

## Bitachon: Connecting With Hashem

When working with our talmidim it can become easy to get lost in the details of their growth. We want to develop their minds, teach them how to analyze a Gemara, teach them responsibility, and help them mature and grow in their middos. All these goals are important, but one of the most important gifts we can give our talmidim is an unshakable bitachon in Hashem.

Life is full of unexpected twists and turns, and no one can escape trials and tribulations. As we progress through the stages of life, heartache and challenges are part of the human experience. Imagine two people, the atheist and the maamin. The atheist finds himself in a cruel and capricious world. He is merely a collection of self-replicating cells lost on a tiny and insignificant speck of dust endlessly circling the cosmos. No one is guiding his life; his destiny is entirely determined by brute and unfeeling chance. Such a worldview is bleak and hopeless, and one pities the person forced to endure such an existence. It is no wonder that America is in the midst of an anxiety epidemic, with 40 million adults — roughly 18% of the population — having a clinical anxiety disorder, according to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America. Consider also that stress is one of the top health concerns for U.S. teenagers according to the American Psychological Association. Psychologists say that if high school students don't learn healthy ways to manage that stress, it could have serious long-term health implications. Even more shocking is the revelation by the World Health Organization that depression is among the leading causes of disability worldwide. Our world can be grueling, pointless, and difficult for people without faith.

Compare this bleak and nihilistic worldview to that of the baal bitachon. The baal bitachon understands that Hashem created the world with the sole purpose of doing chesed. Hashem maintains total control over His entire creation and guides everything towards the fulfillment of His Divine plan. Life is not hefker - everything happens for a reason. When someone experiences pain, there is a reason. Hashem cares about his prayers and wants him to succeed in fulfilling his life's mission. .

He knows that if he puts all his faith and trust in Hashem, then Hashem will watch over him and care for all his needs. Such a person will not lose hope when the situation seems bleak. He knows that his loving Father is watching over him. This sense of tranquility is priceless and can make the difference between a happy life and an empty and anxiety-ridden existence. This can be clearly seen during the terrible years of 1941 -1945 when our grandparents experienced the crucible of hell on earth. Reading our grandparents' memoirs, one fact becomes clear - the only way that our nation survived the torment of their German butchers was because they clung to their trust in Hashem. Someone who believes that Hashem is watching over him will refuse to give up hope even in the darkest nightmare. He may not understand the grand plan, but he knows that he has a Father who loves him and that everything is for THE good.

### The Real Power of Bitachon

Chazal made a remarkable statement regarding our faith in Hashem's goodness: not only does such faith give us perfect tranquility, regardless of life's tribulations, but it can even change the outcome of Divine decrees. The Chofetz Chaim wrote (Machaneh Yisroel, page 87) that, "According to the magnitude of the bitachon, so is the magnitude of the success." Consider these astonishing words. Bitachon is THE KEY to success in life's challenges. Our world is a mirage waiting to be revealed. It is not our boss who gives us our paycheck, nor the doctor who administers the cure to our illness, it is all Hashem, operating behind a thin curtain of natural order. When someone breaks through the veil of causality in this world and peers behind the curtain - realizing that it is in reality Hashem who controls everything - they enter a new dimension of existence. Gone are the standard rules of materialistic cause and effect; replaced with a direct connection with the Creator of the world. Once we genuinely sear the idea of Hashem's sovereignty and benevolence into our consciousness, our relationship with Hashem grows infinitely closer. Our lives lose the humdrum and angst of ordinary existence and we spend our lives building and fostering our connection to Hashem.

This article was adapted from "Impassioned Chinuch" by Rabbi Shaya Cohen

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