As we enjoy sitting in the Sukkah under the “shade of emunah” (Zohar, Vayikra 3:103b), I would like to reveal a dimension of emunah that may differ somewhat from our standard understanding. In Samurai tradition there is a concept called bushido, The Way of the Warrior. This creed requires absolute, unconditional loyalty to one’s leader. There is no place in this system for a man to confront the problem of personal responsibility, of individual values different from, if not actually contrary to those of his society. The incredible story of Lt. Hiroo Onoda is a graphic illustration of this tradition. Lieutenant Onoda was an Imperial Japanese Army intelligence officer who was sent to the Philippines in 1944 to conduct operations against Allied forces. When the war ended in 1945, he did not surrender, since he assumed that leaflets dropped ordering Japanese troops to surrender were Allied propaganda. Despite repeated attempts to contact Onoda and convince him that the war was over, he continued his military activities. Since he never received an official command from an authorized military commander, he continued the task that had been given to him years earlier. It was not until Onoda’s former commander, Major Yoshimi Taniguchi, was brought to the Philippines and ordered Onoda to surrender that he was willing to give up the fight. This occurred on the 9th of March 1974 (!!), 29 years after he first arrived in the Philippines. This is one of the most extraordinary examples of the Samurai ideal of loyalty I have ever heard. My revered teacher, Rav Moshe Shapiro zt”l, always translated the word emunah as “loyalty,” ne’eman as “trustworthy” or “secure.” He based this translation on numerous verses throughout the Tanakh, where it is clear that the word does not mean only “belief,” but also loyalty, security and trustworthiness. For example:

Not so with my servant Moses, for he is trustworthy ne’eman one in all my house.

Bamidbar 12:7

But Moses’ hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady emunah until the going down of the sun.

Shmot 17:12
Shmuel 1:2:35

And I will fasten him as a tent peg in a secure ne’eman place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father’s house.

Isaiah 22:23

The Torah, however, does not laud loyalty as a virtue independent of all other considerations. The Torah requires truth as a condition of loyalty. Onoda’s loyalty was impressive, but it was not loyalty that loyalty. Onoda’s loyalty was loyalty as a virtue independent of all other considerations. The Torah does not laud loyalty as a virtue independent of all other considerations. The Torah, however, does not laud loyalty as a virtue independent of all other considerations. The Torah requires truth as a condition of loyalty. Onoda’s loyalty was impressive, but it was not loyalty that loyalty. Onoda’s loyalty was loyalty as a virtue independent of all other considerations. The Torah does not laud loyalty as a virtue independent of all other considerations. The Torah, however, does not laud loyalty as a virtue independent of all other considerations. The Torah requires truth as a condition of loyalty. Onoda’s loyalty was impressive, but it was not loyalty that loyalty. Onoda’s loyalty was loyalty as a virtue independent of all other considerations.

All of this is truth and emunah, and established upon us...

Derekh Mitzvotcha, The Mitzvah of Emunah in Hashem

The Tzemach Tzedek maintains that knowing truth intellectually is not sufficient, it must be something we think about and meditate upon; it must be what directs our behavior and character. In other words, to the same degree that loyalty must be married to truth, truth must be married to loyalty. Without being devoted and loyal to the truths that we know, those truths remain theoretical, ephemeral and without impact.

Another dimension of emunah is its ability to reveal truth in this world through the power and courage of those loyal to the truth. When Rambam defines the commandment of kiddush Hashem, sanctification of the Name of G-d, he writes that the mitzvah requires us to publicize the truth of our emunah, not to be fearful of any tyrant or of any threat whatsoever in following this truth and not even to give the impression that we have denied Hashem, even when internally we are still loyal (Sefer HaMitzvot, Mitzvah 9). So, the prestige, honor and absolute nature of the truth is manifested by its followers’ loyalty, courage and stubborn
attachment to the truth through all circumstances. Throughout history the Jewish people have been the bearers of the torch of the Torah’s truth by not giving in to those who wish to see Judaism disappear. Our survival and the survival of Judaism have shown the eternity and power of truth by the persistence and power of our emunah, our loyalty.

Finally, emunah connects us to the redemption and to Olam Haba, eternity. As the Midrash states:

Then sang Moshe (Shmot 15:1). They had emunah in Hashem (ibid. 14:31) and therefore merited acquiring the land. You find that because of his emunah in Hashem, our patriarch Avraham inherited both this world and the world-to-come, as is written: And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness (Bereshit 15:16). Similarly, because the people believed (Shmot 4:31), it is written: The Lord preserves the faithful... (Tehillim 31:24)... Scripture states: This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter it (Tehillim 118:20). Who are the righteous ones that will enter?

