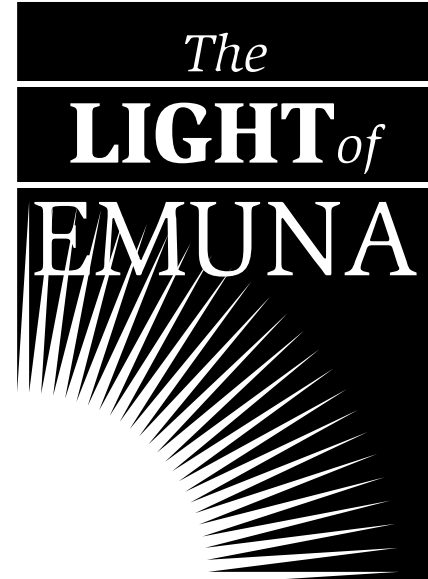


# פרשת שמות

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

ולרפואה שלימה: רצה בת רחל - העניא בת פרידל  
מנחם מרדכי בן אופירה - רבקה בת שימה לאה - מיכה חיים בן שרה



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

"ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה" (א, א)  
"And these are the names of the Children  
of Israel who were coming to Egypt"

"A good name is better than good oil."<sup>1</sup> "Good oil" signifies those who have been granted eminence by Heaven (e.g. Kohanim, who have been preordained by Heaven). Even worthier are those who earn it themselves, through their own toil - that is called a "good name."<sup>2</sup>

"וראך ושמת בלבו" (ד, יד)  
"And when he sees you, he will rejoice  
in his heart"

HKB"H created man with two inclinations: the *yetzer tov* and the *yetzer hora*, so that he would be free to choose good and receive reward for his choices. Throughout our entire lives, we strive and toil to be better. The main part of this service is in our immediate environment - our home. Precisely there, arguments, discord, anger and tension instigate and we must adopt a positive outlook towards all of them: our spouses, children, parents, relatives, neighbors and friends - everyone. "Master of the World, grant me a heart that feels the pain of others and is happy for their successes. Just like Aharon Hakohen, who, despite being the eldest, was happy about Moshe's success and, in whose merit, we received the *pasuk* that became the proud symbol and benevolent outlook of 'and when he sees you, he will rejoice in his heart.'"

Our life's mission is to acquire a generous outlook - **not to be envious of others, to be pleased about their successes** - even if we are experiencing deficiencies in the very matters in which they

succeed. **If we are happy for others - Hashem will give us as well.** This is a difficult test - let us not deceive ourselves. We still have envying eyes - it is taxing to watch others succeed where we have failed, to progress more than we do.

We must cry so much to Hashem, "What shall I do with my resentful eyes? I cannot bear being covetous any longer - save me, I have no more strength for this overwhelming envy. **Help me remember that I reach You via my own path and at the pace that You set for me - having nothing to do with the path and pace of others.**"

A begrudging eye cannot tolerate the success or fortune of others. It immediately disqualifies them. However, we forget that one who disqualifies - does so with his own flaws. If we cannot tolerate something in someone - it is a clear sign that we possess the same negative feature. If we say something negative about another person - we can be sure that we possess the same flaw.

**By contrast, if we look at others with a smile, with love, encouragingly, praising them - even when they may be acting somewhat badly - the evil immediately departs and they suddenly smile back. That is our primary service here.**

**First, we must learn to judge ourselves favorably and then we can do the same for others.** If we cannot exist ourselves, who will be left to give others the benefit of the doubt? If we feel worthless - we will only be able to see the negatives in others so that we may assuage our

<sup>1</sup> טוב שם משמן טוב (קהלת ז, א)

<sup>2</sup> שפת אמת

own feelings of inadequacy. However, **if we recognize our own value, if we find the aspects of wonder within us – we will learn to recognize the amazing qualities in others.** We will not look at them critically because we do not see ourselves critically. Even if we feel overcome by all of our negative attributes, people say terrible things about us and we observe others who are better and more successful than we are – we must not consider ourselves worthless. If we denigrate ourselves, we are maligning the image of Hashem – the G-dly soul that Hashem infused in us – and we have no right to do so. We are fortunate to be vessels, even if for only a tiny drop of G-dly light that is reflected in us. Is that insignificant? It is a great and glorious thing.

We tend to be sad, unhappy, self-destructive, unaccepting of ourselves, believing that certain things do not happen to others, only to us? “What will become of me, how is it that everything goes smoothly for my neighbor – he has a beautiful new house and I constantly have to move.” **We forget that there is One Above who orchestrates everything down here and every time that we complain, get angry and feel deprived, it is as if we say to HKB”H: “You do not administer the world properly.”**

“A man’s folly perverts his way, but his heart is angry with Hashem.”<sup>3</sup> When a person has a faulty outlook, it causes him to become angry with Hashem. People constantly complain – “this hurts, I am lacking this or I should have that.” Who said that they should have? **Maybe we were created specifically not to have certain things. Maybe they would be detrimental to us, G-d forbid.**

If we regularly look around at others, we will always be resentful. If someone has something – he is lacking something else. There is always someone of whom to be jealous. We are always missing something that others have. However, **if we look to Hashem - nothing is missing and we will be able to shower all of the abundance that we receive upon others.** If we constantly look to Hashem, we will look kindly at others – for they are all children of Hashem.

