

ניצוצי אור Sparks of Light

בס"ד



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פרשת שמות תשע"ה

Acquiring Trust

Rabbi Shimon Hellinger, Editor

Thinking Positively

What is the definition of *bitachon*? **Rabbeinu Bechaye** writes in **Chovas HaLevavos** that *bitachon* is complete peace of mind, a state in which a person is fully calm, knowing that he can rely on HaShem and trust in Him. When a person contemplates how HaShem loves him, cares for him, is able to fill his needs, and knows what is best for him; when he considers how HaShem alone monitors his life, and always does good even to those who are undeserving; – he will then feel full *bitachon* in Him.

Such trust can be found only in HaShem, for any other option, such as mortal benefactors or financial security, can fail or discontinue.

(חובת הלבבות שער הבטחון פרק א)

When the revered *mashpia*, **Reb Michoel Beliner** (better known as **Reb Michoel der Alter**), was still a young man, his son fell deathly ill, and the doctors said that there was nothing they could do. Reb Michoel went to the local beis midrash and shared his bitter news with the chassidim who were there at the time. Doing their best to encourage him, they assured him that HaShem would surely have *rachmonus*, and advised him to travel immediately to the Rebbe, the **Tzemach Tzedek of Lubavitch**. Reb Michoel began to weep, saying that he would strongly like to go, but the doctors said that it was only a matter of hours, so why should he set out on the road? One of the older *chassidim* berated him. He quoted from the *Gemara* that one should never despair of being granted HaShem's mercy, and added that surely the good *malochim* would succeed in having the Heavenly verdict postponed until he reached the Rebbe. One of those *chassidishe yungeleit*, a tailor, offered to join Reb Michoel on his trip, and together they set out on foot, here and there hitching a cheap wagonride.

Arriving at last in Lubavitch, Reb Michoel was fortunately able to be received for *yeichidus* immediately.

He later related: "When I entered the Rebbe's room and handed him my *pidyon nefesh* for my son, I thought to myself, 'Who knows what has meanwhile happened with him? The doctors said it's only a few hours...' and I began to weep. The Rebbe read the note and said, 'Don't cry. You must have *bitachon* in HaShem with simple *emunah*

that He will save your son. *Tracht gut vet zien gut*. (Think good and things will be good.) You will yet celebrate the *bar-mitzvas* of your grandsons!" "

Soon after, the boy recovered completely. From then on, whenever Reb Michoel experienced difficulty he would bring to mind the luminous face of the Rebbe as he spoke those words, and the situation would change for the better.

(לקו"ד ח"א ע' קנט, אג"ק רי"צ ח"ז ע' קצז)

When a person places his full trust in HaShem, feeling fully at ease with complete *bitachon*, that is enough for him to merit HaShem's salvation. This is true even for someone who is seemingly undeserving, for this *avodah* of *bitachon* alone gives him the merit to be helped. That is the deeper message of the words of the Tzemach Tzedek, "*Tracht gut*" – "Think good and things will be good."

(לקו"ש חל"ו ע' 4)

A Reliable Trustee

A simple Jew once traveled to spend Shabbos in the court of **Reb Mordechai of Chernobyl**. When he asked for a *bracha* before departing, the *tzaddik* asked him about his daily routine, and the Jew told him how he rose early to buy merchandise from the local farmers and returned home to daven when he finished. The Rebbe condemned this conduct, but the Jew excused himself by saying that if he davened first, he would be unable to buy the merchandise. Reb Mordechai then told him the following story:

"A *yungerman* was supported by his father-in-law, but when his family grew and he was forced to find additional means of support, he left home and worked as a *melamed* for three years, saving every coin he earned. Finally, having collected enough to start a business, he decided to make the long trek home. On *erev Shabbos* he reached a little village near his hometown, where he realized that he would not be able to reach home in time. He decided to stay at a wayside inn, but was afraid to leave the money in his bag lest someone steal it. On the other hand, he didn't know if he could trust the innkeeper with it. Having no other choice, he gave it to him to hold for him. Throughout the entire *Shabbos* he worried about his money, and

immediately after *Havdala* requested it back. Upon receiving his wallet, he counted all the gold coins and was happy to find that nothing was missing – but then continued to shake the coins and look through them.

