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WEEKLY PARSHA
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THE OPPOSITE OF BITACHON IS FEAR - 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 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 mechudadin 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.

BITACHON IN SPITE OF THE RAV'S WARNING

QUESTION: The Rav said that if the generation doesn't change, either it will have to end with the coming of Mashiach, or the generation will meet the same end as the Holocaust, chas v'shalom. Recently the Rav said that there is still a lot of room to suspect that it's able to happen, chas v'shalom. In my humble opinion, this is the most frightening thing the Rav has ever said. With such a possibility, how am I supposed to have emunah and bitachon in Hashem and serve Hashem b'simchah (*with joy*) and have a settled mind when I learn? I am in a daze from these words because I feel the terror whenever I think about these words and I am unable to concentrate on anything whenever I'm thinking of it, and I think about it often. And it seems the generation is heading more and more towards this possibility of actual destruction, chas v'shalom, due to the generally abysmal state of our ruchniyus today. So am I asking a simple question: How is it possible for a person not to go crazy from thinking of such a possibility?? How can I not fall into despair over everything from this??

ANSWER: Feel Hashem's love for you, and trust in Him that everything He does is good.

ESCAPING CHEVLEI MASHIACH & DOING TESHUVAH [#18434]

QUESTION: 1) Why do we need to live in Eretz Yisrael in order to be there for Mashiach? Won't Mashiach gather all Jews from all over the world when he arrives?

ANSWER: Firstly, the suffering of chevlei Mashiach is lesser for those who are already found in Eretz Yisrael by the arrival of Mashiach. On a deeper level, it is because the light of Mashiach first shines in Eretz Yisrael, and therefore anyone found in Eretz Yisrael at Mashiach's arrival are the first to receive his light.

QUESTION: 2) Right now there's a lockdown in Eretz Yisrael and all the airports

are closed, so there is no way for anyone in chutz l'aretz to make aliyah to Eretz Yisrael at this time. Does that mean that Jews living in chutz l'aretz should be more afraid of chevlei Mashiach?

ANSWER: It is a sign to awaken all those living in chutz l'aretz to move to Eretz Yisrael, because we don't know each day will bring. Eretz Yisrael is the "land where the eyes of Hashem are on", and therefore it is always safer to be in Eretz Yisrael.

QUESTION: 3) How do we do teshuvah when we get ready for the Geulah? Are we supposed to be davening, crying, making cheshbon hanefesh, and full of fear of what might happen in chevlei Mashiach? Or should we instead be rejoicing and dancing, with emunah that the yeshuah is underway, just as Mordechai knew that the decree of destruction against Jewry wouldn't happen because he had total bitachon that Hashem would bring a Geulah to their situation?

ANSWER: First a person needs to do teshuvah out of fear of Hashem, and after that he should bring joy into doing teshuvah. First a person needs to do teshuvah (*and all that it entails*), and after that one can rejoice with simchah.

READING THE NEWS

QUESTION: What's wrong with reading the news? Don't we have a responsibility to know what's going on? If I'm not a Gadol and I'm just an average layman, wouldn't it be irresponsible for me not to read the news? Or should I just have bitachon and let Hashem run the world and I just need to focus on my needs, my family's needs, and my neighbors' needs?

ANSWER: You should only get general information without reading into the details – for example, just read the headlines and headers. Unless you have a need to read about a specific topic that's necessary for you need to know about. And even then, don't believe everything you read, and instead you should merely suspect that what you are reading may be true.