<sup>3</sup> אולת אדם תסלף דרכו ועל ד' יזעף לבו (משלי יט, ג)

We can learn a benevolent outlook from *tzaddikim*. *Tzaddikim* reveal the good – they reveal that the essence of a Jew is good. The same happens in court. A young officer comes, a social worker arrives, a friend starts to soften the judge, “I know him, he helped me, he is a kind man, etc.” They relate nice stories and the judge softens – he looks at him in a new way.

That is the generous outlook that is the pinnacle of attachment – just as a miserly attitude is the pinnacle of separation. **When we have a magnanimous mindset – Hashem provides limitless abundance.**

**Having generous eyes means loving others – as they are.** It means feeling joy for others, judging them favorably, remembering that they are G-d’s creations. It is eyes that **see the good in every person – because there is no such thing as being unable to find something good in everyone.** That is our life’s work. We must pass this forward to our children, grandchildren – to maintain a benevolent outlook towards everyone.

**When we judge someone favorably, he feels it in his soul, even if we do not say a word to him. It helps him overcome his difficulties because looking at him in a positive light encourages him to see the good in himself and to believe in himself – and, if we also offer a kind word, that can be the beginning of his transformation. When a person hears that he is good, he strives to prove it correct – that he really is worthwhile.**

Every Jew has an aspect of Awe of Heaven that no one else possesses – one *davens* better, one excels in holiness, one performs more kindness, one is more erudite, etc. **If we believe in, cling to and admire all of them – we merit fulfilling the mitzvah of clinging to Hashem...**

True *tzaddikim* have a benevolent outlook towards all of *Klal Yisroel*. Every bit of joy of every Jew is literally their joy. Every pain of any Jew is literally their pain. Like Moshe Rabbeinu. Basya, Pharaoh’s daughter, arrived at the riverbank and saw an ark with a three-month old crying child. What was so novel about the fact that he was crying? Why was this so extraordinary? Infants cry! They especially cry if they have been apart from their mothers for

several hours! Of course, he was crying! This crying though was not the typical wailing of an infant. **Three-month old Moshe was crying over the suffering of the Jewish people. From the day he was born, he did not stop crying and davening for the Jewish nation.**<sup>4</sup>

Even if someone treats us poorly – we must still look at them in a positive way and not immediately distance ourselves from them. Even when we must sometimes keep certain people away, it must never cause us to think badly of them, talk badly about them or push them out of our hearts. **We are forbidden from feeling superior to others. Every Jew contains some element that no one else does. Every person is a unique tile in the huge mosaic that is the Jewish people. Each of us has a unique facet in which we are a tzaddik.**

This begins with those closest to us. Just as we know how to help a child who is facing difficulty – so must we connect to a struggling spouse. Instead of focusing on their shortcomings, (e.g. he is not so sympathetic, she is not so wise, he does not know how to give a compliment, she is not so understanding, he is not so considerate, she is not a great listener) – **we must focus on their virtues.**

A person can complain about his spouse for years and think that she is terrible. He can complain about his child's Rebbe in school or his neighbor who blocked his view or his child who causes him so much aggravation – and he is certain that the trouble is due to this or that cause. Then, he comes to some realization, some understanding and he recognizes that his troubles are to be found within him. If he would look at and perceive life otherwise – everything would appear entirely differently. **He would realize that it is not his wife, it is not his neighbor and it is not his children. It all depends on his eyes – when they are good and seek the positive elements in others – all of life looks different. A bit of light dispels much darkness.** We must focus on even the smallest element of good that we see in others – then we will realize that they are not bad, that this small element is their essence and all of the bad things are nonsense. So must we act towards

others and so must we act towards ourselves. This is the teaching that draws myriads to Rebbe Nachman. He taught that there is **no one who is entirely evil. Every Jew has a holy soul.** We can never identify someone as “just secular,” as if he has no connection to holiness.

