



פרשת בא

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Bitachon - Relying on Hashem

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Part I. Misplaced History

Where's Egypt?

When you begin learning Nach, in the beginning, in Sefer Yehoshua, you see that the Bnei Yisroel were busy conquering Eretz Canaan. That's a good part of the first many chapters of Nach. *Al pi Hashem*, they were fighting against various kings and tribes and taking over the land, town by town.

Now, if you think about it for a little bit there's something quite surprising about this period in our history. And that is that we don't hear anything about Mitzrayim. We're reading the Sefer Yehoshua and the Sefer Shoftim and Shmuel Aleph and Shmuel Bais, and we find no mention of Egypt. It's as if it didn't exist. Other countries, other nations, yes. They had trouble with all nations around them; Aram, Edom, Amon and Moav, the Plishtim. But Mitzrayim? Nothing.

One mention is made. When Shaul went to battle with Amalek, so it's mentioned *derech agav*

that one of the Amaleki slaves was an Egyptian. That's the one mention – an Egyptian slave boy! It's unusual. An Egyptian should be a slave? Egyptians weren't slaves. They were a master nation. And here's an instance where you find a Mitzri slave. But otherwise, besides for that passing story, we would think that Egypt didn't exist.

There's Egypt!

Now, if you know anything about ancient history and especially about Ancient Egypt, it's a very big question. Everyone knows that Ancient Egypt was a powerful country. Already when Avrohom Avinu came to Mitzrayim he found a rich civilization, and it continued to grow and develop for a long time. And then when a once-in-a-lifetime famine wreaked havoc on the whole Middle East, Egypt, by means of its store of granaries, was the only country that remained standing. And then on the backs of Jewish slaves, they grew greater and greater after that. They were the breadbasket of the world, the superpower of those ancient days.

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And the Egyptians were not such nice people that they kept to themselves; they always wanted to have hegemony over all the nations around them. And so how could it be that a little nation of Jews settled right next door to them and yet for five hundred years there's no mention of trouble? It's very strange! Eretz Canaan had always been the province of Egypt; it's right next door! In their own backyard, would the Egyptians allow somebody to conquer their provinces? The nation that came in from the desert was living in villages and farms, spread out in the open country, and they were easy prey for a country like Egypt. And yet we hear nothing. You don't hear a word out of Egypt. For a country like that to just disappear from the scene?! It's a remarkable fact of history.

But actually it's only remarkable if you haven't studied this week's *sedrah*. You remember how the Torah describes Pharaoh's advisors begging him to reconsider his decision to keep hold of the Bnei Yisroel: **הֲטָרָם תִּדַע כִּי אֲבָרָה מִצְרַיִם** – “Don't you see that *Mitzrayim* is lost already?!” (Shemos 10:7) Lost already!

And it wasn't an exaggeration. *Mitzrayim* was laid so low from the *makkos* that it couldn't even lift up its head; they couldn't make a peep. Now, if they had been able to, if they had been the great nation they were formerly, absolutely they would have interfered constantly. The truth is, had they been *anything* they would have intruded constantly in the history of our people.

History's Hole

But **אֲבָרָה מִצְרַיִם** – they were destroyed. They were so destroyed that from the time that the Bnei Yisroel went out of Egypt, that superpower is not heard from again for hundreds of years! Everything went quiet. There is a five hundred year gap when Egypt just vanished from history.

Now this gap is so queer, so unusual in the history of the world, that it became one of the primary causes for a disruption, a big error, in the chronicles of world history. Anyone who is familiar

even a little bit with the studies of the history of ancient nations knows that the secular historians are fond of making a fuss about a discrepancy of about five hundred years that they've found between their calculations and ours.

Now, the truth is, I don't feel much of a need to reconcile their chronology with ours because *we* are the ones who have an exact chronology according to generations. We have enumerated in our Tanach every generation in sequence from the beginning of time. And Josephus, writing at the end of the second *churban*, says that we have in writing all the generations of our priests from Aharon Hakohen down to his time. Now, if you have our Torah chronology and also from Aharon Hakohen down to the Churban Bayis Sheini, that means you have from Adam Harishon to Churban Bayis Sheini!

So we have pedigrees, clear-cut pedigrees, from the beginning of history. And therefore it's gratuitous, it's entirely unnecessary, for us to bother our heads to reconcile our chronology with theirs. Let them worry about reconciling *their* records with *ours* because *we* are the ones who have an exact chronology according to generations, every generation in sequence, from the beginning down to today.

