

## Building Bitachon

How does one work on developing an enduring trust in Hashem? The truth is that there is no magic button that can be pressed to allow us to inspire our students to a high level of bitachon. Furthermore, bitachon is not something that can be faked until we achieve the real thing. However, bitachon does have levels, and one can grow from a lower level of bitachon to a higher level. Developing bitachon requires a multi-pronged approach that includes study, contemplation, and focus.

### Studying Bitachon

Whenever we sin, we are on some level denying Hashem's rulership over the world. The first step in developing bitachon is to make concrete our knowledge of Hashem's existence and His relationship with the Jewish people. Human beings are created with minds that can logically process reality. As such, Judaism does not believe in taking a "leap of faith," but instead encourages coming to belief through clear and rigorous analysis. Any idea that is arrived at without a clear logical foundation can be easily shaken. Obviously, there is a concept of emunah peshutah – simply embracing the truth passed down from our fathers as well as feeling the clarity that comes from connecting with Hashem. Nowadays, however, many of our talmidim are not on that level and want a clear approach that can be understood in a reasonable and simple fashion. Studying the unique claim of public revelation to the Jewish people at Har Sinai and the numerous events in our history that unambiguously point to our relationship with the Creator of the Universe can shore up one's foundation of faith in Hashem. Contemplating the remarkable survival of the Jewish people and our singular impact on world history will leave one with a clear sense of Divine handiwork operating behind the scenes of history. Studying the works of the rishonim and achronim on the topic of bitachon in-depth can help one cultivate insights and a deeper feeling of connection with Hashem. Additionally, the Torah and our tradition are full of prophetic statements and ideas that display a knowledge of our world that defies human explanation. Studying these concepts can help one strengthen his belief in Hashem's existence and in our place as the Chosen People.

### Contemplating The Universe

The Rambam teaches us that faith in Hashem can be acquired by observing the world around us. Everything about our universe, from the mechanical ingenuity of the hummingbird's wings to the sheer complexity of the human immune system,

points to a Master Designer. The analogy often used is that of a man who finds an intricate watch on the forest floor. Would the man ever conclude that nature somehow designed the hundreds of intricately connected gears and springs that comprise the clock? Of course not, yet almost everything in nature is infinitely more complex than even the most sophisticated watch. The human brain contains over 100 billion intricately connected neurons that control its functioning. The human body is made of countless systems that must work in complete and delicate harmony at all times to function. We used to believe that single-celled organisms were somehow "simple," but the more we learn about the world, the more apparent its sheer complexity becomes. The internal mechanisms housed inside even the simplest cell are so utterly complex and exquisitely engineered that they would put our most significant technological and engineering feats to shame. If one laid out the genetic code of the little Japanese flower Paris Japonica, it would stretch more than 328 feet long. The human genome contains approximately 3 billion base pairs in its 23 pairs of chromosomes, a copy of which is housed in every single cell in our bodies. All the marvelous design in our universe points to one inescapable fact: A Creator designed our universe.

### Focusing On Hashem's Chesed

When someone closely examines their life, they can see the remarkable reality: Hashem is always present in our day to day life. He helps and guides us in subtle - and not so subtle - ways. If we open our eyes, we can see the many acts of chesed that Hashem does for us every day and can feel Hashem's rachamim and love in our daily lives. Look out for moments of hashgacha pratit and share them with your children and talmidim. Focus on them and make them part of your identity. By doing this one can develop firm trust in Hashem.

When you are struggling, see your struggles for what they are: a chance to have Hashem alleviate your burden. By connecting to Hashem even in hardship, you inculcate in yourself the awareness that the only thing you can rely on to help you is Hashem's kindness. Nothing else matters. Surviving a tragedy or challenge by clinging to your faith in Hashem is one of the best ways to supercharge your bitachon to make it part of your core identity and the bedrock of your entire outlook on life. In this sense, challenges are a great opportunity from Hashem to develop an intimate relationship with Him.

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