VAYOMER ELIYAHU

Inspiration and Encouragement on Topics of Trust and Faith in Hashem Yisborach
Based on the Weekly Torah Portion

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In English



בס"ד

One Never Needs to Fear Because He Can be Saved as a Result of His Bitachon in Hashem!

›› *Trusting in Hashem Until One is Certain that His Yeshua is Near!*

The *pasuk* in this week's Parshah (Bereishis 34:25) states: "And they came to the city with confidence (*betach*), and they killed every male."

The Shevet Sofer *zt"l* (quoted in Sefer Shaarei Simcha) says that this verse teaches us an important lesson about the power of *bitachon*.

We are meant to learn that one's trust in Hashem should be so strong that he should feel like his salvation is guaranteed. He should be so confident that Hashem will help him that he should feel like his *yeshua* has already arrived. If one has *bitachon* to such an extent, he can rest assured that Hashem will, in fact, surely help him.

This idea does not only apply to difficult times. Rather, even when it comes to common, everyday matters, one should trust in Hashem and recognize that He knows what he needs and He will provide for him. Therefore, he should always remain calm and simply rely on Hashem.

With this in mind, he explains the *pasuk* in Tehillim (22:5): "Our forefathers trusted in You. They trusted and were saved." He writes that the word "*bitachon*" has the root of "*betach*", assured. This indicates that one who has genuine *bitachon* has no doubts in his mind. He is sure that Hashem will help him. The Avos were on this level. Their *bitachon* was so powerful that they always considered it as if the salvation was already there.

Accordingly, the *pasuk* in Tehillim uses the word "trusted" twice because it is saying that their *bitachon* was so genuine that they trusted in Hashem, and while they trusted, it was like they were already saved, even if the salvation had not actually occurred yet.

This is what the *pasuk* says about Yaakov's two sons, Shimon and Levi. It says that they entered the city of Shechem with *bitachon*. They were confident and had no fear because of their great level of trust in Hashem. As a result, Hashem performed great miracles for them, and they were able to wipe out the entire city.

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In the same vein, the Ben Ish Chai *zt"l* (Sefer Hachaim V'Hashalom on Tehillim) explains the words (22:5) "they trusted and were not ashamed" by saying that some people trust in Hashem to miraculously save them, but they don't tell anyone about it because they are worried that the miracle might not occur, and they think that this would be embarrassing for them. This shows that their *bitachon* is not perfect. If someone truly trusts in Hashem with his entire heart and soul, he won't be ashamed to show it, as he is certain that the miraculous salvation will occur.

He goes on to relate that during the times of Rav Moshe Galanti *zt"l*, there was a severe drought in Eretz Yisroel. Not one drop of rain fell all winter. All the wells used for storing water had gone dry, and people had nothing to drink.

The Maharam Galanti assembled everyone for an Atzeres Tefillah at the gravesite of Shimon Hatzadik, and he told them to bring along their raincoats to protect them from the heavy rains that would surely be falling on their way home. Everyone prayed with their entire hearts, and it began to rain heavily. It was pouring so much that they all had to run home as fast as they could to get out of the downpour.

The Maharam Galanti's trust in Hashem was so strong that he was positive that He would hear the prayers and send rain, to the extent that he reminded everyone to bring their raincoats. He wasn't worried that he might be embarrassed if it didn't rain because he was 100% sure that it would.

This is reminiscent of the story that the Gemara relates about Choni Hama'agel (Taanis 19A). During a drought, before he began to daven for rain, he told the people to bring their ovens into their houses so that they wouldn't get ruined by the rain that he was positive would fall.

Rav Mordechai Banet *zt"l* (Drashos, Drush 20) similarly explains the *pasuk* (Tehillim 13:6): "And I trusted in Your *chesed*, my heart will rejoice in Your salvation. I will sing to Hashem

for He has bestowed it upon me."

He notes that Dovid Hamelech is talking about trusting in Hashem to provide for him in the future but also singing to Him in thanks as if the *yeshua* has already arrived. Again, this is because his *bitachon* was so strong that even before the salvation came, it was already a reality for him, so he already thanked Hashem for it.

›› *The Bitachon Itself Brings the Yeshua*

The truth is that *bitachon* itself brings about the *yeshua*. We see this from the text of Shemonah Esrei that was instituted by the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah.

