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The Opposite of Bitachon is Fear, and the Opposite of Emunah is Doubt

Everything in creation has an opposite. For everything good, there is something evil that opposes it, equal in strength. For everything evil, there is something else good that can oppose it which is also equal to it in strength. Therefore, there is a rule that in order to understand anything, we need to learn about its opposite.

Right now we are discussing *Bitachon*. What is the opposite of *Bitachon*? The opposite of *Bitachon* is *pachad*, fear. If we understand the nature of fear, we can know everything about what it means to have *Bitachon*. If we understand what *Bitachon* is, then we can know that fear is whatever *Bitachon* isn't.

We have two similar terminologies: *emunah* (belief) and *bitachon* (trust). What is really the difference between them? The Ramban says that *emunah* is a **potential** ability to believe in Hashem, while *Bitachon* is this ability in its **active** form. When we have *Bitachon*, we are acting out our *emunah*. The opposite of *emunah* is *safek* (doubt), while the opposite of *Bitachon*, as we said, is *pachad* (fear).

When You're Sure There Is Danger: Use Bitachon

Now, what is the difference between a fear and a doubt? When a person is afraid, he is he afraid of *definite* danger, not a possible danger. When a person has *Bitachon*, he trusts that Hashem will definitely save him from this seemingly "definite" danger. The opposite of *Bitachon* is fear, which is when a person is afraid and he thinks that danger will definitely come.

Bitachon thus solves our definite fears. The clearer the danger is, the more fear a person has; the less we see the danger - due to *Bitachon* - the less we will feel the fear.

The Hebrew word *pachad* comes from the word *chad*, which means to sharpen, like we find by the words of Torah, that they should be *mehudadin b'picha*, "sharpened in your mouth." In other words, there is only reason to have fear when the danger is clear and definite; when a person feels sure of the danger, now is the time to use *Bitachon*. *Bitachon* enables a person to believe in a definite source - Hashem, who can take away the "definite" danger.

But what solves doubt? What should a person do if he is afraid of the unknown?

When You're Not Sure If There's Danger: Use Emunah

Doubt is solved through *emunah*.

In today's times, there is much doubt in the world; this comes from the impurity of Amalek, whose very essence is to induce doubt. In the future, when Amalek will be destroyed and there will be no more doubt, we will have the perfect *Bitachon*, because when doubt is removed, we can then truly have *Bitachon*.

Thus, when we remove our doubts, we reveal our *emunah*. When we have no fear of danger that seems close, we reveal our *bitachon*.

Two kinds of good fear

There is a kind of fear we find, however, which is holy.

It is written, "*Praiseworthy is the person who is always afraid.*" The *Gemara* says that this is either referring to fear about forgetting one's Torah learning, or to be afraid of sinning. When a person is afraid of forgetting his learning, or he is afraid of sin, these fears are good for him. They are holy and constructive.

Sin causes two negative emotions: sadness, and fear. Sadness is understandably caused by sins, by why should sin cause fear? We do not mean the fear from punishment; we are referring to the fear of sin itself. Why is this fear good?

It is written (Yeshayahu 33:14), "*And sinners were afraid in Zion.*" Why only in Zion (Jerusalem) was there fear of sin? It is because only in Zion was there a revelation of the *Shechinah*. The meaning of this is that when there is "revelation", there can be fear. A fear of sin shows that there is a "revelation" of the *Shechinah* in a person.

Unhealthy fears (that are not fear of sin, or those that do not have to do with our Torah learning) are detrimental, because they distance a person from feeling his oneness with Hashem.

By contrast, having fear about forgetting our Torah learning brings us closer to the oneness of Hashem, because we "sharpen" our learning. Sharpening means *mechudadin* in Hebrew, which comes from the word *chad*, "one", alluding to the source of oneness – Hashem. When a person is afraid over this, his fear is that he is afraid of being distanced from the oneness of Hashem, and such a fear is holy and praised by our Sages.

When a person is afraid of others looking at him

Some people develop a self-conscious fear that maybe others are staring at them. What is the root of this fear?

It is really because the person feels distanced from the "oneness" of Hashem. Therefore, all he will feel is his own "oneness", so he feels alone and by himself, and this causes him to be afraid that others are staring at him. If he would feel closer to Hashem, he would only feel the oneness of Hashem, and then he wouldn't feel alone – he would feel the "oneness" of Hashem, instead of his own insecure "oneness".

Fear of the Unknown

The *Gemara* also relates that there are many fears which people have which they don't know where the fears come from. When a person feels afraid and he doesn't even know why he is afraid, that itself increases his fear. This is because usually a person feels afraid when he senses definite danger; when

a person senses danger even though he's not sure of danger, it makes him even more afraid. He's agitating inside: "Why am I afraid, if I'm not supposed to be?"

When a person is afraid and he doesn't know why, he has both fear and doubt. This is a fear that comes from doubt, and the doubt feeds the fear. This is a worse kind of fear, because it's the outcome of a lack of both *Emunah* and *Bitachon* at once.