Inventing History

People are so naïve, so weak-minded. They don't realize what's behind the secular histories. The secular histories are riddled with errors. First of all, many of the earlier historical works were rigged for the purpose of justifying the Gospels of the New Testament, books which are full of falsehoods anyhow. Calculations and chronologies were created and manipulated to promote a false narrative. And they did quite a poor job at it. It's a joke! The Christian books weren't written by scholars. Anybody who knows a little bit about their books can recognize the ignorance of the early Christian writers and the untruths as they create generations out of thin air.

And the Ancient Egyptian records are even more lacking. You have to understand that the ancient Egyptian records are like a palimpsest. You know what a palimpsest is? It's an old scroll written on parchment, and then someone needed some page to write on, so he erased part of the parchment and wrote something on top of the old letters. So experts who want to discover what the original writing was, they photograph the present writing, then they erase it carefully, and they try to find underneath the furrows that were caused by the stylus of the original writer. That's a job for experts. It's one kind of writing imposed on another kind of writing.

Now that's what happened in the Egyptian chronology. When the *makkos* devastated Egypt for a full year, so during that desolation almost all of the Egyptian records were destroyed. And later when they began to rebuild and write again, it was like writing on top of old records. And so when Herodotus, the ancient Greek historian, began to copy his history from ancient Egyptian records, what did he do? He took the two sets of records that were overlapping and he thought they were consecutive. He pieced together the ancient Egyptian chronicles that were before this period and after the period and he considered them one continuum because he didn't know there was a five hundred year gap in between when Egypt was desolate.

Ages In Chaos

This subject is explained at length in the work "Ages in Chaos." It's a secular Jewish writer and therefore I won't give him the honor of mentioning his name and I'm not recommending that you read it either, but that's the place where it's spoken about most fully. He states there that there's a very big mixup in the secular chronology because all of the secular histories of antiquity are based on Egyptian records, and that's why they are hundreds of years out of line – because it was something unfathomable,

that the once proud powerhouse, the land of Ancient Egypt, should be so utterly destroyed.

Now, our little *cheder* boys and our little Beis Yaakov girls, on the other hand, already know all about it. They all learn the Chumash and remember what the Egyptians themselves were saying: **כִּי אָבְדָה מִצְרַיִם** – "Our Egypt has gone lost." But the secular historians, what could they do? They're bumbling around in the darkness of a long-lost history and they're tripping on every little thing, making mistakes at every turn.

The truth is that today even the secular historians admit it. They've begun to begrudgingly admit it because of ancient records they've found. Our *possuk* doesn't need any proofs from the *goyim* but today they've already found ancient papyri with the testimony of Egyptians who lived through the *makkos*. We have the Papyrus of Ipuwer. In the early 1900's a certain gentile professor published these papyri, composed by an ancient Egyptian sage who witnessed these events with his own eyes. "The river is blood ... Blood is everywhere ... Men shrink in disgust from tasting ... That is our water ... What shall we do? Everything is in ruination!"

You can read the descriptions over there. "The land is turned over like a potter's wheel ... there is no end to the noise ... trees are destroyed ... no fruit nor herbs are found ... gates, walls and columns are consumed by fire ... the land is left over to its weariness like the cutting of the flax ... the cattle moan ... all the animals, their hearts weep ... there is no light in the land." (The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage From a Hieratic Papyrus in Leiden; Alan H. Gardiner)

We Know All About It

Now that's news to the secular historians – these papyri were published quite recently – but we know all about it; we grew up on these stories. **וַיֹּאכַל אֶת כָּל עֵשֶׂב הָאָרֶץ וְאֵת כָּל פְּרֵי הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר הוֹתִיר הַבָּרָד וְלֹא נֹתֵר כָּל יֶרֶק בְּעֵץ וּבְעֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה בְּכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם** (Bo 10:15). *Whatever little bit was left after the hail, was completely destroyed by the locust.* There was

nothing left at all. Destruction and darkness, that's all. No Nile, no vegetation, no food, no safety and security.

It's a remarkable thing how low Egypt was laid. The *makkos* were one blow after another, until everything the Mitzrim relied on was completely destroyed. Egypt was so ruined that it didn't have the nerve to get up out of the dirt! For five hundred years, they laid in the dirt prostrate!