**Love is obligatory. Unconditional love will bring the Redemption.** The Jewish nation is a single entity. We do not always feel this because there are people who are difficult for us to abide and accept. However, HKB”H is the Father of all of us and we do not have the option not to love them all. We must invest all of our efforts in this. As obvious as this seems, it is still so hard. Our love of our friends tends to be up to a point, with conditions. However, Hashem wants us to follow in His ways. **Hashem's ways are kindness – we too must be kind. Hashem loves every Jew – we too must want to love every Jew. We cannot cling to Hashem while simultaneously running away from people, scowling at them, erasing people from our lives for years and acting as if it is okay.** “One, who is pleasing to his fellow men, is pleasing to Hashem.”<sup>5</sup> Just as a person must fulfill his obligations towards Heaven – he must fulfill his responsibilities towards man. Every morning, we say, “Always, a person must be G-d-fearing.”<sup>6</sup> This can also be read, “Always be a *mensh* and only then can you be G-d-fearing.”

A benevolent outlook is the world's correction, the world's redemption. **When the “eyes” are good – everything is good – there is blessing in life.** “He who has a generous eye will be blessed.”<sup>7</sup> **When we are generous in our assessment of others – Hashem is generous in providing us with boundless abundance.**

How was Moshe Rabbeinu chosen as our leader? Once, a sheep ran away from him. Moshe ran after it for a long time until it reached a source of water. He observed the sheep stop to drink. He understood that it was thirsty and had sought water. He said, “I had not realized that it had run due to its thirst – it must be tired.” Therefore, he

<sup>5</sup> כל שרוח הבריות נוחה הימנו, רוח המקום נוחה הימנו (אבות ג, י)

<sup>6</sup> לעולם יהא אדם ירא שמים (קרבנות)

<sup>7</sup> טוב עין הוא יברך (משלי כב, ט)

<sup>4</sup> עשרה מאמרות

carried it back on his shoulders. HKB”H said to Moshe, “If you have this type of compassion in leading sheep – you will lead my flock, the Jewish people.<sup>8</sup> Only someone like you is worthy of tending to my flock of Jews.”

**A benevolent outlook leads us to a pleasant, happy and satisfying life.** Whenever something bad happens, we understand that it derives from our negative outlook, because we see things improperly. We must go off to the side and contemplate, we must think about what is actually going on - until we reach the conclusion that, it all depends on our perspective. Once we successfully awaken the generous outlook, we can proceed forward until Moshiach arrives with his refined eyes and magnanimous outlook. In the merit of his positive attitude, he merits being who he is.

"Israel, about whom I will boast."<sup>9</sup> The Jewish people are the only nation about whom Hashem can boast. Hashem created us with a *yetzer hora*.

**In every minor area in which a Jew overcomes the *yetzer hora* – Hashem is so proud.** That is the power of the benevolent outlook: **it searches for the point of good that is hidden within, in the depths of a person's soul.** Even if it cannot be seen and everyone thinks that there is nothing positive in this person, he is a failure, he is rotten – but, to HKB”H, he is good – to the *tzaddikim*, he is good. We too must learn this path of judging everyone favorably, loving everyone.

When we do not find anything good in another – we must keep searching until, eventually, we will find. When Hashem taught Moshe Rabbeinu the laws of the New Moon, Moshe looked for the point of light of the new moon but he could not find it. HKB”H helped him and said, “See like this and sanctify it.” **You see that tiny speck of light that is almost indiscernible? As small as it is – it is big and amazing. Sanctify it because it will flourish and grow until it becomes a great light. Looking positively at others is the secret of life.**

## תפילה

**Master of the World! Help me finally cleanse my mouth from every grain of *loshon hora* and *rechilus*. I have been speaking about this for so many years, listening to talks about this, asking for this – and there has been practically no change. Help me merit, Father, to understand that if there is something in the things that I say that can hurt someone else, damage his honor, something negative about him – it is forbidden for me.**

**Master of the World, when will I learn that You run the world measure-for-measure? If I speak negatively about others, how can I come with complaints and feel disgruntled when they speak ill of me? I brought this upon myself when I spoke poorly of others! If I guard a clean mouth and never say a bad word about others – then, about me too, no one will say a negative word.**

**Master of the World, how can I judge another person? Do I know what he has been through? What he has gone through in life? Where he grew up and with what parents? When will I merit having the *emuna* that if I was in his place, I would be a million times worse? And if he were in my place – he would be a million times better?**

**Master of the World, I want to see only the good, think only good, speak only good and remember, at every second, that they are all Your children and You love them with boundless love. Even if they are not the best, You wait for them to be the best, for them to return in *teshuva* – just as You wait for me too to do *teshuva* for all of my shortcomings.**

**Master of the World, grant me a pure mouth.**

**Have an awesome, uplifting and wonderful Shabbos!**

Dov Elias

Notice: The foregoing is my limited understanding of the Parsha Sheet, *Ohr Ha'Emuna*, by Harav Menachem Azolai *Shlita*. It 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, Mordy Blass, for helping with some of the Hebrew expressions. Thank you to my wife, Devorah, for proofreading and commenting on the “working draft.”

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<sup>8</sup> שמות רבא

<sup>9</sup> ישראל אשר בך אתפאר (ישעיהו מט, ג)