





The Simple Faith Fueling the Deepest Relationships



Based on a teaching of the *Imrei Chaim*



The *Imrei Chaim* (Rav Chaim Meir Hager of Vizhnitz zy"o) outlines two types of *emunah* and their respective roots:

 <p>Hearing שְׁמִיעָה - אֲמוּנָה פְּשוּטָה # 2</p>	<p># 1</p> <p>Seeing רְאִיָּה - חִקְיֹרוֹת, אֲמוּנָה שְׂכָלִית </p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple faith rooted in the longstanding beliefs of prior generations passed down from one to the next. Receipt of core beliefs from parents and grandparents, etc. who are models for clinging to <i>emunah</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making personal inquiries, seeking evidence in the hopes of gaining a better understanding. Active investigations and evaluations of the world in order to shape a system of beliefs.

With this in mind, he explains the opening pesukim of the parsha (11:26-27) as follows:

 <p>את הנבוכה אשר תשמעו אל מצות ה' אלקיכם</p>	<p>ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום ברכה וקללה </p>
<p>Using the power of hearing (i.e., genuine, pure belief in the <i>mesorah</i> of our ancestors) we will see only <i>bracha</i>. To feel eternally blessed, our <i>emunah</i> must be informed by תשמעו - hearing from those who preceded us and simply believed.</p> <p>לכו בנים שמעו לי יראת ה' אלקיכם. (תהילים לד:יב)</p> <p>True acknowledgment that Hashem runs the world, that He will ultimately fulfill all of His promises, and that somehow all that transpires is for the good, etc., provide us with lenses that allow us to see Hashem's <i>bracha</i> everywhere.</p>	<p>Using the power of sight (the need to investigate) we can do our best to see what Hashem has given us, but we must be very cautious, for using this sense alone <i>can</i> lead us to perceive blessing, but it can <i>also</i> lead us to feel cursed.</p> <p>"החקירה לכדה היא סכנה עצומה ונוראה"</p> <p>If <i>emunah</i> is based on ראה/compiling evidence, and belief in God only is only in my consciousness when I can point to something tangible, then such a form of belief can produce dangerously polar opposite conclusions.</p>

Only if a person has the **foundation** of אמונה פשוטה should he/she venture into carefully making deep inquiries and evaluations. That **bedrock of 'simple faith'** can support questions that may result in inexplicable or unsatisfying answers. Should a person encounter such disappointment, he's able to remain faithful to Hashem because he still "hears" the *emunah* of his ancestors.

This insight on the importance of guidance from our loved ones, can perhaps, לעניות דעתי, shed light on another topic in the parsha (13:7):

כי יסיתך אחיך בן-אמך או-בנה או-בתך או אשת חיקך או רעהך אשר כנפשו בסתר לאמר נלכה ונעבדה אלהים אחרים אשר לא ידעת אתה ואבתיך: This pasuk deals with a מסית - the tempter/inciter who attempts to **convince someone close to him** to follow false deities. The מסית is subject to serious punishment - even if he is unsuccessful in convincing, he receives no mercy and is executed.

A question arises: What is the difference between an inciter and one who [figuratively] 'places a stumbling block before a blind person' (לפני עור לא תתן מכשל)? Both involve a person causing another to falter, yet the former is a far more serious offense...

<p>מסית</p> <p>Key focus: The person tempting; the tempter's strong connection with his victim is how he leverages and abuses the relationship for unholy ends; thus, punishment is severe.</p>	<p>לפני עור לא תתן מכשל</p> <p>Key focus: The temptation itself; the 'stumbling block' is the force/impediment that's so powerful. The identity of the person doing the tempting is irrelevant.</p>
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The parsha highlights the **immense power of strong relationships** - some used for the loftiest good (את הנבוכה אשר תשמעו - transmitting *emunah* through the generations), and others for bad (כי יסיתך - the מסית who tries to urge a dear contact to follow deities that the Torah *specifically* says have **no link to the past** and **unknown to prior generations** - ואבתיך - אשר לא ידעת אתה ואבתיך).

May we always foster human bonds to fan the flames of *emunah* and lovingly pass the torch of Torah from generation to generation.