

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Notes: Rabbi Jonathan Rietti on Emunah from Tiferes Program, Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation

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I am grateful to CCHF for inviting me to speak regarding Emunah. Watering the roots of our emumah when the storm begins?

I want to share with you a beautiful medrash Rabba...Vayikra Rabba 27:11
Esav called Cain a shokeh...He said, "Cain, you had an argument over Earth that there wasn't enough room for both to inherit so you knocked off your brother thinking you would then inherit. Esav, said you fool. Why didn't you wait until Adom died and then kill your brother. Then Adom wouldn't have been able to have more children. .Later on Paro makes fun of Esav "you were a fool, you let your brother have children and you should have killed his children as well as your brother, because they brought the greatest message of all, Emunah in Hashem. Paro said I am not going to be as foolish as you, I am going to kill the men and boys." Then Haman said, "Paro you fool, just killing the boys doesn't go far enough, you have to kill the girls too. The final solution."

After that, who could be more idealistic than Haman. Medrash says that at the end of time Gog and Magod in the future, "all the rashaim before us were the fools because didn't they realize there is a Protector in Shemayim, we are defended by Hashem? Gog and Magog says "First we will take care of Hashem and then we will start up with these people and wipe them out."

How does the Medrash conclude? Hashem answers Gog and Magog, "You will start up with Me? Then I will take up the war personally."

How does it conclude "Hashem will be King on the entire earth. When all the wars against us will be completed and Hashem is victorious, on that day Hashem will be one and his name one."

From here, the mefarshim tell us. We are understanding what is the battle Gog and Magog against Hashem? How do you do that. Mefarshim answer, in that day I will be King over the entire earth that means Gog and Magog wanted Hashem to stop being King. How do you stop Hashem from being King – how do you stop Hashem from being King? take away the Emunah that the Jewish people have in Hashem. What does this mean?

Our sages were so afraid of the last generation before Moshiach – let the Moshiach come but I don't want to be here to see it. What were our sages afraid of? Yes let Moshiach come but I don't want to be there to see it come. Not physical death, torture or terrorism. Much worse. Temptations of the last generation – in Sotah, the members of my own household will be labeled oivey ish, my own enemies. My own children, parents, in-laws, extended families, Many role models will be seen with disdain. What will be my recourse? Chazal tell us, I only have Emunah in my Protector, to fight the greatest battle in world history. that is the only thing that I am left with to fight - what is left to fight the greatest war in the history of the world – not a war of territory or ideals.
The greatest battle in all world history is for YOUR MIND

The mitzvah of Emunah takes place in our minds. This is the greatest battle of all. Will I stay strong in my Emunah, conviction, certainty, that Hashem is in Control, He really is in my Life, He really is in the detail before every person. Will I stay strong amidst all those challenges? Gemara 98 Sanhedrin: If

you see suffering come upon the Jewish people like a river flowing...tragedy, illness, off the derech, shidduch crisis, young adults who are married, people who are leaders found guilty of convictions. Where is my Emunah? Where is my Emunah, in my mind.

Hilchos Dais: Avigdor Miller, laws of the mind. Sefer Chareidim, the 613 mitzvahs. How many pertain to my thoughts – 51 mitzvahs are on how I think. These can empower us to understand “What is it that Hashem wants me to have in my mind about Emunah.”

Emuna comes from amein, truth, and it comes from omain, trained, trained in a trade, knows how to do it, a craftsman. He knows he can do it, and he knows he can accomplish it, in contrast to a contractor who believes they can but they can't be certain, too many factors they can't control

Ani mamim..I am certain with absolute conviction. What is highest level of Emunah possible? Arguably it is that Hashem loves me! Let's see a proof of it.

Our sages when they legislated tefillah, they legislated prayer, what did they decide should be the first message that leaves my lips the moment when I am consciously awake, even when I am tamei. “Mode Ani I agree, I am grateful, I agree.” What am I mode to? That You are Melech Chai V kayon, You are in control, you are alive, and consistently and constantly in my life. rabba – great- emuna – faith-secha...Your emuna? Great is Your Emunah in ME? How does that fit? What am I thanking for? You returned my neshama. Did Hashem have to return it? Some don't wake up. When I do wake up, that is the greatest demonstration, testimony that You believe in me, You want me to be here, You know I can still achieve, there is something I can accomplish. You have not given up hope in ME.

You know that I can change! Therefore I should believe in ME, Your Emunah in me is so great, I ought to rely on YOUR hechsher. Hashem has Emunah in US!

Dovid Hamelech wrote 150 love songs to Hashem. One was written by Adom – 92 – mizmor shiur ; yom HaShabbos – the origin is Adom who first recognized the cycle of nature that sun came up after going down, after his initial depression thinking he caused the darkness. When the sun rose, he realized it was a cycle. Adom, with clarity – tov is to be grateful, admit, be real about yourself with Hashem. It is good to be real and to sing your lofty song of Your greatness. In the morning – daylight, clarity, blessings - when things are good, be grateful to Hashem. And I will count your kindnesses. What about the night time? Problems with Shalom bayis, Financial setbacks.

What do we rely on in nighttime...count your kindnesses in day, and at night I am going to tell your Emunah in me - If You keep me alive during the night that means that You know I can get through this, You have Emunah in ME, Hashem, that is why I have to have Emunah , because I am here.