"What are you looking for?" the innkeeper asked. "Is something missing?"

"The guest explained that he wanted to make sure that his one copper coin was there as well..."

Reb Mordechai concluded, "Look at this silly fellow! After seeing that all his golden coins were returned to him, he still suspected his host of perhaps stealing one copper coin.... And you are doing the same. Every night you entrust HaShem with your *neshama*, and when you wake up in the morning, He returns the gold you have given Him. So how is it that you don't trust that He will give you your *parnasa* if you wait until after davening...?"

(אדמו"רי צ'רנוביל ר"ה)

One's biggest trouble is a lack of *bitachon* in HaShem, for that is the key to everything. One must strengthen his certain belief that even if there seems to be no way for matters to work out, he should nevertheless trust in HaShem – for He works above nature, and thus all can be good. When a person lifts himself out of his worldly mindset to the point that he appreciates that there is no power over him except HaShem, he is then able to cause everything to be good in actuality.

(אג"ק ח"ו ע' קמז)

Consider This

Did the *mashpia* Reb Michoel not know that HaShem could heal his son? What did the Tzemach Tzedek teach him?

Why is *bitachon* so essential to the service of HaShem and the ways of *Chassidus*?

Sparks of Greatness

ר' טבת - Rambam

Rabeinu Moshe ben Maimon (the "Rambam") was of the greatest *Rishonim*. He is famous for his unprecedented work codifying the entire Torah, titled "*Mishneh Torah*," as well as *Moreh Hanevuchim* and other major works. He was a sephardi who lived the troubled life of the Jews in Morocco, Egypt, and neighboring countries. He was also a renowned physician and philosopher. The Rambam passed away on the 20th of Teves 1205 (ד'תתקס"ה).

Here is an excerpt from a letter of the Rambam to his talmid Reb Shmuel Ibn Tibun, describing his daily schedule. It is an expression of the embodiment of absolute selflessness and tireless commitment:

"I live in Fostat, and the Sultan lives Cairo. The distance between them is 4000 cubits [a mile and a half]. My duties to the Sultan are very weighty. I must see him every morning to check on his health, and if one day he does not feel well or one of the princes or women of his harem do not feel well, I cannot leave Cairo that day.

"It often happens that there is an officer or two who needs me, and I have to attend to healing them all day. Therefore, as a rule, I am in Cairo early each day, and even if nothing unusual happens, by the time I come back to Fostat, half the day is gone. Under no circumstances do I come earlier. And I am ravenously hungry by then.

"When I come home, my foyer is always full of

people: Yidden and non-Yidden, important people and ordinary, judges and policemen, people who love me and people who hate me. A mixture of people, all of whom have been waiting for me to arrive home.

"I get off of my donkey, wash my hands, and go out into the hall to see them. I apologize and ask that they be kind enough to give me a few minutes to eat. That is the only meal I take in during twenty-four hours. Then I go out to heal them, write prescriptions and instructions for treating their problems.

"Patients arrive and depart until nightfall, and sometimes – I swear to you by the Torah – it is two hours into the night before they have all gone. I talk to them and prescribe even while lying down on my back from exhaustion. And when night falls, I am so weak, I cannot even talk anymore.

"Because of all this, no *Yid* can come and speak with me wisdom or have a private audience with me because I have no time, except on Shabbos. On Shabbos, the whole congregation, or at least the majority of it, comes to my house after *tefilah* in the morning, and I instruct the members of the community as to what they should do during the entire week. "We learn together simple subjects until the afternoon, and then they all go home. Some of them come back and I teach deeper concepts between the afternoon and evening *tefilos*.

"This is my daily schedule, and I've only told you a little of what you would see if you would come."

