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Our Life Is A Contradiction

We are a contradiction. On one hand, we all know in our minds that “Everything Hashem does is good”, but when it comes to actualizing this belief in our life, we still feel pain.

There is a contradiction between our heart and our mind. Our mind understands, intellectually, what the truth is – that everything Hashem does is good. But the feeling of our heart is totally different than this. Simply, we would say that this is because we have a problem – we haven’t internalized our knowledge yet into our heart! We know that we have an *avodah* to internalize (“*And you will know today, and you shall return the matter upon your heart*”) and it seems that we are failing to internalize our beliefs.

That is true, but we have a deeper *avodah* than this as well. Our mind’s knowledge represents the understanding that is above us^[1], the unlimited comprehension which resides above logic. Our heart’s knowledge represents our limited comprehension. They are two different perspectives taking place at once inside us, and they are each correct.

Of course, first our *avodah* is to try to internalize our mind’s knowledge into our heart. But we must also realize that there will always be a contradiction always going on inside of us between our mind and heart. Just as we believe that our mind’s knowledge is true, we need to understand that our heart’s limited understanding also need to be validated (our feelings, which don’t allow us any peace to make sense with things).

This is a very deep point. It seems simply that our heart is disagreeing with the truth that we know in our mind, and that there is only one truth here, the truth that our mind knows. But at the same time, we must be aware that we live all the time with contradictions in our life; we must recognize that our mind thinks one way, while our heart always feels differently.

Our *avodah* is to keep trying to internalize our mind’s knowledge (that everything Hashem does is good) into our heart. When we succeed in internalizing, we then gain a whole new mind. We will still have contradictions, though, even after that.

What is then our avodah?

Our avodah is to keep continuing to internalize our knowledge, again and again, and go through this cycle: knowing, then internalizing, then finding contradictions – and then once again returning to knowing, internalizing, and finding contradictions, etc.

Our whole human makeup is a contradiction. Our mind is one kind of understanding, while our heart is another kind of understanding. It is an example of the concept of “*rotzoh v’shov*”, our general avodah of “running and “returning.” We go through a constant cycle of progressing and then falling from our progress, only to return back to progress and then to keep repeating that cycle. The fact that we have a contradiction in ourselves between our mind and our heart is not just this contradiction; it is the inner reality of every person!

Without knowing this secret about life, that we are supposed to live with contradictions, life is very difficult. We must firmly believe that our mind thinks one way, while our heart thinks a different way, and this contradiction is an inextricable part of who we are.

Now we can understand the following point. Although we know the statement of our Sages that “Everything Hashem does is for the good”, that doesn’t invalidate our need to cry. Why? It’s not that we aren’t believers; it is for a different reason. It is because our mind believes the truth – but our heart does not. Our heart is below the understanding of *emunah*, so it initially does not want to take *emunah* as an answer. On a deeper note, we cry when we have real pain and suffering, not because it makes sense to cry, but for no reason at all.

(This is the depth behind, “They cried tears in vain”. We know that the destruction came about due to how the nation “cried tears in vain” when they heard the Spies’ complaints about the land of Israel, and that we were punished because of this pointless crying. This was an evil usage of the power to cry, but the power to cry is good at its root, which is to cry for no logical reason at all. We can use the root good of “crying in vain” on Tisha B’av, which is really an illogical kind of crying).

It is our heart that has pain and cries, not our mind. This is not by chance. First, our avodah is to internalize our mind’s knowledge into our heart, but at the same time, we must also understand that our heart’s feelings of pain are also correct, and that it is an equal understanding to our mind’s understanding. Just as our mind is correct for believing that “Everything that Hashem does is for the good”, so too, when we have legitimate pain and we cry, our heart is correct in feeling the need to cry. It is a crying that is above logic, the power of “crying in vain” being used for good.

However, when a person cries simply out of a lack of *emunah*, he is using “crying in vain” for evil. It is only when a person believes that his crying is coming from his heart, from the root good power of “crying in vain”, that he elevates his heart’s understanding to the level of his mind’s understanding.

The Three Levels Of Crying When We Have Pain

To make this practical, there are three possible reasons why a person would cry. Two of these reasons are valid reasons to cry, while one of them is a lack of *emunah*.

The lowest level of crying is when a person cries, simply, out of a lack of *emunah*.

A person with the higher perspective, though, cries with the following attitude: he knows in his mind that everything Hashem does is for the best, but he also knows that sometimes we have a *mitzvah* to cry, like to cry over the destruction of Jerusalem. He detaches from his *emunah* a bit and instead allows himself to cry.

This higher kind of crying is reflected in the following story. The Kamarna Rebbe zt"l once lost a son. As he went through this tragedy, he said that he is momentarily disconnecting from his great bond with Hashem, and that he is instead allowing himself to feel pain. He said that if he would have remained in his total attachment with Hashem, he wouldn't feel any pain over the death of his son, and since he knew that it is Hashem's will that he should cry over his son's death, he allowed himself to disconnect from his great *d'veykus* and *emunah*. He let himself descend from his lofty perch a bit, to the level of his heart's emotions, the lower understanding, so that he could cry.

There is an even higher kind of crying than this, and that is when a person cries even though he has no idea why he is crying; this is when a person is so connected with Hashem that his crying comes from a place that is above himself, a crying that's coming from Heaven. In the level we mentioned before, a person cries out of *emunah* that he knows he must cry in order to fulfill Hashem's will. But in this third kind of crying, which is a higher level, a person cries without any explanation. He's not crying because he's sad, and he's not crying because he knows that it is Hashem's will. He is crying even though he has no idea why!

