

BILVAVI

**MY
HEART
ASKS**



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

MYSTERIES OF EMUNAH & BITACHON

VAYEITZEI 5783 · ISSUE 270

MYSTERIES OF EMUNAH & BITACHON

Q: It seems that the difference between emunah and bitachon is, that one's emunah can be sorely lacking and he has false beliefs, whereas bitachon is only when it comes to something that's true?

A: A person might also have *bitachon* in something that's false. "*Al tivtichu b'nedivim*" - "Do not trust the donors, in a son of man who cannot help." Everything in creation is mixed with good and bad. There are good beliefs and false beliefs, and with *bitachon* as well it is possible for a person to trust or be confident in a false source.

Q: How can it be that a person has emunah in one area but he has no emunah in a different area? Once he believes that Hashem is in charge, what's holding him back from having complete emunah in all areas of life?

A: *Emunah* is a light which one receives, and this light spreads from higher areas of the soul to lower areas of the soul. *Emunah* itself is an undivided light at its source, but the zenith of its light is not divided equally in all areas of the soul. Just as there are 248 limbs in the body, there are limbs in the soul, and not all of them are equally fixed and purified from all the damage of sins and destructive character. Some parts are more repaired and some parts are less repaired. The limbs of the soul that are more repaired better tools or *emunah*, since these parts of the soul are more purified. But the parts of the soul that are far from being repaired are not able to receive the light of *emunah*, so *emunah* can't affect those unrefined parts. This is the root of why a person will have *emunah* in certain areas while he has no *emunah* when it comes to other areas.

Q: Emunah is in the heart, so why does emunah get affected by the other parts of the soul?

A: The heart is the source of all life for the soul, the main limb of the soul is the heart, and the heart extends to all other limbs of the soul and builds the soul – and as an indicator of this,

when a person is afraid he feels it in his heart, because fear begins in the heart and spreads to the rest of the body.

Q: In many cases a person faces terrifying danger and he is afraid, yet he accepts his fears and he is able to stay balanced, and his fears don't impede on him. How he is he able to do this?

A: Being at peace with the fear can only be possible if it's not a fear about something life-endangering. But if it's a threat to one's life, no one can be at peace with such a fear. When one faces a danger to his very life and the fear is continuing, it will certainly steal a person's energy. Even though the danger is certain, the fear becomes hidden and he stops being bothered by the fear. It can be compared to a person who is about to get robbed from all his money. He's very afraid. But if his money has already been taken from him, he's not so afraid of being robbed because there's nothing left for him to lose. Another example is that if a soldier in the army is getting closer to an enemy who is a lot stronger than him, he may not be that afraid of the enemy – because it is so certain that he will die, and that causes him to despair over remaining alive, so he has lost his will to save his life. He is sort of dead – he knows he's going to die anyway so he feels like he has nothing to lose by endangering himself, and therefore he doesn't feel fear of the enemy anymore. That is why he is able to go on fighting with all his energy.

Q: What happens when a person's fears are being caused by his imagination?

A: Whenever there is fear, there is certainly a sharp sense of impending danger. It may be that he isn't conscious of the source of the fear, and therefore he is afraid even though he does not consciously sense any impending danger.

Q: Is it ever legitimate to be afraid when the fear is only coming from one's imagination?

A: In one's imagination, one imagines that there is certainly impending danger coming. The imagination creates the fear. When one is consciously afraid, he may not even be aware of the reason why he's afraid, because his imagination can cause him to forget. But when a person is afraid and he doesn't know why he's afraid, when he's afraid because he's in doubt about something, the fear may be located in his subconscious, or above his conscious (in his mazal),

or in his imagination. But the common denominator will always be, that he is afraid of a sharp sense of impending danger.

Q: If a person is close to Hashem, is he immune to fear?

A: If a person is close to Hashem, he doesn't have harmful fear. He isn't afraid of something illogical. He will only be afraid for a holy cause. He is afraid of becoming distanced from his closeness with Hashem.

Q: What is the antidote for being afraid as a result of one's sins?

A: The remedy is to "return to Tziyon" – to do *teshuvah*, and fix the aveiros he did.

Q: If Yitzchok Avinu's trait was yirah (fear of Hashem) does that mean Avraham wasn't as afraid of Hashem as Yitzchok was?

A: Certainly all the *tzaddikim* perfected every area. But each *tzaddikim* had one specific area in which he became unique in. Avraham reached unparalleled love for Hashem, so this became his personifying trait – as opposed to the trait of fearing Hashem.

Q: Why is a child scared to be alone?

A: The external reason for this is because he is afraid of what might happen to him when he's alone. But the deeper reason is because a person has a nature to be afraid of being alone, ever since man became an additional existence and he is not one with those who are greater than him.

Q: The Rav explained that good, constructive fear is when a person is "constantly afraid from within" about something holy. How can this be good? Doesn't it take him out of his serenity?

A: Constructive fear is good only when it's coupled and balanced with other abilities of the soul. Fear doesn't have to take a person out of his serenity. Fear is actually needed so that it can restrain a person from going overboard with his joy. Chazal said, "*Rejoice amidst trembling*" – in the place of joy, there should be trembling." Fear doesn't have to take away from joy – rather,

fear is needed in order to restrain joy and limit it properly. When a person is afraid when he shouldn't be, he cannot be happy then, because his fear doesn't allow him to be serene and darkens his joy. But when a person is afraid in a holy manner – when he is afraid of being distanced from Hashem – then he has One Source of why he's afraid, and that One Source will enable him to have both joy and fear in their proper balance. Fear and joy can aid each other instead of extinguishing the other, enabling a person to remain serene.

