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Even Our Senses Are Enabled Only Through Emunah

We have five senses – sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. The senses are powers of our mind, and above the senses is our power of *emunah* (faith in the Creator). At the point where our senses end, that is where the point of our *emunah* begins; our *emunah* can show us things that are senses cannot.

That is the simple way of understanding things. But on a deeper level, it goes even further than this: the root of our senses is the power of *emunah*! Our very senses thrive on our power of *emunah*.

We naturally trust our senses whenever we see or hear something, that what we are seeing or hearing is real. But how are we relying on our senses? Maybe our senses are deluding us? The answer is because we believe in our senses, that they aren't deluding us. Thus, our power of *emunah* is essentially what is behind our senses, and that is why we trust our senses. So if not for *emunah*, we wouldn't be able to rely on our senses. We believe that Hashem created us with senses, and therefore we believe that our senses are giving us a true perception of reality.

For example, the Torah says that two witnesses are believed to testify in matters. How can we believe the witnesses? Maybe they are lying? The answer is, because the Torah says to believe in them. It is not because we know for sure they are telling the truth; maybe indeed they are not telling the truth, as we know very well that there can be false witnesses^[1]. It is rather because the Torah tells us that we are allowed to trust them, (unless, of course, they are proven afterwards to have been lying).

How can we ever be confident in our own intelligence? Who says we even understand anything? We indeed cannot know for sure. We can't just trust our natural senses and intellect. We can very well be fooling ourselves and imagining things. So we cannot trust our senses or our thinking mind. The only way we can know anything is through *emunah*; we *believe* in our senses and in our mind.

We Cannot Rely On Our Own Intelligence!

Therefore, in anything we understand, we have to realize that we aren't understanding it with our intellect. Nothing we understand is coming from our own intellect. If we think that we understand things due to our own natural thinking process, then our thinking is disconnected from the truth, and then our mind will indeed be able to mislead us.

For example, if you are reading a *posuk* in Chumash and you are trying to understand it, be aware

that you are not understanding it on your own. If you do understand something, realize that it is coming from Hashem's vitality being poured down upon you.

When you gain that perspective, your mind connects to *emunah*, and it is then that you can trust your mind. Your mind then becomes fueled by *emunah*, and the wisdom you discover will not be superficial wisdom, but the kind of wisdom that is coming from the source of all wisdom – *ayin* (lit. “nothingness”, the inner understanding of things). *Ayin*, the source of all wisdom, is essentially the power of *emunah*, and it is reached through *emunah*.

Without this perspective, your mind cannot be trusted.

For this reason, Hashem created all kinds of people in the world, each with varying opinions. Why is Creation designed this way, that each person thinks differently and has different opinions? It is so that we should all come to realize that we cannot rely on our own understanding alone, since there are so many different ways to understand something.

How Our Doubts Can Actually Bring Us Closer To Faith in the Creator

In Creation, there is a particular evil force that exists called “Amalek.” Amalek manifests in our soul as the evil power to doubt reality. As is well-known, “*Amalek*” has the same numerical value in Hebrew as the Hebrew word *safek*, doubt.

The Amalek within us can get us to doubt just about anything. Amalek\Evil Doubt says to us: “Who says so? Maybe not.”

What is the solution to our tendency to doubt things? The answer is through *emunah*. We find this hinted to from the war with Amalek; as long as Moshe's hands were raised, we were winning against them, and when his hands grew weak and slumped downward, Amalek gained the upper hand. What does the possuk call Moshe's hands when they were raised? “*And behold, his hands were “emunah” (Shemos 17:12)*. This hints to us that when we have *emunah*, we can defeat Amalek's evil.

On a simple, superficial level, it seems that there is a war between good and evil in Creation; evil is represented by Amalek\doubt, while good is represented by *emunah*. But the truth is (as the Baal Shem Tov revealed) that even evil can become constructive. “*Hashem created everything in His honor*”, even evil. Therefore, even our doubts can serve a constructive purpose. How? It is if when we realize, due to our many doubts, that we indeed cannot rely on our understanding, since there is so much that we can doubt about. That is how our doubts become transformed into good: when they help us realize this understanding, that since we cannot be sure of ourselves, we indeed cannot just rely on ourselves alone.

We can only be confident in ourselves if we realize that Hashem is directing us. If I believe in myself simply because of my “I” (my ego), then there will be doubts. But if I believe in the deeper part of myself, my “*Ayin*” (my nothingness, my negated ego) – which tells me that my entire existence serves to be connected to the Creator at all times – then I can be confident in my understanding. The reason is because if I have this perspective, I am relying on *Hashem* for my understanding, and I am realizing that I am only understanding something because Hashem is allowing me to.

We have no way of being confident in ourselves for just about anything! What we can do, however, is to realize that our entire understanding is provided by Hashem, Who has no doubts. If we understand that, then we can rely on our understanding of things, and when we come across a doubt, we can tell ourselves: “Why did Hashem place this doubt in me? So that I should know that, “*HaVadai Shemo*”, that only “His Name is definite”, and not me.