Such fear is the kind of fear that Amalek induced into our people, and it represents all the impurity of Amalek. Fear of the unknown is the worst kind of fear - it is the antithesis of both *Emunah* and *Bitachon* together, and it is Amalek's very strength of evil.

The Difference Between Healthy Fears and Unhealthy Fears

We have begun to mention the holy kind of fear, which is a healthy fear, and we can use this holy fear to counter the fears that are fueled on by Amalek's evil.

Holy fear is called "*Pachad Yitzchok*" - the "fear of Yitzchok". What is this type of fear, and why is it holy?

The word *pachad* (fear) comes from the word *chad* (one). This shows us that unhealthy kinds of fears come from when a person feels that he is "one" - in other words, he feels all alone, with no Hashem in his life.

A person is afraid when he feels like he is "one" and all by himself, because he is distanced from Hashem, who is "*Echad*" - the true "One." When a person doesn't feel the Oneness of Hashem, he is left with his own oneness, so to speak; thus he feels alone, and he might even become afraid of his own self.

What is the solution for this fear? The problem here is that the person feels that he is "one" and all alone. Therefore, the solution is to go in the opposite direction - to feel "two". Let us explain what we mean.

The holy kind of fear is based upon being afraid of future spiritual failures. This is *pachad d'kedushah* - a holy kind of fear, which was the fear that Yitzchok Avinu had. Yitzchok really had fear that he wouldn't match up to the greatness of his father, Avrohom. He was afraid of his future; he was afraid that because he is the "second" in line, he might not fulfill his duties properly and live up to his father Avraham. He was afraid of a situation of "two" - that he will be compared to Avraham and not live up to his great father.

In other words, holy fear is to fear that one will not grow spiritually, that he will not fulfill his life's mission. This is called fearing a situation of "two", alluding to how Yitzchok was afraid, that the fact that he is second to come after Avraham automatically compares him to his father's level; that he was afraid that he won't live up to the level expected of him.

By contrast, unhealthy and unholy kinds of fear are just temporary fears of the present moment, not of future spiritual failure; in other words, when a person is afraid of the present moment, he is just being afraid of his own oneness - he's afraid of his own self.

How a person can know if his fears are healthy or not

How can a person know if his fear is justified or not? The way to know this is as follows.

It is written, "*Praiseworthy is the person who is always afraid,*" and the Sages say that this is referring

to one who is afraid when it comes to his Torah learning, or when one is afraid of sinning. Why does the possuk say that praiseworthy fear is “always”? What is the meaning of this?

From here we learn that the right kind of fear of the future to have is only when it is consistent. If a person is feeling a **constant** fear of future spiritual failure, like when he is afraid of sinning, or he is afraid when it comes to his Torah learning – he is afraid of the **future**, and thus he is constantly afraid. This is the **healthy** kind of fear to have.

But if a person is only sometimes seized with a fear, he fears the **present** moment; his fears are just happenstance, and that is a sign that his fears are not holy. Let us explain what we mean.

Our unhealthy fears are never really a constant fear – they are just fearful moments that seize us here and there. But when a fear is holy, such as a fear that has to do with one’s learning or because one is afraid he will sin, his fear is constant. The consistency of the fear shows that it has a true source, and such fear is holy.

(To summarize: healthy fear is fear of the future, while unhealthy fear is fear of the present moment. Healthy fear is a constant fear of the future. When a person fears spiritual failure of the future, his fear is *pachad d’kedushah*, just like Yitzchok Avinu was afraid of the future. Fear is unhealthy when it is only temporary, because such a fear is a fear of the present, not of the future).

Another note is that *Bitachon* is the opposite of the word *bo chet*, “sin comes”. When a person sins, he loses his *Bitachon*, because sins cause fear, which doesn’t allow for *Bitachon*.

Fear of being alone

There are people who are afraid of even themselves. This is why we can find people who are afraid to be alone even for a moment. Why are people afraid to be alone, and why are these people afraid of their own self?

It comes from an unhealthy soul. It is not only delusional people who are afraid of themselves; anyone whose soul isn’t healthy fears himself, and he thus fears being alone. Such a person’s life is not a life. This is one of the curses that comes along with fear – it causes a person to fear his own self. A person who fears himself doesn’t see himself as connected to Hashem; he sees himself as a separate entity. He is far from the “oneness” of Hashem.

Until now we spoke of the higher kind of *Bitachon*, and its opposite, fear. When a person has fear, he is essentially feeling very far from Hashem; he needs to fix this by feeling the Oneness of Hashem.

There is a holy kind of fear which can return a person back to his source: to sense the Oneness of Hashem and be afraid of that. By fearing sin, and by fearing mistakes in our Torah learning, we utilize fear in the right way and fix the soul.

This is the true kind of fear which we should have; it is the inner layer to our fears, and all other fears we go through are the garments of this fear. By using the inner layer of our fears, *pachad d’kedushah*, we utilize our fears in a healthy way and for holy purposes, which can fix our soul.