Q: The Rav explained that fear of Hashem enables a person to nullify his existence and integrate himself with Hashem. It seems from this that fear of Hashem brings us closer to Hashem than love of Hashem. But isn't it the more accepted view that love for Hashem is better than being afraid of Him and that it is better to love Him than to fear Him? (Serving Hashem out of love is like a father-child relationship with Hashem, which is closer, than serving Him out of fear, which is like a master-servant with Hashem?)

A: Raboseinu discussed which is more prominent – fearing Hashem or loving Hashem. Indeed, the accepted view is that love of Hashem is more prominent than fear of Hashem. However, the *Maharal* explains how fear of Hashem can be greater than loving Hashem, because love is about two sides who love each other, but each of them considers themselves to be their own entity. But fear causes a person to nullify himself to the one he's afraid of. This is the “fear of Yitzchok” which brings a person to nullify his sense of self and integrate himself in the true Existence, Hashem. So when a person is afraid of Hashem, there is a way to understand how this makes him even closer to Hashem than when he loves Hashem, because by being afraid of Hashem he becomes one with Hashem, recognizing only Hashem as the One true Existence.

Q: If a person sins, this creates fears and he can't have bitachon. But we see that people do aveiros yet they still have bitachon, at least on some level. How are they able to have bitachon if they do aveiros?

A: If a person is mostly full of good deeds but he has committed a few small *aveiros*, this will darken his soul a bit, but the parts of his soul which haven't been darkened are able to have

emunah and *bitachon*. That is even a sinner is able to have feelings of *bitachon*. But he can never have complete *bitachon* as long as the darkness of his unfixed *aveiros* continue to lurk in his soul and he hasn't yet purified himself from the effects of the *aveiros*.

Q: *The Alshich's view is that any person in any situation can have total bitachon and get whatever he wishes from Hashem. Will that also apply to a person who does aveiros – if he has total bitachon, can he get anything he wishes (as long as he has bitachon to get it)?*

A: As long as a person has *aveiros* that he hasn't yet purified himself from, he cannot have total *bitachon*. If a person did *aveiros*, he can't fulfill the *Alshich's* view on *bitachon* – unless he does total *teshuvah*. However – this doesn't mean that he needs to know all the aspects of doing *teshuvah* before he has total *bitachon* in Hashem. **As long as he intensifies his *bitachon* in Hashem, that, itself, is his *teshuvah*.**

Q: *If a person has bitachon but he didn't do complete teshuvah – he doesn't regret what he did, didn't confess it, and didn't resolve not to do it again – how can his teshuvah be accepted and how can he have bitachon....?*

A: There are 2 aspects – the *mitzvah* to do *teshuvah*, and the act of *teshuvah* itself. In order to stop being a *rasha* and to become a total *tzaddik*, one needs to do the act of *teshuvah* itself. He can do this just by having regret and resolving in his heart that he doesn't want to sin again. (Not confessing the sin doesn't invalidate his *teshuvah*. Confessing the sin is part of the *mitzvah* to do *teshuvah*, but if he didn't confess yet, then although his *mitzvah* of doing *teshuvah* is lacking, his *teshuvah* can still be counted as *teshuvah* even if he didn't confess his sin. This is clarified by the Poskim, based on *Gemara Kiddushin 49b*: “If a person betroths a woman and says “You are betrothed to me, on condition that I am a *tzaddik*”, even if he is a totally wicked person, she is betrothed to him, because maybe he thought of doing *teshuvah* when he said it.”

Q: *It seems there are wicked people who regularly commit aveiros and even as they are in the midst of doing aveiros they have bitachon in Hashem. For example, Chazal said that a robber davens to Hashem that he should succeed in robbing the house.*

A: A robber has no *bitachon*. He is afraid that he will be caught and punished, so he davens to Hashem that he should be saved from punishment.

Q: *But we know certain people who are far from being pure, they do a lot of aveiros, yet they also seem to show bitachon in Hashem and they aren't afraid. How can this be? How are they able to be on such a high level of bitachon if their souls are so unrefined?*

A: Usually, a person is not black-or-white. He is not a total *rasha* or a total *tzaddik*. He is not totally pure or totally dirty. There are many parts to the soul. Some parts can be totally pure, some parts are a bit dirty, and some parts are ruined. In the dirtied parts, a person sometimes sins. In the ruined parts, a person sins completely. There are people who are not *tzaddikim* – to put it mildly – yet they can have certain areas in which they totally pure in. Usually, these people will even be purer in certain areas than their peers who are on a similar level to them. **And sometimes, these people can even be purer in certain areas than even the biggest *tzaddikim* of the generation. This unique phenomenon is due to previous lifetimes in which they already repaired or purified certain aspects of their character,** so they are born in their current lifetime with these aspects already repaired. That pure aspect of their character may be the source of impressive levels of *emunah* and *bitachon* that they can show when it comes to certain areas.



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