

Nourishment for the Neshama

<http://lvracha.com>

Monday, October 22, 2007

Meaning of Trust Class 1 by Rebbetzin Heller

We are going to begin a topic of how to gain trust in Hashem. For most people, trust is very elusive. It is hard for us to trust ourselves, harder to trust other people, and hardest of all to trust Hashem. We have to trust. None of us is an island, none of us could survive on our own, and Hashem imbued us with the need to trust. What we are going to be doing in these shiurim is learning how and under what circumstances trust is valid, what it really means, how it relates to faith and how to make it our own.

We are going to be approaching this through several different authors. We are going to be dealing with first Orcha Tzaddikim, then Chovos HaLevovos, then the Chazon Ish and finally the Maharal. Beginning with the beginning then we are up to Shaare HaSimcha.

Simcha is a midda that comes to a person because he is tranquil in his heart and nothing feels like a tragic or unfortunate occasion. A person whose achieved their desires, and nothing has happened to make him sad, that person will always be happy and his face will be full of light and his countenance will shine and his body is healthy, and old age doesn't come to him quickly. I want to analyze what we just read with you.

The first thing that he tells us is that simcha is a midda, not a response to outside events. It is a midda, a trait of the soul. The same way with other middos, chesed, emes, a midda can be developed. Some midda are inborn, some people have a stronger desire to do chesed from the very beginning...you see babies that smile back at you just wanting to see you smile, they want to see you happy. Not everyone has chesed to the same degree as everybody else. Some people have to develop it. Not everyone has a sense of truth to the same degree as everybody else, and not everyone has simcha the way everybody else does. It is a midda and it can be developed.

So what he says is that this midda isn't a consequence of either fun or pleasure, which are two things that we confuse with simcha. Think of fun. Now I like fun so I can't push myself too hard on that one. Whatever it is that you like you like...swimming, sports, music, whatever it is that you like. If it is real fun, it takes you out of your own reality. Swimming in the baby pool is not fun if you are an adult. There is no challenge there. If you like sports, competing in a game of roly poly with a four year old loses something after a short while because there is no adrenaline flowing. The same holds true for other pleasures. Seeing a movie where the plot is transparent and the characters are cardboard so that you are in your own reality is not as interesting as seeing a movie that is compelling. Of course a frum movie we are talking about. That being the case, fun is not simcha because it makes you LEAVE your reality. It is not a midda.

Another thing that people confuse with simcha is pleasure. There are all things we enjoy. I am not now talking about fun which has a certain stream of escapism to it, but pleasure...eating, having a down comforter on a cold day in the winter, those things don't affect you essentially, they are external to you. What simcha is –it is feeling great tranquility regardless of what is happening. A person who has that kind of tranquility, who doesn't feel that their desires have not been fulfilled, what is happening IS their desire, there are signs of it. Now I am sure you have met people who say with a scowl on their face, I am very happy. I am a very joyous person. Simcha looks like what it is. If a person has simcha, they look happy, it is what it looks like. Having said that I want to share with you how I learned that simcha is not a response to the outside.

When I was 14, I was in Bais Yaakov, my teacher Rabbi Bedlefsky, a tzaddik of a person, taught us halacha, a very ehrlich person, a person of enormous sincerity, he wanted to whip us into shape spiritually We were a mess, we were very vacant, lots of nonsense, lots of 14 year old nonsense. So in order to make us into Bnos Aliya, he wanted us to get in touch with our spiritual side, so he made a chesed club, chevra chesed. Now today, in all seminaries, they have Monday afternoons where the girls are sent out to do chesed. There is someone in charge of it who matches the girls and her abilities with what needs to be done. That is not