We recite: "*V'lo neivosh kibecha batachnu*. We will not be embarrassed because we trust in You." In other words, our *bitachon* is the reason that we will not be embarrassed.

We further recite in "Refaeinu": "*Refaeinu Hashem… ki Keil melech rofeh ne'eman v'rachaman ata.* Heal us, Hashem… because You are the G-d, trusted and compassionate king." This means that Hashem will heal and save us because we trust in Him as our king.

We also say in the *tefillah* of "Ga'al Yisroel": "*V'ga'aleinu geulah sheleimah ki Keil go'el chazak ata*. And redeem us with a complete redemption because You are a G-d who is a strong redeemer." Again, this indicates that Hashem will redeem us because we trust in Him as our mighty king.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky *zt"l* (Sefer Orchos Yosher, Erech Pachad V'Daagah) writes: "Some people are always afraid. They fear disease, war, criminals, etc. They spend their lives in fear and panic that some bad thing might occur to them. Some people are afraid of going to certain places, while others are even afraid to leave their homes.

"…For everything, throw your needs to Hashem. Don't scrimp and don't be worried at all, for this is the remedy of bitachon. Hashem will fulfill the will of one who trusts in Him with a full heart. He provides all his needs in every place and at every time…"

This is a very bad way to live, as is seen from the Gemara (Brachos 60A), which relates that Rav Yishmoel ben Rav Yosi once saw a student in the marketplace who looked fearful. He told him that he was committing a sin, as is stated (Yeshaya 33:14): 'Those who fear in Tzion are sinners.'

"**The** student responded, 'It also says (Mishlei 28:14): 'Fortunate is the man who is always afraid.' Rav Yishmoel answered that this is referring to *divrei* Torah. Rashi explains that a person should constantly be afraid of forgetting his learning; therefore, he should consistently review. (Thus, a person should not be worried about anything besides *divrei* Torah.)

"**Fear** and worry also damage the body and cause all types of illness, as is stated (Sanhedrin 100A): 'Don't allow worry to enter your heart because worry has killed many strong men.'

"**The** cause of all of this is a lack of *emunah*. If one would fully believe that everything comes from Hashem and no one can even bend a finger in this world unless it is decreed Above, he would have no reason to fear. He would know that if something is decreed against him, there is nothing he can do about it, and if nothing is decreed against him, there is no reason to fear at all.

"**While** we do find a concept of '*zehirus*' (vigilance), as is stated (Bava Kama 60B): 'If there is pestilence in a city, pick up your feet (and leave) …', this is part of doing one's *hishtadlus*. One must do whatever he can, but there is no reason to fear or worry. And Chazal (Taanis 22A) praise those who are always happy and make others happy and say that they are *bnei Olam Haba.*"

Shimon and Levi inherited this strength in *emunah* from their father, Yaakov Avinu. It says about him at the beginning of this week's Parshah (Bereishis 32:14): "And he slept there that night. And he took from what came into his hand an offering for Esav his brother."

We may ask why it is necessary to inform us where Yaakov slept that night. Furthermore, the *pasuk* later reiterates (ibid:22): "And the gift passed on before him, and he slept that night in the camp." Why is it so important to repeat these details?

The Abarbanel *zt"l* explains that the Torah tells us that Yaakov slept to teach us about his great *bitachon*. He didn't run away or look for a place to hide. Rather, since he was so full of *bitachon*, he went to sleep right there, even though Esav was nearby, because he fully trusted in Hashem and felt no fear.

The *pasuk* is teaching us that Yaakov was perfectly calm. Although Esav was approaching, he was able to sleep peacefully because his trust in Hashem was so great.

Rabenu Bechaya (Kad Hakemach, Erech Bitachon) writes that one's *bitachon* should be so strong that he should feel as if Hashem has given him a personal guarantee.

Similarly, the Chovos Halevavos (Shaar Habitachon, beginning of Perek Aleph) writes that the defining trait of *bitachon* is *menuchas hanefesh* (serenity). One should trust in Hashem to such an extent that he feels calm and serene, knowing that Hashem will do what is best for him.

›› *Calmness Even During Difficult Times*

We find a similar statement about Yona Hanavi. After he boarded the ship to flee to Tarshish, it is stated (Yona 1:4-5): "And Hashem cast a mighty wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, and the ship threatened to be broken up. And the sailors were frightened, and each one cried out to his god, and they cast the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them, and Yona went down to the ship's innards, lay down, and fell fast asleep."