The closer we come to our own soul, the more doubts we will actually come across. In fact, the less doubts we have and the more sure we are that we know ourselves, the further we are from our own soul! We must go through a doubting process, constantly. Why?

The closer we are to our true self – which is our non-ego, our power to be nullified totally to the Creator, in which there is no sense of “I” whatsoever – the more we will have to get rid of our various doubts. The only way we can do this is by experiencing the doubt and then dealing with it. The way we reach our true self is by removing all our doubts, more and more. The way to do this is through *emunah*. Whenever you come across a doubt, access your *emunah* and trust in Hashem that He is guiding you. As it is written, “*Follow me into the desert.*”

Not Sure, Yet Sure, At the Same Time

Amalek is also the source of the evil power of *leitzanus* (mockery), for they epitomize this trait of mocking holiness. Of Amalek it is written (Mishlei 21:24), “*Rebellious one, haughty one – a mocker is his name.*” What exactly is *leitzanus*?

The depth behind *leitzanus* is that when a person belittles holiness, he is essentially trying to break the rules. The limits of this world – contained in the Torah – are generally referred to as “*Yeish*”. The realm of the unlimited, [the *Ein Sof* of Hashem], is referred to as *Ayin*. But Amalek, who epitomizes *leitzanus*, is trying to mix the two; it is trying to pervert Creation, ignoring *Yeish* and instead trying to negate its rules into an evil distortion of *Ayin*.

When this concept applied to holiness, it is essentially *emunah*. Through *emunah*, we are able to transcend our limits and enter into the realm of the unlimited, the *Ein Sof* of Hashem. Our doubts hold us back from keeping our limits; when we have *emunah*, though, and we believe that the limits which the Torah has placed on us are good for us – when we believe in the truth of the limits that the Torah has placed on us – then we will be able to connect to our limits in the right way. But if we are doubting the limits which are placed on us, then what will happen? We will only want to connect to the *Ein Sof* of Hashem, ignoring the Torah’s rules and limits in the process [fooling ourselves], and this is evil.

We are supposed to be balanced between our limited and unlimited aspects. If we have *emunah*, then we believe both in the endlessness of Hashem, as well as in our limits that are placed on us. Through this, we are able to believe both in the unlimited and in the limited, simultaneously, and this is the proper balance. Our doubts, fueled by Amalek’s evil, will then cease.

Therefore, we have to totally be in doubt about our own understanding of things, all the time. This is a necessary process we have to go through in order to reveal our own *emunah*. If we think that there are some things we know for sure and some things we don’t for sure, then it’s a sign that we still haven’t yet accessed true *emunah*, and we are only having superficial, external *emunah*, and this shows in turn that one hasn’t gotten close enough yet to discovering his true essence.

Once a person connects to *emunah*, he will discover that he was what to be in doubt in, in just about anything he encounters. He will realize that he truly cannot be sure of anything, not even today’s date. Who says that the date on the calendar is the right day today – maybe the printers made a mistake! Maybe even all the calendars in the world were printed wrong, and they are all the wrong date! Do you think that’s illogical? Who says it’s really illogical to think so? And who made the dates in the calendar...?

So there is nothing in Creation that you can be sure about. You should be skeptical about everything; you have no way of knowing for sure anything you come across. Reveal forth your power of doubt, and see that you have what to be in doubt in just about anything in the world.

However, you can only do this if you're connected to *emunah*. With *emunah*, you accomplish two seeming contradictions at once: On one hand, you doubt yourself entirely, and on the other hand, you have total and complete faith in the Creator, and therefore, there are no doubts.

We are a paradox. On one hand, we must doubt everything. On the other hand, we shouldn't be doubtful about a single thing! It seems that this is a contradiction, but when we have *emunah*, we will be able to handle the contradiction. We will be able to believe in the fact that we have our limits, which makes us doubt everything; and we will be able to believe in the realm of the unlimited, which is to be connected in total *emunah* with the Creator, Who has no doubts whatsoever.

"Follow Me Into the Desert"

It is written, "*Follow Me into the desert.*" This entire world is like one giant desert; we have no choice but to follow Hashem into that "desert". This is because we cannot be sure about anything in the world. Only Hashem is sure about everything, so we have no choice but to follow Him. If we do that, then we can be assured about things.

If we believe that Hashem is running the world and that He is running it well, we will have no fear and no doubts. The world, indeed, is a place full of fear and doubt. Our fears and doubts exist so that we can uncover *emunah* through them. The more we mature spiritually, the more doubts we will actually encounter, and we can keep doing this until we eventually reach a situation of 100% doubt – in which we will have no choice but to totally nullify ourselves to Hashem. That's the whole point!

Repairing the Evil In The World

In this way, we are able to transform the essence of evil in the world into good [a concept that the Baal Shem Tov introduced]. Even evil and falsity can be good; how?? It is when we realize that we must stay within our limits and rules of the Torah and not bypass them, in spite of the fact that we know that we have an unlimited aspect to us. In this way, evil\doubts\falsity serves a catalyst to help us hold onto our *emunah*, enabling us to accept that we must live a paradoxical kind of existence.