how they did it in the old days. He himself was a bale chesed, he did many acts of kindness for people, so he sent us to do the same. No coordination, no preparation, no liaison, didn't always match. In my chevra chesed days he sent me and my friend Rivky to a place that was really called Brooklyn Chronic Disease Hospital, formerly Brooklyn Home for Incurables. That is what it said on the gate. They had a big outdoor yard and the people on nice days would be taken out to the yard and they would be sitting in wheelchairs or if there were people who could not sit there were devices that held them at sort of a three quarter angle and we went with no preparation, we had no idea what we should do with these people, what we should say to them, whether they would want us there or not, but we decided to try. So we figured we should go over and say hello. So we went over and said hello. Now there were two terrible things about these people in terms of what their lives seemed to be. One was that they were there on a one way ticket and the other is that no one there could possibly be very physically comfortable. So we expected the majority of people to be angry and bitter. What we discovered that within the context of Brooklyn, they were completely normal. Around 10% were nasty and bitter, around 10% were delightful and self-transcendant. There was a woman that we would visit who became our confidant, she was so ill that she wasn't even down in the yard, she was in one of the rooms, she was attached to all sorts of devices so she could not be moved. But she was so uplifting and optimistic. Hello girls! Thank you for coming. Oh I love when you read me Readers Digest it is my greatest pleasure. Come sit with me, and what do like and what do you do? We could tell her our stuff! She was completely safe emotionally. She was the one who we could tell I cheated on the test and I think the teacher knows and I will be in big trouble. Or, and after five dates, after all of that, he said he is not interested. And she would say you'll marry someone better, you deserve someone who will cherish you, not someone who is in doubt about a wonderful girl like you. That sort of thing. So 10% like her, 10% awful, and the 80% were standard Brooklyn. That doesn't mean they were happy, just hey, hello, that sort of thing. So it is not the outside. It is an attitude towards the outside. And as we will see, this attitude towards the outside comes from trust in Hashem. Let's read further.

A happy heart gives forth goodness in expression, a person who is happy will laugh easily. Not that an intelligent person should be frivolous or go to far, but the kind of laughter that will characterize a person who is b'simcha, won't take you there. Now we are going to skip some of it because he discusses all the things that are simcha's negative side, the escapism, the frivolity, all of the bad stuff, so we are not going there, but we are going to talk about where the simcha will take us in the positive.

A person who believes in Hashem with a strong heart and trusts Him with a strong trust, that trust will bring a person not to be afraid of any bad thing. That person will never enslave themselves to any person to appease them. And he won't invest his hopes in a person. And he will never agree with people when agreeing with them is in opposition to serving Hashem. And their matters don't scare him, and he won't be afraid of their quarrels. The more a person trusts Hashem, the less fear he has of anything else in the world. What are we afraid of? He doesn't just say bad things that could happen. But we are afraid of opposition, we are afraid of rejection, we are afraid of a lot of things. Why won't we fear other things if we trust Hashem? Let's start simple. The simplest idea is that greater fear always eclipses smaller fear. Let me illustrate that.

I will assume that for many of you the following would be a nightmare. Let's say you get up in the middle of the night and you step on something and you feel a liquidy substance and a crunch and you realize you stepped on something alive and big. How many of you can picture being petrified..you stepped on a mouse...horrible! Could you scream? I could scream. But as you are screaming, you notice your bedroom door is open and you know you closed your bedroom door and you locked your outside door. Someone is in the house. Do you remember the mouse any more? No. So you don't know what to do, so you draw your robe around you and look in the other room and there is a man with a knife. What mouse? But as you stand there too frightened to even scream, you notice through the open outside door that a mushroom cloud is beginning to develop outside radiating. You don't even see the man anymore. What man?

Why am I telling you this horrific scenario? Bigger fear always eclipses smaller fear. The reason why we fear people and events is that we don't fear Hashem, we don't believe in His Mastery. We believe in His Mastery in our minds, but not in our hearts. Simcha is contingent on two things..Hashem's Mastery and His compassion. So if you believe that only Hashem has control, you are not going to be afraid of people and look at the other things that you are not going to do, you are not going to appease them, you are not going to be whomever they want you to be. You won't twist yourself into a pretzel-shape, you won't invest your hope in people who will invariably disappoint you because invariably only Hashem could do everything. You won't destroy yourself because of fear of rejection. He goes on.

And if you have to give them rebuke, you are not going to worry about their kovod. Why? Because you are not worried that your sense of self has to come from them, only from Hashem. Now he is going to take us

to ways of thinking that develop this sort of trust and from there, we are going to work on taking these ways of thinking to specific sorts of situations.