We may ask two questions on these verses. 1. Why is it necessary to tell us that Yona went down to the ship's innards and went to sleep? What are we meant to learn from this? 2. How could he go to sleep during such a frightening time? While all the sailors were screaming and crying, how could he just take a nap?

Sefer Darchei Noam (Chelek 1, page 170) answers that the *pasuk* is coming to teach us the extent of Yona's *bitachon*. Even in such a confusing, troubling time, he was so calm and collected that he was able to go to sleep, as if he didn't have a worry in the world.

›› *Everyone Can be Saved in the Merit of Bitachon!*

We may ask: If we are talking about a virtuous man who fears sin and fulfills every mitzvah and avoids all sin, such a man has the ability to have *bitachon* in Hashem and trust that He will protect and save him during his time of need in the merit of his mitzvos and good deeds. However, how can a simple man who is not so careful to avoid sin come to such a level of *bitachon*? How can a sinner expect Hashem to save him from harm when he has set the trap for himself simply by having *bitachon*?

The answer is that it is indeed true! Any Jew, no matter who he is, can emerge from his sufferings by placing his trust in Hashem. This is actually stated in Chazal (Yalkut Shimoni Tehillim 32:10): "'There are many sufferings for a wicked man. And one who trusts in Hashem will be surrounded by kindness.' Even a wicked man who trusts in Hashem will be surrounded by kindness." This means that if one trusts in Hashem, even if he is wicked and deserves punishments and sufferings will be surrounded by His kindness.

Rav Yisroel Salanter *zt"l* wrote in a letter to his son, Rav Aryeh *zt"l,* in the name of Rav Zundel of Salant *zt"l*: "For everything, throw your needs to Hashem. Don't scrimp and don't worry, for this is the remedy of *bitachon*. Hashem will fulfill the will of one who trusts in Him with a full heart. He provides all his needs in every place and at every time, even if he isn't virtuous, as it is stated, 'One who trusts in Hashem is surrounded by kindness.'

"**And** Hashem has many messengers. I am certain that a person can trust in Hashem to fulfill any desire, and he will receive it. If we see that someone yearns for something and doesn't receive it, it is only because his bitachon in Hashem is not perfect."

›› *Avrohom Trusted in Hashem, Not in His Merits!*

The c After Avrohom Avinu received the promise from Hashem that he would have a son, it is stated (Bereishis 15:6): "And he believed in Hashem, and He considered it to him as tzedakah." Rashi explains: "Hashem considered it a merit and an act of tzedakah for Avrohom because of his emunah."

The Ramban asks why Avrohom's belief that Hashem would grant him a son was considered so special. He had already recognized Hashem as a child, and had gone through ten *nisyonos* unquestioningly. Isn't it obvious that he would believe Hashem when He told him that he would have a son? He answers with the following words: "His *emunah* was that Hashem would grant him a son solely out of His kindness, and not as reward for anything he had done, even though Hashem had told him that he deserved much reward."

To understand the Ramban, we may quote the words we recite in Nishmas: "Until now Your compassion has helped us, and Your kindness has not forsaken us. Do not abandon us, Hashem our G-d, forever." This means that Hashem has provided for us with "compassion" and "kindness" until now. Therefore, we can be assured that He will continue to send what we need to us forever.

The Vilna Gaon *zt"l* (quoted in Siddur HaGr"a, Havdalah for Motzoei Shabbos) expounds on this concept and writes that if a person really thinks he deserves everything Hashem gives him because of his righteousness and goodness, he should realize that it is possible he will one day use up all his merits and run out of "credit". But a person who realizes the truth knows that everything he receives is given to Him by Hashem out of His great compassion knows that it is really charity from Him that he does not deserve based on his own deeds.

Such a person has no reason to worry that Hashem will ever stop sending him what he needs. He knows that everything he has ever received was a present from Hashem that he did nothing to deserve. Why should he suspect that Hashem would ever stop providing for him and sending him gifts purely out of compassion and kindness?

Accordingly, the Ramban is explaining that Avrohom Avinu believed that Hashem would grant him a son solely as an act of Divine kindness, and not because he deserved it. Therefore, he was not concerned that anything he did could annul the promise. Thus, he was able to have full *bitachon* in Hashem on the highest level.