Rav Yeshaya Halevi Horowitz describes the desert journeys of the Jewish people as the “pillar of emunah” (Shnei Luchot HaBrit, Masechet Taanit, Drush Matot-Masei 18). He bases this idea on Hashem’s praise of the Jewish peoples’ loyalty for following Him into the desert:

And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus said the Lord; I remember you, the devotion of your youth, your love like a bride, when you went after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not cultivated. Israel is holy to Hashem, and the first fruits of his produce; all who devour him shall be held guilty; evil shall come upon them, said Hashem.

Yirmiyahu 2:1-3

Emunah is particularly necessary during the long night of exile. As the Talmud states:

 Armenian and Israelites they say (in the name of Rav: One who did not recite: True and Firm, emet ve’yatziv, at the beginning of the blessing of redemption that follows Shema in the morning prayer, and: True and Trustworthy, emet ve’emunah, in the evening prayer, he did not fulfill his obligation, as it is stated: “To declare Your kindness in the morning and Your faith (Emunatcha) in the nights” (Tehillim 92:3)."

Berachot 12a

In the morning, one must mention Hashem’s loving-kindness, while in the evening one is required to emphasize the aspect of faith. As Rashi explains:

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against supernatural forces such as witchcraft, so too they must take natural forces (teva) into account. If this interpretation is correct, then, perhaps R. Chanina's statement that no man bruises his finger here on earth unless it was so decreed against him in heaven may reflect his own personal reality; it does not definitively point to an all-encompassing providence.

2. While this passage indicates that small annoying occurrences are sometimes the result of divine providence it may not imply that all such occurrences are providential.

3. This explains the language used in birkat ha-gomel, who knows the goodness upon the guilty? Who has bestowed every goodness upon me. Why do we call ourselves guilty? In fact, the Shulchan Aruch (YD 376) rules explicitly that one may not say that he has not been punished as he deserves (לא ז◄גויה). And I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in grace, and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness, be'emanah; and you shall know Hashem.

Hoshea 2:21-22

However, the bond of emunah is not a unilateral relationship, one that only involved our loyalty to Hashem. Emanah also involves Hashem’s loyalty to us. The Sifrei comments on the verse in Ha’azinu (Devarim 32:4) that describes Hashem as “God of faith” “Kel Emanah” and says that Hashem has faith in His world, which is why He created it — Shehe’emin bolamo u vera’o — He believed in His world and created it (Sifrei, Ha’azinu Piskah 2). It is clear that the word he’emin does not mean “believe” in the sense of apprehending its existence, rather it means that Hashem created the world because He had (and still has) confidence that it would succeed. Hashem loyally sustains the world and ensures the continued existence of the Jewish people, because He knows that we are a good investment. We express this idea every single morning when we end the Modeh Ani prayer with the phrase, rabba emunatecha — abundant is Your faith. It is a very optimistic and encouraging way to start the day by affirming the fact that Hashem, our Creator has confidence and trust in us.

Our ancestors followed Hashem loyally into the desert and dwelt under His clouds of glory. They marched through the desert of our long exile and were loyal to Hashem and His Torah, and they had hope even in the darkest of times. We too, when we dwell in our sukkot manifest this same loyalty, confidence and hope and hence our sukkot may correctly be called “shelters of emunah.” May the merit of our study of emunah during the night of exile bring us to the moment when we will tell of Hashem’s kindness in the morning of the redemption (Rashi, Berachot 12a) and to see Him “spread over us His sukkah of peace.”

Introducing Divine Providence (continued from page 10)

Mishna in Avot (4:22) that states a person lives against their own will (לע מפי אתה יתי). "כפי מעשי, או כיוצא בדברים אלו, לא יאמר אדם: לא מפורעת סמי מעשה, או נoutines רבדים אלה, הדברות יפי ט斫שו לך. הניהם הוא חכם" (S. 6), so why are we doing exactly this when we proclaim our guilt and unworthiness in birkat ha-gomel? The answer, however, is that in this case of a near-death experience, God has warned the person that he is deserving of punishment, and, accordingly he must take note of this, as Rashi writes: "לאחר רבים עתים, שמר הפרד את הת kald הותאה ולקברד, א’n ש_WATCH והוהה אף על פישウォוי, אלא למשהו ולטעמו. שאר כרפת א כא ברהמד ברכה תבוכר

6 It is not clear that Chovot ha-Levavot would even allow for that. In Sha’ar 4, Bitachon ch. 3, he writes:

This line indicates that a person cannot even harm themselves without God’s approval. However, one could respond simply that if a person goes out without a coat, God may allow them to get sick. Thus, their getting sick was with God’s permission, but it is not bi-dei Shamayim in the sense that it was not part of God’s initial plan. Rather, their decision to act negligently resulted in God’s allowing them to get sick. However, should they have acted responsibly, then they would not get sick unless it was part of God’s original plan.