

Dear Friends,

We're just a few days away from yetzias Mitzrayim. The night of Emunah. We'll be eating Matzah, the bread of Emunah. And we'll experience leil shimurim, the special protection of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

In that spirit, today I want to think together about a word that is perhaps the smallest expression of our Emunah but one of the most frequent.

Amen. Such a simple, short word. Just three letters. What does it mean, and how can it supercharge our connection with Hakadosh Baruch Hu?

The word Amen has at its root **the word emunah**. It's also the acrostic of *Kel Melech Neeman*, Hashem is a trusted King. We depend on Hashem for all of our existence. Our lives, our future, our being hinges upon him. How can we take this out of the realm of theory, into a practical reality?

Imagine this scenario: you're on a hike, a difficult hike, and you finally arrive at the top of a steep hill. You take a moment to enjoy the incredible scenery that surrounds you. And then it's time to sink down onto the grass and catch your breath.

There's a small stone wall right there. It casts a little shade, so you sit beside it, thankful to be out of the glare of the sun. You may even lean on it, gently, with your shoulder. **If it feels pretty sturdy, then you may turn and rest your back on the wall.** But you wouldn't trust it with all of your weight. And certainly, you wouldn't pitch your tent against it, much less incorporate that wall into your shelter. Not unless you've examined it well and good. Why not? **You don't trust it, so you wouldn't lean on it.** Would you ever allow yourself to simply freefall and drop?

Teenagers have a popular game. It's called '**the trust game**'. They gather around in a circle, and they dare one of their friends to simply fall back - to let go of their weight and just drop, trusting that their friends are standing, with open arms, ready to catch them, ready, to stop their fall.

Whenever I see teenagers succeed in doing so, inside, I give them a round of applause. It's just a silly game, but as they stand at the cusp of adulthood, I'm glad when I see that they have the capacity **to simply let go and...trust.**

When we trust fully, we can allow ourselves to freefall.

What is the 'neeman' in Kel Melech Neeman? **Hashem is the trustworthy King.**

That means that He's here for us. That He is standing beside us, with His arms open. That He's waiting to catch us.

Sometimes, we invest all of our energy into trying to stand straight. Trying to keep going. We clench ourselves inside, we strain all our muscles in order to give in. And sometimes, that's what's required of us. **But there are other times, when we must fight our instinct.** Our instinct to search for areas of control, to do more hishtadlus, to push ourselves harder.

Instead, we can simply surrender. We can say, Amen. Kel Melech Neeman. And that's not the "In G-d We Trust" that is printed on every dollar bill. **It's the real deal.** When we don't know where the money is going to come from. When we're threatened with serious illness. When our loved ones are fighting for their lives. When community and family members we know and care about are dealing with tragic losses and grief.

Amen. Only You. Only You have the answers. Only You can wipe away the tears. Only You can effect a yeshua. Only You can heal.

For many of us, it's Emunah like we've never known before.

But we have it in us. We have it in us because we experienced yetzias Mitzrayim. Dam, v'eish, vsimros ashan. Blood. Fire. Columns of smoke. We heard the night being pierced with the calls of the dying and the screams of those who feared they would not survive. We heard the ear-splitting roar of the sea splitting in two **and knew, really knew, that we would survive this because Hashem was leading us.** That it could be that we would be led through the sea, but we would do so on

dry land. And when we paused and drew breath and opened our eyes, there were luscious fruits growing out of the towering walls of ice.

Amen. It takes courage to trust. It takes courage to let go of everything we knew before and melt into Hashem's arms. But He's waiting, with His arms outstretched, to catch us.

Kel Melech Neeman.

May we all be able to tap into the Emunah embedded deep in our DNA. May we experience the freedom of pure and innocent trust -trust that will allow us **to freefall into Hakodosh Baruch Hu's waiting embrace.**

Sincerely,

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