

And he trusted in Hashem, and He reckoned with it to him as righteous. (15:6)

On a recent trip to an area, which was completely foreign to me, I was forced to rely totally on my GPS to guide me, literally every step of the way. I did not know when a turn was coming up, when I should just go straight. I was at the mercy of my GPS. As Jews, we, too, have a GPS system that guides us through life. It is called *emunah*, faith. Without *emunah*, we do not function; we are unable to function. It is our lodestar, our beacon of light, our guide which takes us by the hand and helps us navigate around and over the many obstacles and challenges that are present in our path. The Jew whose faith is deficient is in serious trouble. He not only does not know where he is going, he also does not know what to do when he arrives at his destination. Perhaps, the following vignette will elucidate this idea:

Horav Yonasan Eibyshutz, zl, was walking on the street when he was met by the mayor of Prague. The mayor asked the *Rav*, "Where are you going?" *Rav* Yonasan replied, "I do not know." The mayor became enraged with this insolent answer. A man as distinguished as the city's *Rav* does not just walk around without purpose. Certainly, he knew where he was going. He called for his guards to incarcerate the *Rav*. This was life in the big city centuries ago. If a Jew offended a gentile, even if a gentile just perceived that the Jew was offending him, it was cause for serious repercussion; in this case, it was incarceration in the city's dungeon.

After a few days passed, the mayor, who had heretofore been friendly with the *Rav*, had a change of heart. He summoned the guards and had them bring *Rav* Yonasan to him. When *Rav* Yonasan arrived, the mayor had his chains removed. After all, *Rav* Yonasan was not a common thief. He then asked him, "Rabbi, tell me, does a person walk and not know where he is going? Why did you respond so insolently to me?"

The *Rav* replied, "If the mayor would have asked, 'where are you planning on going?' I would have responded, 'I plan on going to the *bais hamedrash* to learn.' Instead you asked me, 'Where are you going?' I thus replied, 'I do not know.' Veritably, that was the truth. I had planned on going to the *bais hamedrash*; instead, I ended up in prison!"

This powerful response defines the life of a Jew. Do we really know where we are going? Do we have any idea where we will end up at the end of the day? We make plans – but do they materialize in accordance with our intentions? We must follow our GPS/*emunah* and rely on where *Hashem Yisborach* leads us, because that is where we are going – plans or not.

Horav Mordechai, zl, m'Lechowitz, says, "Without *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, one cannot cross the threshold of his house. With Hashem, one can split the sea." It is so true. Yet, we try to convince ourselves that we can do it alone. One does not discover Hashem by probing, but by believing. Indeed, as the well-known dictum goes, 'For the believer, there are no questions; for the non-

believer, there are no answers.” To him who questions G-d, who has difficulty serving a G-d whose ways are incomprehensible, we respond with the words of the *Kotzker Rebbe*, “I would definitely not want to serve a G-d whose ways are compensable to the minds of human beings.”

While we may assume that *Klal Yisrael* is a nation of believers, whose *emunah* in Hashem is part of their “Jewishness”; at times, this *emunah* may be selective. We believe when it is convenient, and when it is not, we find an excuse to justify our indifference. We believe in Hashem when we have exhausted all other beliefs; after we have seen how ineffective they are, we then turn back to Hashem. One should believe in Hashem first and all the way through, even when life appears bleak. We believe that if the results differ from our hopes, it is Hashem’s decree, and it is for the best.

There is also limited belief. *Horav Bunim, zl, m’Peshischa*, asks how, on *Motzoei Yom Kippur*, after a complete day of fasting and intense prayer, we recite in *Shemoneh Esrai* the prayer, *Selach lanu Avinu ki chatanu*, “Forgive us our Father, for we have sinned!” When did we have the opportunity to sin? All day long was spent in prayer. Immediately following *Neilah*, the closing prayer of *Yom Kippur*, we commence with *Maariv*. When did we have the opportunity to sin? What are we asking Hashem to forgive?

The *Rebbe* explains that we ask forgiveness for our lack of belief that Hashem really forgave us. The fellow feels that he is still the same sinner that he was before *Yom Kippur*. We believe in Hashem, but we do not believe that Hashem believes in us! To believe in Hashem is to believe totally in Him, to give ourselves over to Him with complete trust and faith. We do not limit our belief.