Lech lecha...the first and last tests of Avraham..go into yourself, to you. This is a nisayon. Hashem tested Avraham when he told him lech lecha. What is a nisayon? Word nais has five meanings. Nisayon – nais, flag, elevate, run away, miracle – no mistakes. What are the ingredients of a nisayon..when I get squeezed through finances, health, global terror, machlokes, what comes out? Whatever is inside. There are number of responses... I can run away, but Hashem will repeat it, with different scenario, same nisayon. Run from a marriage, even though I might be looking forward to a different set of personality traits, how do I know what will come out of me when other parts squeeze me that I can't know in advance?. Run away from career, but I will get same test over again.

I can elevate myself, conquer myself, by overcoming my weakness, or I could conquer my hatred, but when I do conquer it, how do I feel afterwards, when we conquer our mouths and hold ourself back from hurting someone with words – we feel elevated when we conquer ourselves. Or I can be part of a miracle. A miracle that is FAR GREATER - immeasurably greater than creation or Har Sinai. Those are miracles, Hashem created these, water to blood, wind out of control and blows locusts in different directions , animals , hail water rain, all different elements – some other power controlling them. At Sinai, “I am the constant power that you experienced when I took you out of Egypt.” That is a great miracle. Laws of nature changed.

But there is one miracle greater than all those combined. And that is "Hashem would impress YOU that You would say That is a miracle? When a person changes their nature. So when I am going to gehenim on earth, my health, finances, and I hold onto my Emunah, "You still love me Hashem and I am not going to let go -the proof is that I am alive"...and I change myself, I can change my mind!

Lev has three meanings, mostly it means mind, thought. Second meaning is the icon of heart, like emotions, and physical heart. Mostly leiv refers to what I am thinking. Don't hate your brother in your mind, in your thoughts. Genesis of my hatred starts in my mind. What do I say about this person that makes me feel hatred, bitterness, frustration. Every emotion starts up here in the mind. I meant to study enough Torah, imbue the value of Torah, so that I am not just seeing it with my mind but rather I am screening my life through Hashem's mind, Daas Torah, Hashem's mind. I am screening my life through Hashem's mind.

At Sinai I told you I am the power behind all powers and do not have any other powers. Powers of powers...do not give power to anything else – family, kid, boss who frustrates me... If I should give power to anyone else and they make me mad, the boss frustrates me, don't let any other power be upon my face.

Hashem hides behind nature, a facial mask. He is controlling. Tzunas, tornados. Hashem is the only Power, there is no other power besides Hashem. Hashem is warning me, Emunah is the master key. If I am in this generation when no one can say we understand our kids, who are overexposed to the media, overexposed to multi values; the confusion and the pain that they have, they are not ripe and ready, access to entire world with all its sheker and darkness and worse. We can't appreciate that nisayon.

Only option I have is to believe that Hashem exists and loves me, Hashem still loves me I am alive and awake. You love me and I can prove it, I am still alive and awake.

World of the mind - Don't hate someone, love others, all in the mind. Emotion is a result of what I am saying in my mind about you. If I love you it is because I look for the reason to see - I must see the virtue, verbalize the good points in your character, kindness, sensitivity, trustworthiness, your hard working work ethic. Everything I can identify as a quality in myself and spouse. I repeat this inventory of the good qualities, that is what causes me to feel love. When I don't, then I feel anger and frustration and disappointment...to others, be patient. Hashem trusts that I will change in the end. Greatest battle is battle for our minds.

We are living in a generation - technology – feeding off information – cell phones, satellites. Hashem through technology is enabling us to see that our Emunah that there are things that exist but that we can't explain. Yet we know they exist. We know with certainty that they exist, just like this video. Therefore this has been technology created at the same time that battle for our Emunah is the fiercest in all history. We will be victorious, and what is that victory?

Don't let go - that Hashem loves me.

Pirke avos, chapter 2 mishna 13 be careful with kiras shema, with tefilla and don't be a rasha in your own eyes. If I think I am a low life, that I can't lose weigh, control my tongue, I'll never have a good relationship with my husband or improve my self-esteem, then what will happen to my expectation when I daven to Hashem. "I am not worthy of Your love, your compassion, ynext to kirat shema ! Don't be negative in my own eyes because I'll never succeed, then I won't ask Hashem to help me. Emunah means "I am loved by You Hashem and I will never let go of that. Even though I am going through what I am going through I will never let go. I am going to hold on."

Every Asher Yatzer we say says Hashem loves me so much – why am I reporting the functions of my body – the smallest openings and closings, You want me to declare gratitude. The smallest opening and closing of functions of the body, I declare gratitude. Why? Why is He interested in such details? Because He loves me so much, He wants me to recognize the functions of my physical body how much more so does He love me for the smallest effort I make to overcome myself and control my mind with Emunah, with thoughts that switch hatred to love, control my mind of jealousy, control my mind and give a

favorable decision, interpretation, and judgment to people who otherwise would be negative in my mind.

All these mitzvahs, 51 out of 613 pertain to my mind, and Emunah is master key to get through until Moshiach Arrives. Bimhamo Iyamanu Amein