The first thing you must know is that Hashem has more compassion than any human could possibly have. So not only is Hashem the source of everything but He is compassionate. Let's say something happens in your life that you don't like. You don't like it. The first thing you have to realize is that things come only from Hashem. It can come through other people, but it only comes from Hashem. For many people that just changes the address for their embitterment and anger, so I am not angry at my mother or my boss or the shadcan, or at whomever, I am angry at Hashem. The second thing that you have to know is that not only does everything come from Hashem, but he is not caught up in reaction or limitation. He is only compassionate. He is not like a human being who does this but can't do that because of his own limitations and you suffer. He is not like a human who could only be here and not there. He also is not limited by His own fears or of rejection or whatever. Only compassion.

Third thing, Hashem is involved with you whether it is revealed or hidden, whether you can see His involvement or whether you can't see His involvement. It is there.

Let's say you deflect the anger away from other people and Hashem and you blame yourself. It is not Hashem it is me, I ruined my life. I should have said yes but I said no, I should have married this one but I married that one, I should have taken this career training course but I took the other one, I should have made aliya but I stayed in Holy Oak Ohio, whatever it is. You blame yourself. So listen to what he is saying. Even if you should have guarded yourself better, Hashem has mercy upon you and will still guard you. Hashem guards the fools. So if you close a door, which you could in life, Hashem will open another door. And if you walk through that other door, you will get where you want to go. This way of thinking is the way you have to train your mind to go whenever something happens that doesn't fit your existing plan. How would this work concretely?

There is a discussion from a Rav. A man came to him, he was totally distraught he was afraid he would do an act of violence against his own wife. What happened? He had a terrible marriage, the man has a terrible temper. He has been trying to get past his terrible temper with only limited success. He is controlling, he is angry, his wife wants out. He saw this as an insult, how dare she say that. She gets a court order and he is out of the house. He was afraid of where he would go next...he was out of his home, the product of all his hard work and money, she is not letting him in! Could this be from Hashem, she is going to poison the kids against him, he is going to end up divorcing her, he will have to pay her alimony, he will be tied to her even though she will be free of him, she will have to do nothing for him and he will have keep paying and paying..you got the picture? The Rav said to him this comes through your wife but it is from Hashem. There is compassion here. Let's look at your situation. There is compassion – what is compassion? If you have compassion for someone, you are giving them exactly what it is that they need. The word for compassion rachamim comes from the word rechem which means womb. The same way a baby in utero receives everything it needs, Hashem's compassion is to give people exactly what they need. You need to be thrown out of your home, he said, because you need to come to grips with the reality of where you are in life and fix it. Why did your wife throw you out? Because she is unhappy. The first thing you have to do is realize that your job as a husband is to make your wife happy. That is what you have control over. You are upset by her responses to you. Instead of looking at her responses to you, he said, you have an opportunity for tikkun, look at yourself. He thought the Rav would give him legal advice, how he could get out of the court's act against him. This is not what he expected, but he heard it. They made a plan together. First thing, what would she need to be happier? Send her money. Don't be in a hurry to back into the house. That is not your goal, your goal is being the kind of person who can live with your wife and children. He sent her money every month. He called the children every day. He spoke to them nicely about their mother. He sent her gifts. He softened her, he had to be patient, he knew it would take a year and he did it. And he became a changed person. He closed the door and Hashem opened another door and this happens every time we suffer a disappointment. Again, I want to review with you the thought process in what he is speaking about here.

1. Everything is from Hashem who is compassionate
2. Everything is to fix you, to make your life better
3. If you closed a door, Hashem will open another door, if you are willing to see that what is happening in your life is coming from a compassionate source.

All of the good that a person has ever gotten from their parents, from their siblings, from their relatives and friends, it comes through these people but it is from Hashem. The trust we have for the people we love really should go a step further. Now this doesn't mean don't love them, but don't let that be the end of the story. Let's say you have a good friend who is there whenever you need her, you call her and she is there for

you. She can only do that if Hashem gave her a mind and a heart and access and caused her to cross your path. The same holds true with parents, siblings. It is Hashem's providence that puts them in your path and their ability to give us what we need. No one can give what they don't have. Everything ultimately is from Hashem which doesn't mean don't be grateful to them. Be grateful to them because of their choice, because of their commitment, but what they have, comes from Hashem.