How can a person reach such a level of crying? It doesn't come from within himself; it is poured down from above. It can come when a person becomes so utterly connected with Hashem that he goes above even his *daas* (mind). This is a level called "*lo yeda*"^[2], no *daas* - in other words, there is a kind of higher understanding from above that can come to a person. This can be reached when one nullifies his *daas*;[3] when he realizes that just as he is limited in his understanding, so is there is a kind of unlimited understanding that is above human logic.

However, such a high understanding can only come to a person when he is truly connected to a life in which he has the synthesis of both understanding his human limits, as well as recognizing that there is a realm of the unlimited that is beyond him. Such a person can both "cry and laugh" at once - he can cry based upon his limited understanding, and he can laugh based upon the higher, unlimited understanding.

Suffering Is Incomprehensible!

The Maharal says that both the words "*galus*" (exile) and "*geulah*" (redemption) have the same letters in them (*gimmel* and *lamed*), because they are both from the word *giluy* - revelation. In other words, both the exiles and the redemption serve to reveal Hashem, each in their own way. (The redemption, will, of course, be a more complete revelation).

It is written, "*Behold, the angels are crying out*" (In Hebrew, "*Hein erealim tzaiku chutzah*"). The commentators of this *possuk* explain that the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* is something that our logical mind cannot endure. How could it be that Hashem, who is so merciful, has given cruelty to rein free? How could He allow so much pain upon His creations? There is no logical way to understand the destruction.

"*Avinu, av harachaman*". Our Father, our Merciful Father. Where is Your mercy?! Where is Your kindness? Even the cruelest person on this world wouldn't bring so much destruction to the world; how can it be that You, Hashem, our Merciful Father, can do this to Your children?!

From our human perspective that is limited, there is no way to understand how it could be that Hashem, Who is the epitome of mercy (*midas harachamim*) could allow for the destruction of Jerusalem. The Destruction is something that is above our limited comprehension.

This is why the angels were crying over the destruction: because there is no logical way to understand how Hashem could allow such destruction.

However, although we do not really understand anything – not the *Beis HaMikdash* itself, and not its destruction, and not the Endlessness of Hashem – still, we know that *we are able to have a connection to Hashem*, and that is **when we nullify ourselves to Him**.

There are many valid questions which people are asking in the world: How could there be a destruction to Jerusalem? How could Hashem allow such destruction?

How can we understand all the suffering going on in the world?

There is only one answer. It is really not possible to understand suffering; it is simply illogical! When we read the stories in the *Gemara*^[1] about the insane suffering at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem as well as all of the suffering that the Jewish people has gone through in recent times everyone is baffled: Is this the Merciful Hashem, who is supposed to be the epitome of compassion?!!

Of course, when we look into our holy literature, we can find all kinds of answers: even bad can somehow end up being good, etc. But in the end, our mind cannot endure such a thing! All of the suffering is so mind-boggling! How could Hashem pain us for so many years?!

Logically speaking, one would have to be the cruelest being possible in existence to allow so much pain to go on in Creation.

The truth is that we cannot understand how Hashem could let it be possible for so much suffering to go on in His Creation, how He could allow so much evil and destruction to take place. However, precisely because we cannot understand it, that itself leads us to an inner understanding: that **nothing can really be comprehended**.

When a person reaches this inner perspective – that human suffering is impossible to understand, since our logic is limited – he will be able to understand that even when we have pain and cry over the destruction, it is not because we are simply saddened over what is going on, from our limited perspective. The inner crying is because we are connecting to what is above our comprehension; it is a crying that we do not really understand why we are crying. It is an illogical kind of crying, and it indeed does not make any sense.

[1] In the Hebrew sefer, the author describes this as a manifestation of “ohr makif”, “surrounding light” (which is an understanding that is outside/above us), and “ohr penimi”, inner light, (the understanding that we have within us).

[2] Briefly, the concept of “lo yeda” is that there is a kind of daas that is above our regular daas; the source of this is an expression of the Baal Shem Tov, who said that “the purpose of “yeda” (“to know”) is lo yeda (to not know)” – that there is a higher kind of understanding we can reach in which we can realize that we do not understand things from our logical perspective. This is reached the more and more a person attains a deeper closeness to Hashem. It is explained at length in Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh, Volume V, in the beginning of the section [Mili D’Avodah \(Deep Matters of Avodah\), p.293-303](#) [2], as well as throughout [sefer Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh, Volume IX](#) [3].

[3] “Nullifying” our daas is also discussed the author’s other series, [Da Es Daatcha 009: Bittul HaDaas \(Nullifying Our Daas\)](#) [4]; see also the above mentioned places in Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh, Volumes V and IX, as well as in [Bilvavi IX: Chapter 6: Bittul HaSichliyus \(“Nullifying the Intellect”\)](#) [5]. See also Getting To Know Your Happiness, [Chapter 2: Simcha and Sechok](#) [6], and [Chapter 3: Happiness From Our Existence](#) [7].

[4] See Gittin 55a

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[2] <http://www.bilvavi.net/files/%D7%91%D7%9C%D7%91%D7%91%D7%99.%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%9B%D7%9F.%D7%90%D7%91%D7%A0%D7%94.%D7%97%D7%9C%D7%A7.%D7%94.pdf>

[3] <http://www.bilvavi.net/files/%D7%91%D7%9C%D7%91%D7%91%D7%99.%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%9B%D7%9F.%D7%90%D7%91%D7%A0%D7%94.%D7%97%D7%9C%D7%A7.%D7%98.pdf>

[4] <http://www.bilvavi.net/sugya/daes.dat>

[5] <http://www.bilvavi.net/sugya/bilvavi.tes>

[6] <http://www.bilvavi.net/english/getting-know-your-simcha-002-adar-simcha-sechok>

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