when to teach the other person a lesson and when to forgive him – and if to forgive, how to do so wholeheartedly. **When we live with Hashem - we perpetually seek to comprehend and perform G-d’s will.** Then, everything is easier. The Torah tells us to “live by them [Torah and *mitzvos*]” – only that is called life – when we live with HKB”H.

A person must attain such connection with Hashem, such *dveykus* (clinging) - that he feels compelled - that he feels Hashem across from him so strongly that he is embarrassed to even think about the possibility that he may be permitted to do anything that is not the absolute Divine will. And when he does do something wrong - he corrects it quickly, he does *teshuva*, he does not remain undisturbed if he knows that he has done something that is contrary to Hashem’s will – because he already clings to Hashem.

What is the pinnacle of *dveykus* (clinging)? *Shema Yisroel*. When a Jew screams out *Shema*

³

ליקו"ה הפקר ונכסי הגר ג, א

Yisroel – it is not just another stage of *tefilla* – it is the ultimate purpose – the culmination of everything. **“Hear, O Israel: Hashem is our G-d, Hashem, the One and Only” – includes everything – it is all of existence, all of life, our entire identity** – we are born with it, we enter this world with it and the generations of the Jewish people continue with it – because of this we are the chosen nation. When we say *Krias Shema* – Hashem descends upon us, envelopes us and rests His *Shechina* on us – like a little boy whose mother embraces him. *Krias Shema* is powerful and awesome – for through it, all of existence is sustained. **This type of scream that we direct to HKB”H says: we know the truth and we acknowledge the truth that You are One – there is none aside from You.**⁴

When a Jew submits his heart to his Father in Heaven – he is triumphant. Every morning, we ask Hashem to “compel our Evil Inclination to be subservient to You.”⁵ How do we do that – how do we subdue our hearts – how do we merit the Gan Eden that is called *dveykus* (clinging)? This week’s *parsha*, also known as Shabbos Shira, provides us with the answer:

אז ישיר משה ובני ישראל

Then Moshe and the Children of Israel sang

Song and melody is the most amazing links between a person and his Creator. Our soul is wrested from upper worlds, where it is accustomed to hearing the singing of the ministering angels. Therefore, even now, when it is in a body – it yearns for song and melody. **When we hum and sing, we are immediately joined to Hashem.** It is an amazing force and it has great power to draw the heart of a person to Hashem. We can get lost in a song that connects us and we lose interest in anything else – **we just want to continue to feel this ecstasy.**

A person should try to find one *pasuk* each day that enlightens him, that stirs him – a

⁴ באור פני מלך חיים
⁵ וכוף את יצרנו להשתעבד לך (שחרית – ברכות)

tune that suits him – and, throughout the day, he should sing it. All day. A person is unable to live without an internal melody – something new each day – that gives him strength – that will accompany him throughout the day, and sometimes, for many days.

We must praise Hashem, thank Him – sing and chant before Him throughout our lives. That is the highest service – the very purpose. HKB”H split the sea to give cause for the *Shira*. Since the creation of the world, Hashem craved the singing of the *Shira* by the Jewish people. Of everything that we do for Hashem’s honor – what does Hashem love most? “Who chooses musical song.”⁶

If we have difficulty singing – speak! Speech creates such indescribable connection. If we find it difficult: “Master of the World, it is strange for me to speak to You, I do not feel anything, but I want, I want, I want.” When we express our desire for Hashem – all of the concealments, separations and veils are diminished. **Desire is a nuclear weapon.**

We will not be judged for what we failed to do but for what we failed to want. There are no excuses for the lack of desire. Failure to act can be excused by lack of funds or other difficulties. But there is never any excuse not to want – it is free and no one can ever take it away. If we have issues with our children: “Master of the World, grant my child the desire to learn Torah, to pray, to be successful in life, in Torah! Grant him desire!”

Our entire battle is for desire. The *yetzer hora* is the sum of our negative urges. We counteract negative desires with positive ones. When we sit down to eat – instead of craving the food, we can crave Hashem – thereby breaking the passion for food.⁷

If we have difficulty speaking – scream! We can scream, Abba, Tatty, Daddy, Papa – in any

⁶ הבוחר בשירי זימרה (שחרית – ישתבח)
⁷ המברך את עמו ישראל בשלום

language. **We cry out to Hashem – because only He can help us.** The Jewish people fled Egypt – sea before them, Egyptians behind, wild animals on both sides. With no options – they cried out to Hashem. When nothing more is possible, when the pain is too great to bear – a person screams. **There are screams with words – and there are shrieks without words – there are even ones without any sound – a cry of the heart.** That is our secret weapon. We call out to Hashem without sound - rescue us. The very purpose of suffering is so that we cry out. We say on Pesach that every Jew, in every generation, must view himself as if he himself left Egypt. Rebbe Nosson taught that we must see our circumstances as that very situation. We are fleeing the forces of evil, the current day Egypt - we must call out to Hashem.⁸

If we even have difficulty screaming – look up

and gaze! That is so potent and sweet. That cannot be stopped. “I am looking to You Father and feel that I do not want anything except You.” **It is looking at the purpose and recognizing that there is no bad – our goal is all good.** We experience true humility – that others are more righteous than us, holier than us, purer than us.

The more humility and modesty we manage – the higher our gaze advances towards Hashem and the more we seek to benefit other people. It is exactly like a tree, whose birthday is this coming week – planted in the ground, roots deep in the earth, branches spread out above to the most amazing place – toward Hashem. How much good does it provide to people –its shade, its fruit, providing the opportunity to perform *hisbodedus* under its canopy. **Love of Hashem and love of other people go together** – just like a tree – reaching for Hashem, giving to people.

תפילה

Master of the World! Help me safeguard my joy even when something not so good occurs – such as when I suffer a small financial loss and, rather than learn a lesson from those who lose a fortune and make a celebration of gratitude with dancing and delicacies – instead, I become dejected and cannot manage to convince myself that it is truly for the best. **Help me have emuna that if I only accept everything with delight – I will also receive everything that I am lacking.**

Master of the World! When things do not work out as I had wanted, despite having *davened* so much – help me have *emuna* until the final moment that there will still be miracles, that everything can yet transform for good. For even when I tell others that there will yet be miracles, I do not truly have *emuna* that they will occur – for what can actually happen in the ninth hour?! Forgive me Father that despite the many times that You have shown me that it is possible and things change for the good at the very last moment, despite that I still have very little *emuna*.

Master of the World! How can I ignore what others do to me, how others harm me, how they fail to honor me properly, that I have not received what I am owed? How can I elevate myself to a higher level and remember that it is all You, Father – that they are all Your messengers? How can I compel myself to love everyone – even those who avoid me as if I were mere vapor and I do not know why – maybe I can forgive them – but to love them? Help me Father.

Master of the World! Help me set aside all of the little things in life, the daily matters and not allow them to extinguish the fire that loves You and burns for You, that provides a zest to sing again and again the amazing song of the hands of Moshe – that it was not they who helped the people win the war – it was the upward outlook, Heavenward, to You – this sweet attitude that provides flavor to life.

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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