These people are Hashem's messengers, so what that means is that Hashem wanted you to have whatever they gave you, the closeness, the intimacy, the security, came through them but from Hashem. The third way of thinking...all of the things Hashem does comes from chesed, and not that we deserve it. Hashem doesn't give you any benefit in life because He needs you, it is just generosity and kindness. We tend to do bookkeeping...for some people it is conscious and for some it is sub-conscious. Here is how it sounds. I deserve better than this. I have been living a good life, I try to improve myself, I daven with kavannah, I give tzedakkah..I deserve better than this. Do people think this way? Yes they do. Let's look at it. You go to the store, you take a loaf of bread, pay the man, even. He needs your money and you need the bread. Hashem doesn't need you..He was doing just fine before you were on the horizon and He will cope without you also. He created you as a chesed out of generosity to give you the opportunity to build yourself into a person who could be a spark of eternity. He gave us Himself. The mitzvahs that we do give us what we could never acquire on our own – eternity, constancy, depth, joy.

Next. Everything has limits. Sometimes a person thinks as follows. Yes I believe that this is for my good, but I can't bear it. I believe it is for my good, I have no doubts that it is for my good, but I can't handle it. The reason why we say I can't handle it is because we assume that the way we feel this minute is the way we will feel a year from now, and ten years from now. Let me illustrate how this works. Imagine a 7 month old baby going to the doctor for an inoculation. He screams and cries and does not want it. In the end, the mother holds him down and he gets the injection. He did not want it, and if he could talk, he would have tried to explain to his mother that no one has small pox and that he doesn't need it. The baby can't understand that there is no small pox because of inoculations. The baby wants to go with his own experience, not with the mother's intellectual understanding. What happened here is that the baby knows his own experience but doesn't know where it goes. He is too shallow, he is a baby. Every experience we have in life has intrinsic purpose. The reason this is simplistic is because if it were possible to give the baby the inoculation without the suffering we would do it. But our possibilities are limited. Hashem's possibilities are not limited. Anything we have to experience we have to experience as it is. The suffering may be part of the tikkun inherently. Now a more sophisticated example.

Everything has a limit. My neighbor's father in law was in a concentration camp. Before he got there he suffered terribly. The week before that he lost his business, his family, his home, his freedom, his appearance, everything was gone in a week. It was the worst week a person could experience and survive. He got to the camp and he was assigned to a bunk house, three layers deep with three in each bed. He got up and found himself in bed with another man and a corpse. Just a week ago he was in his own bed, with sheets that match, with blankets, with his wife. This is where he is now. Something like that could drive a person mad. His bunk mate said don't say anything because if you tell them that he is dead they will put another person here. That was his greeting. The next day he and the other man were assigned work and it was work that had no meaning. They had to break rocks using sledge hammers. The other man was so embittered that with every hammer blow he would curse G-d. The hero of our story didn't correct him, he didn't give him mussar, he didn't see this man as someone who could hear, but he didn't curse G-d either.

Time passes, the liberation takes place. My neighbor was in mid-town with his father-in-law, who at this point was quite an old man, and he is holding onto his arm. He suddenly breaks away from him and begins crossing the street in the middle of midtown traffic. He sees another old man on the other side of the street and he says, Yankl is it you? He recognized him after 60 years. And he said, it is. So there is embracing, weeping, and then the questions. Where has your life taken you? After the war, I got to the US, I remarried, I had children and grandchildren, I did well financially (this man is one of the people who developed Monsey), and where has your life taken you? And Yankl said I did nothing. You know what I have done these last 60 years? Nothing. Never remarried, never had a real world job. And he is not the only survivor who could answer like that. This should tell you what the suffering in the camps were like. You would think that the man who made something of himself would have said, well why didn't you do anything? No, he understood him. It was the man who did nothing with himself who asked how did you start again, how did you do it? And he said I want to tell you something. When you were cursing G-d with every hammer blow I didn't say anything, maybe I should have, maybe it was wrong, I don't know. But you know what I was thinking? With every hammer blow I would look up to the sky and I would see the heavens and I would say Hodu Lashem Kitov, I will praise G-d because He is good. Humans are terrible, my life may be horrific at this moment but G-d is good and this is going to end. Evil doesn't endure. This is a challenge and a test, and I

am going to make it. And he did.