Library Sparks

Towards the end of *Parshas Shemos*, the Torah relates that after Moshe and Aharon demanded from Pharaoh that he let the *Bnei Yisrael* go, he reacted in rage, accusing Moshe of disturbing the *Bnei Yisrael's* labor, and he therefore increased their workload by forcing them to collect on their own the materials needed to produce the bricks for construction, while maintaining the same output quota as before.

When the *Shotrei Bnei Yisrael* (Jewish foremen) criticized Moshe as being the cause of their additional misery, he turned to Hashem "*lama hare'osa la'am hazeh, lama zeh shelachtani*", complaining why Hashem sent him to Pharaoh, because since he came to Pharaoh he worsened their lot.

Hashem sternly responds to Moshe that he should not question His ways of running the universe.

In order to understand the dialogue between Hashem and Moshe Rabeinu, we must first know how human beings are supposed to react to the sufferings of others.

In *Tanya* (אגרת הקודש י"א) there is an important statement: אין רע יורד מלמטה, evil does not descent from above. Well, how come Moshe Rabeinu, the father of all *nevi'im*, to ask Hashem why he was

treating *Klal Yisrael* this way or another, if all Hashem does is only good?

The **Baal Shem Tov** explains that every *middah* could be used for *Avodas Hashem*. If that's the case, then even such a *middah* as *Apikursus* can also be utilized positively! The Baal Shem Tov continues to explain that when the well being of others is at stake, it is necessary to act with *apikursus*. Do not have *bitachon* and *emunah* for him, but to everything in your power to assist him.

When someone's is terribly ill or is in a dire situation, don't view it as "good". Pray to Hashem with all your might for a *refuah* and *yeshuah*. When your friend is grieving over a loss, empathize with him and feel his pain. Only for yourself should you have *bitachon* and see the good in all circumstances.

Moshe Rabeinu, the dedicated shepherd of *Klal Yisrael*, complained to Hashem about their situation, which was seemingly terrible. He did not see any positive dimension to *Klal Yisrael's* plight, and *bitachon* would be misplaced here.

Hashem answered him that he will yet see the benefit brought about by his mission to Pharaoh, and that redemption was near!

Halacha Sparks

Eating in the Street

Rabbi Chaim Chazan

Is it permissible to eat in a designated picnic area of a park?

There is a genre of *halacha* known as *hilchos derech erez* which include the Torah's expectations for behavior regarding mundane daily living, including eating, sleeping, talking etc. A facet of *hilchos derech erez* is that it is axiomatic to Torah that one should not act in a manner that disrespects oneself.

The *Gemara* tells us that one who eats in the street degrades himself so much that he loses his credibility to serve as an *eid* (witness). This halacha is recorded in Shulchan Aruch.

While during the times of the *Gemara* this was considered degrading even by the general population, today it is common to see people eating in the street. Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach writes that although this has become common practice, it is still inappropriate and should not be done. The rule is that something deemed by *Chazal* as inappropriate should not be done, even when it becomes common practice.

The *Talmud Yerushalmi* cautions a *talmid chochom* not to eat in the street, which seems to indicate that all others may eat in the street (unlike the *Talmud Bavli* which disqualifies anyone who eats the street from serving as an *eid*).

To resolve this apparent contradiction the *meforshim* define exactly what the *Bavli* is referring to. Some say this only applies to one who eats while actually walking or one who regularly eats on the street. Others limit it only to those eating bread, while others say it only refers to a proper meal.

However, since the rationale behind not trusting one who eats in the street as a witness is because it is undignified, it does not include designated eating areas such as a picnic area.

קידושין מ"ב, תוס' שם ד"ה ויש אומרים, טושו"ע ח"מ סי' לד"ב, ב"ח, וסמ"ע שם, ספר ויהי בנסוע עמ' רה

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Our new exciting shiurim program will be operating soon! Shiurim will be taking place weekly at our state of the of the art library for men. Lectures will be taking place for women as well on a variety interesting & important topics.