

Every person is guided throughout life by Sibos. People, circumstances, obstacles, and opportunities direct his path. Yet as long as a person sees himself as an independent existence and believes that he controls his life through his own strength, these Sibos do not connect him to Sabas Kol Hasibos. He sees them only as things that help him or prevent him from getting what he wants. Emunah begins when a person recognizes that his independent existence is an illusion. Every thought, movement, and breath is given to him anew by Hashem. Precisely when his imagined self-sufficiency falls away, he begins to live from the true life that Hashem gives him.

Even Torah and Mitzvos do not guarantee that a person will leave this world of illusion. He may learn thousands of Dafim of Gemara, study Zohar, Daven, and perform acts of Chesed, yet still draw all his vitality from the feeling that he is the one who learns, understands, and accomplishes. He may call this spiritual satisfaction the Ribono Shel Olam, while in truth he is enjoying himself. He must therefore return even his Torah to Hashem and remember that the Daf of Gemara, the mind, the desire, and the ability to understand were all given to him from Above. Instead of taking pride in what he learned, he should wonder how a Daf of Gemara reached someone as lowly as himself. Then Torah does not enlarge his sense of self. It reveals Hashem's mercy toward him.

This is the meaning of 'מבשרי אהזה א' "From my flesh I behold Hashem." A person comes to recognize Hashem through the weaknesses and faults that he discovers within himself. He knows that by his nature he is capable of stealing, hurting others, and doing wrong. If he does not steal or hurt someone, he does not say, "I was strong enough to stop myself." He asks, "If this is my nature, what stopped me?" He then sees that Hashem sent him a Siba that held him back. Precisely from the fact that he did not steal, he discovers that Someone is sustaining and directing him. By recognizing his weakness, he learns to turn to Hashem and to see Hashem's help whenever he is able to overcome it.. It prevents him from claiming the victory as his own.

Even when a person fails, the failure should not bring him to Yiush. It comes to break the imaginary image he created of himself and bring him to cry out to Hashem. Instead of remaining broken, he should call to Hashem and admit that he cannot save himself and has no one upon whom to rely other than his Father in Heaven. He must preserve this awareness even while learning, davening, and doing good. Success itself may cause him to forget that he has no independent strength and may turn even a genuine spiritual attainment into a source of pride.

A person cannot walk this path alone. He needs a chaver whom he can approach without seeking money, favors, or honor, and tell him that his heart is bitter and that he sees the ugliness within himself. The chaver must not judge him, break him, or repeat to others what he has heard. He must listen and hear himself within his chaver's words. He must understand that his chaver is not only revealing who he is. He is also showing the listener what he himself is made of.

A person in distress often feels that no one in the world suffers as he does and that no one can understand his pain. When his chaver also opens his heart and admits that he too is broken and sustained only by mercy, the suffering person discovers that he is not alone. One broken heart joins another. The chaver does not need to solve his problems. By remaining with him inside the pain, he brings healing to his soul. Together, they can turn to Hashem and cry, "To You they cried and were rescued; in You they trusted and were not ashamed."

This is Ahavah that does not depend on anything. Conditional love lasts only as long as one can receive some benefit from the other person. Once the benefit ends, the relationship disappears. Unconditional Ahavah is the ability to remain with a chaver, listen to his pain, protect his confidence, and not run from his wounds. When both recognize that they live only through Hashem's mercy, neither has any reason to look down upon the other. This is how they reach the love of David and Yehonasan, אהבה שאינה תלויה בדבר.

Korach represents the opposite path. He saw that Shmuel HaNavi would descend from him and turned that vision into proof that he deserved leadership. Instead of being faithful like Moshe Rabbeinu, he sought greatness for himself. This is the power of Korach that exists in every generation, the force that refuses to give up its honor and independent existence in order to unite with the community.

This also places a great responsibility upon those who learn Torah. We cannot look at the brokenness of the lower world and say that the problem exists only among others. If Torah were learned with complete Bittel, its light would reach even the lowest places and connect them to the reality of Hashem. As long as each person stands apart and wishes to say that the Geula came in his merit, there is not yet one united people ready to receive it. Geula requires people willing to recognize their lowliness, hear one another's pain, and unite through Ahavah that does not depend on anything.

This is also the meaning of the Arba Minim on Sukkos. They represent four types of Jews, some possessing Torah and good deeds and others possessing neither. Hashem commands us to bind them all together. The bond that joins them is Emunah. When the person blessed with Torah and good deeds knows that everything he possesses was given to him by Hashem, he does not look down upon another Jew. When the person who feels that he has neither taste nor fragrance knows that he too is sustained by Hashem's mercy, he does not remove himself from the community.

On Sukkos we sit in the sukkah, the Tzila D'Meheimnusa, the shade of Emunah. We bind the Arba Minim together and wave them outward and inward before the One to whom all four directions belong, and upward and downward before the One to whom heaven and earth belong. Through the bond uniting the Jewish people, it is revealed that no independent power or existence exists apart from Hashem. In this way, we all become one united people, joined together to fulfill His will with a complete heart.