No person can add or subtract from what Hashem wants for you. If Hashem wants you to have little, no person can increase or lessen that amount that Hashem wants for you. And what should come later, nobody could make it come earlier, nor that which should come later to happen now. Everything is Hashem's decree and His Will.

The fifth way of thinking. It is knowing that Hashem sees your heart. What does that mean? You can go through the motions of trusting Hashem but not trust Him in your heart. And when you are doomed and you say, where is the simcha, the answer is it was never in you. For example, someone suffers, they lose their job, the perfect job, that they love. They are fired and not because of incompetence, but because their boss's sister in law needs a job. Could this happen in real life? Yes. So they will say things like, I know it is all l'tova, but like I really don't see why this had to happen..translate- I don't see that this is l'tova, I would like to see it, but I don't see it. You can't fool anyone. You have to move yourself emotionally. The way you do this is through imagery and this is why the bitachon stories are so important. Hashem knows if you have trust in Him, if your trust is full, if there is no deceit. A servant who is serving a human master can fool his master and make him think that he is serving him with a full heart even though he hates him. The master will do good to him because he thinks the servant loves him. But this can't happen with the Creator. He knows the inclinations in our hearts and our thoughts. He knows that which is higher, meaning that which we would like to be, and that which is lower, that which we really are, and the part of us that believes and the part of us that denies. And therefore we can't deceive Hashem. It means that if we are unhappy because our trust is not full, we have to try to change our trust, not just to change our vocabulary of trust. Rav Wolbe says that the way you move things from your mind to your heart is through imagery. The more you can affirm that Hashem is there for you, and this has to do – the Amshenever Rebbe said even say one blessing on food a day with joy – he doesn't say with kavannah- he says with joy, enjoy the grape, look at it, see its color, its texture, its smell, think about it. It is enough to make you love Hashem. But you have to have a tangible image.

Six – you can't say that you trust Hashem but you don't do what He tells you, it doesn't make sense. I trust You but I trust myself more? I trust you but I have to do things according to my judgment and not Yours? The acid proof of trust is when you want to do what Hashem wants of you. He doesn't do what Hashem warns us against doing. When you want Hashem to do what you want, if you make your will Hashem's will, if you want to flow with Hashem's will, you will find that your will becomes Hashem's will. What does that mean? It means as follows: let's go back to the person who lost her job, the job she loved. She could at that point instead of saying, oh I love being unemployed it is the best thing that has happened, which is just being dishonest, she can affirm what we said in the first idea, which is that there is compassion here, I am going to look for it. What should I be doing with this spare time, what could I become at this moment? Now the answers could be as varied as there are varied people in the world. But at that point, the person could say I am becoming who Hashem wants me to be at this moment, I am going with that. And at that point, Hashem will make it that you will realize that His will and your will are the same thing.

Negate your will before His will, don't be rigid, inflexible, and Hashem will cause other people's wills to be negated before you. But when a person trusts Hashem and does not do what He commands, he is a fool, an idiot. What hope is there for a flatterer, someone who thinks that he can fool Hashem by using the vocabulary of trust without living it, is Hashem going to listen to him? Look how we can be, you can have a person who is a thief, a murderer, who is an adulterer, who swears falsely, who worships idols, and he comes and he stands before Me in My house (meaning in the Bais HaMikdash).

