

## Living the Reality of Hashem

Contributed by Rabbi Lazer Brody

Every person should know that he has power, tremendous, almost unlimited power, emuna!

Emuna is a huge untapped spiritual resource within each of us. Like any other personal resource, such as the body or the brain, emuna needs to be developed.

A person must learn how to take advantage of his assets and strengths, how to use them correctly. From this perspective, spiritual strengths are not different from physical or intellectual strengths. Emuna is a spiritual strength and must, therefore, be developed.

A person develops personal resources in proportion to the degree that he believes in himself. A strong person might gravitate toward football, an artistic person toward art, a highly intellectual person toward physics or chemistry. Emuna resembles any other personal ability or aptitude, one must believe in himself, believe in his potential, and know that with hard work, he can reach astounding goals.

Double Tragedy Here's a double tragedy.

- Not knowing that you have a talent or ability
- Knowing you have talent or ability, but failing to believe that you can achieve great things with it.

In developing one's potential, there's basically no difference between the intellectual and the physical or spiritual. To extract oil or diamonds one must drill deep into the earth. With physical talents, such as bodybuilding, an investment of time and effort yields gains. The same is true of the academic; everything, physical or intellectual requires exercise. The greatest power a person possesses is emuna, because emuna is a person's connection with Hashem and Hashem is unlimited and all-powerful. With emuna, one can make unlimited gains.

We have seen great people who literally change the course of nature by virtue of their emuna. Your emuna begins to expand when you begin to talk to Hashem - in your own language, even in your own slang. Talking to Hashem develops emuna. Hashem is always available, always hears, and is always close by. We can make Hashem a tangible reality in our lives by speaking to Him all day long, at any hour or any minute. We ask for what we need and speak out whatever is in our hearts. Nothing is too trivial or insignificant for Him. He loves to hear from his beloved children.

Going somewhere? Ask Hashem to guard you on the way. Just finished a meal? Say thanks to Hashem with the grace after meals. You have an important meeting on the agenda? Ask Hashem to help you succeed. Your husband or wife or children are on the way home from school or work? Say a little prayer: "Hashem, help me have peace at home, help me raise the kids properly." From the time you wake up in the morning until the time you go to sleep, you should be talking to Hashem. In this way, we make Hashem a reality in our lives. Wait and see how Hashem helps!

Through emuna, we realize the best of our potential: we live with the reality of Hashem. We become conscious of that reality by speaking to Him at all times. We ask Him for advice; we ask Him for guidance; we ask Him for a helping hand. With Hashem in our lives, we are never alone! There is a Creator of the world, a loving Father. Why bust your head against a brick wall trying to cope alone?

People without emunah ignore Hashem's presence, therefore they are often unhappy, confused and stressed out. The reality is, Hashem is here! A person who denies reality doesn't change that reality. Denial only distorts perception. One can look at the world through a bubble. Don't ignore Hashem! In good times and other times, remember Hashem. The tough times are not punishments, they are soul corrections. Our Sages teach that every tribulation is rooted in some form of transgression.

A person who lives the reality of Hashem, even in tough times, develops emuna; he recognizes that everything is from Him. Someone who thinks that they don't deserve a particular trial or tribulation is in effect declaring that Hashem is unjust, which is tantamount to returning to the fantasy world. To say that trials and tribulations don't come from Hashem is an even bigger blasphemy, for there is no randomness in the world.

One cannot begin to imagine how perfectly precise Hashem's justice is. He measures everything that comes to a person in spiritual millimicrons of absolute truth and justice, and often, mercy mitigates that absolute justice.

People suffer because they don't accept the reality of Hashem. In addition, lack of emuna, depression and despair are all rooted in arrogance. Here's how.

A person without emuna is in either a state of arrogance or depression. In good times, when he is succeeding, he declares arrogantly, "My talents, power and brains are to thank." But the minute things get tough, he falls into depression and despair. He feels that the me or I or self let him down.

One must learn that success is a result of Hashem's loving kindness and that when things don't succeed, it's because our arrogance and ego are getting in the way. Hashem makes one fail so that he will put his ego aside, seek His help, and develop his emuna. Hashem wants us to develop emuna because a person with emuna is always happy and on an even keel. We earn eternal happiness only by way of emuna. When we see Hashem's greatness and our nothingness, we begin to live with emuna, the reality of Hashem.

Happy New Year 5768!

You can read and hear more from Rabbi Brody at his website, Reflections of Emuna with Rabbi Lazer Brody