How We Are Limited and Unlimited At The Same Time

Our soul can connect to the unlimited, to the *Ein Sof* of Hashem. But in our actual behavior, in our physical existence, we must realize that we are bound to certain limits of the Torah and therefore not attempt to break those limits. It is the only the inner world within us, the world of our soul, which can be used to connect to the sphere of the unlimited, to the endlessness of Hashem. But since we have an outer and physical existence to ourselves as well, we must realize that, and therefore at the same time we have to keep to the rules and limits placed on mankind.

Moshiach's Revelation: How Evil Became Good

When Moshiach comes, he will reveal a secret. We know simply that the purpose of Moshiach is to come and erase all the evil in the world. But let us explain the depth behind this matter.

Moshiach will reveal the "spirit of impurity" that is in the world (see *Zecharyah* 13:2). Impurity is none other than Amalek; why is Amalek called "impurity"? Amalek is the perspective in a person in which he views his essence as being contaminated, due to his sins. This root evil perspective is that a person forgets that he is in essence a *cheilek eloka mimaal*, a "portion of G-d from Above", and instead views himself as an impure essence.

What is the root of Amalek's perspective? It is because Amalek "met" us along our travels, and this defines its evil: "*met*" in Hebrew means *mikreh*, which hints to the perspective in a person in which he

feels that things are just “happenstance.” When a person believes in coincidences, that things just “happen”... this evil perspective is essentially Amalek’s impurity gaining its hold. But when a person believes that there is no such thing as *mikreh*\happenstance\coincidences – because everything is a result from Hashem, even what appears to be just “*mikreh*” – he then achieves the true connection with the Creator.

This is essentially the secret behind what Moshiach will reveal: the truth of *Ain Od Milvado*, “There is Nothing Besides For Hashem” – and since there is nothing besides for Hashem, even evil is somehow a *cheilek eloka mimaal* (a piece of G-d from Above). That is how Moshiach will come and cleanse the world from evil – he will show us all this revelation, that since evil is also part of Hashem’s plan, it is also good, in the long run of things.

Of course, *chas v’shalom* should one take this understanding to an extreme and think that it’s therefore okay to connect to evil, since in the future it will be revealed that evil can be good. G-d forbid! As long as the redemption hasn’t actually yet come to the world, it is the will of Hashem that we refrain from connecting to evil, and we have to recognize our rules. It is just that after Moshiach comes, there will be no more difference between the limited and the unlimited, and thus it is only then that we won’t differentiate between good and evil.

Therefore, the depth of Moshiach’s purpose is not just to return evil to good, as we simply understand based on *sefarim hakedoshim*. The depth is that he will reveal how even evil is a “piece of Hashem,” since evil is ultimately part of Hashem’s plan.[\[2\]](#)

The Practical Outcome Of This: Living With Deep Emunah

To make these matters into a practical avodah for us that we can implement, this is what we can do.

When a doubtful kind of thought enters you, you can use this as an opportunity to return the doubt to its source, which is good. Remember Who created this doubtful thought which entered you. It was Hashem Himself who allowed such a thought to enter your mind.

The same goes for the rest of your senses. Whenever you see or hear something, or whenever you use any of your five senses, ask yourself: “Who is helping me see? Who is helping me hear?” Remind yourself that Hashem is enabling your very senses. In this way, you will see G-dliness in everything.[\[3\]](#)

There is nothing which doesn’t involve Hashem. Everything in reality is a part of Hashem. One of the major fundamentals that the Baal Shem Tov taught was, “G-dliness is everything, and everything is G-dliness.” Without getting into the difference between the first half of the statement and the second half of the statement, suffice it to say that we must all know that everything in Creation is really G-dliness. Along with this, we also believe in the fact that we have certain limits that we must keep to.

This is the secret to having true *emunah*.

It is our avodah to first realize the reality of Creation, which is that everything, in essence, is G-dliness. We need to realize the truth of the statement of Chazal, “There is no place that is empty from Him.” This applies as well even to the evil traits that exist within mankind, even the concept of falsity. It is not only every Jewish soul which will return to Hashem in the long run[\[4\]](#), but even evil itself will get returned to Hashem one day and integrate with Him.

Not only will evil simply “return” to its source in the future, but even more so, the truth about reality will be revealed, and we will be able to see how everything, even evil, is a true Creation of Hashem. This is the depth behind “*Ain Od Milvado*” – there is nothing besides for Hashem [because evil will

eventually become integrated with Hashem].

[1] As we learn in Tractate Makkos.

[2] Editor's Note: Elsewhere, (in this sefer, as well as in Bilvavi Vol. V: *Mili D'Avodah*), the Rav writes that this understanding can be reached on Purim, as this is the meaning of "*Ad d'lo yoda*", to not know the difference between Mordechai and Haman – in other words, to not know the difference between good and evil, which is the perspective that will be revealed in the future.

[3] Editor's Note: This is a practical way for one to work on the avodah stated by the Baal Shem Tov, that a person has to learn how to see the *nitzotz eloki* (G-dly spark) in everything there is.

[4] See *Shmuel II, 14:14*

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