I want to talk about hypocrisy for a minute because it is the great enemy of joy and trust. Let's start with the simple one, a thief. I am going to give you an example of a simple one that people like us could at least consider, not that we should or would actually do this. You buy an air ticket. Let's say you have never been to Israel. Now there are all sorts of ways of getting to Israel now a days for free. Birthright is one of them. As far as I know, the upper age limit in birthright is 26. and you are not that far from 26 and you are good at graphics, and they don't make you show your passport, they just make you show your birth certificate let's say. I don't know that this is the case. So you doctor it a little bit because you know, what is a year? Now that is not something you are going to do and I will tell you why. It requires too much work, it makes you face up to what you are doing as forgery. But let's say it is like this, that you are on the phone with the person. She fills out the form with you on the phone, Social security number, address,name, education. Then she says, date of birth. You give her your actual date of birth and she says you are over by two months, you know what, no one has to know you were born in October. You were born in August, just between you and me, and you want that trip. Why do you want the trip? You want the inspiration, you want to come closer to your roots, you want it for spiritual reasons. I am sure that there are some people who

would have no trouble saying, yes, whatever you want. Why? Because desperation is a real factor. If I don't do the wrong thing, I will never get what I want. Meaning you are unwilling to trust Hashem to decide what course you should take. Maybe you don't need to be there, maybe you need to be here. Maybe He will get you there some other way, maybe He won't. But you don't have to be desperate. Where He wants to take you is a better place than you will ever take yourself. There is no need for desperation. All theft that is done by people who want to trust Hashem is done out of perceived desperation. Let's go further.

You steal and you murder. I used to think because I read the newspapers that murder is more frequent than it actually is. I think it was in Newseek..the amount of murders by gunfire that take place in the US per day. I thought it would be like hundreds and hundreds. The average per day in the US was under 80. First surprise. Next surprise, I was sure that all of these murders by gunshots were about gang violence and drugs. NO! The vast majority of them were domestic. The third thing that I thought and I was wrong about is that I was sure the murderers had terrible regret once they had been tried and convicted. Most of them had no regrets. Why am I telling you this? The reason is that when people do murder, a lot of the time they do it out of emotional desperation. What do I do, let him get away with it? And again, Hashem does not live in your heart if desperation lives there. The same holds true with adultery. People have affairs because they feel desperate. I'll never be happy without him or her, and you know what? You will be. The same holds true for everything false, oaths, idol worship. So people want two things at once. They want what they want and they will do anything they have to do to get it but they also want closeness to Hashem, and sincerely so. So they will steal and they will also go to the Bais HaMikdosh. It is not because they don't believe. It is because they want what they want but they also want closeness to Hashem. We are very complex. So he says a person has to be wise enough to realize that this is hypocritical and that they really don't trust Hashem to give them what they want.

Is this house the cave where burglars hide, that is what my name is called before you?

Seventh, which is the last way of thinking that we have to learn to adapt... we have to know that the Creator made man in a way that he can do many things. And Hashem made it that in order to get what we want, and the example that he is giving is parnassah, that we have to do many things, all sorts of work. So it isn't as though work is there because we have to get parnassah. NO. Hashem makes it that we have abilities and in order to express those abilities He made it that parnassah comes through work. If every matter that a person needs, their food, their clothing, without any effort, he would be cut off from many mitzvoth. He can only give tzedakah if he earns the money otherwise the tzedakah has no meaning. You have to identify with the money, see it as the fruit of your efforts, but give it away any way and then it has meaning. Refraining from theft or from desire only has meaning if you have earned and you want more. And without needing to work, even our bitachon would have no meaning. Therefore, Hiskiachu hid the book of healing, there was a book called the book of healing that all of the cures for all of the illnesses were there, and Hiskiachu hid it so we would trust Hashem and not our abilities. We have to struggle. We have three reasons for struggle now, expressing our potential, doing mitzvohs, and trusting in Hashem. And if a person did not have to work or struggle for his sustenance, his energies which are not channeled will cause him to sin. Yisroel became fat and kicked against Hashem. And our Rabbis say, it is good to work and to learn, we have to struggle because that is what keeps us from sin. We have enormous inner potentials and they have to find expression. Better they should find expression through contributing to the world than through nonsense or worse.

Next time we will review these seven means of thought and we will talk about how to apply them concretely. Meantime have a joyous week.