The Lesson

The question is what was the purpose of such a destruction? After all, in order to allow the Bnei Yisroel to go free, no *makkos* and no miracles were necessary. Egypt could have had an internal revolution or some other misfortunes that would have divided them and the Bnei Yisroel could have left in a natural manner. Didn't the slaves in America go free without ten *makkos*? There could have been an Egyptian Abraham Lincoln too; why not? There could have been a civil war and the Bnei Yisroel would walk out to freedom without the land being destroyed. So what was the purpose of *אֲבָרָה מִצְרַיִם*?

When Hakodosh Boruch Hu began the series of the ten *makkos*, one plague after the other, He introduced them with a preface that reveals their purpose. The Torah states as clearly as could be, *וַיִּדְעוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי אֲנִי הָשֵׁם* – *Mitzrayim should know that I am Hashem!* (Shemos 7:5). Or *לִמְעַן תִּדְרַע כִּי אֵין כְּמֹנִי בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ* – *in order that you should know there is none like Me in all the world (ibid. 9:14)*. It means, "I'm the Boss here".

The ten *makkos* were ten courses of instruction in *emunah*, reminders of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. But not only for Egypt – after all, the people of Mitzrayim are long gone; they're not learning anything. It's the Am Yisroel, the ones who still study *sefer Shemos*, who are expected to learn the lesson of *כִּי אֲבָרָה מִצְרַיִם*, of why the most powerful nation of the time was laid so low that their disappearance caused a gap to appear in world history. By means of studying the destruction of Mitzrayim and why it happened,

we are the ones who gain; we're the ones expected to be recipients of that lesson!

Part II. Misplaced Reliance

Careful What You Wish For

There is a principle called *bitachon*, which means trust in Hakodosh Boruch Hu. It's most fully treated in the *sefer Chovos Halevovos*; there's no other work where this is spoken about at such length. And in his famous *Shaar Habitachon* the *Chovos Halevavos* says as follows: *כְּדִי לְהַתְמַיֵּד הַטּוֹבָה אֶל יָבֵטַח בָּהּ* – *In order to continue receiving some benefit that you have, you should not trust in it*. It's a few words and it's easy to memorize. It means that trusting in something may cause that thing or that cause to be removed; and therefore, if you want to preserve what you have, make sure not to rely on it.

Now, the *Chovos Halevavos* is not coming here to give you an *eitzah tovah*, how to keep your property safe. He's not interested in that right now – of course he is, but that's not his purpose here. What he's telling us is the way of Hashem in this world, how He guides a man to a successful Torah mind, a mind that relies solely on Hashem. That sometimes He'll take away something from you, something that you trusted in, in order to teach you – and anyone else who is willing to learn – not to transfer your reliance on Him onto anything else. That's one of the lessons we're expected to learn from this week's *sedrah* and that's the crux of tonight's talk; now let's begin.

Land Of The Nile

You know, there's a certain reason why Egypt is called Mitzrayim. *Meitzar* in *lashon kodesh* means a boundary and *meitzarim* means double boundaries. Mitzrayim means a land with two narrow boundaries; a long and narrow land.

Now, why is Mitzrayim a long and narrow land? Why can't it be wide? The answer is that the fertility of Mitzrayim depends on a long and narrow river,

and the country developed alongside that river. Everyone knows that the Nile rises every year and it overflows the lowlands for a certain distance on both sides of the river. And when the water recedes, it leaves behind a rich sediment, a loam that fattens the earth and provides one of the most fertile areas in the world. And so, because they were dependent on that river, so the length of the Nile, that's the length of the civilization of Mitzrayim. Beyond that, it's arid; it's unproductive and unsettled.

And therefore, the Nile was the pride of Egypt. A big majestic river ran through the land and there were irrigation ditches leading from the Nile to everywhere. It was beautiful to behold as the life-giving waters swept through the land and caused the entire narrow Nile valley to be a beautiful picture of fertility.

And not only sustenance it gave them; there was plenty to bathe in, plenty to wash your laundry in. They had a way to travel, to navigate their ships. It also freshened the air; the Nile, as it traversed the land was their biggest pride, their chief benefactor.

Pharaoh's Nile

That's why Yechezkel Hanavi (29:3) portrays Pharaoh as saying the following: לִי יַאֲרִי וְאֲנִי עָשִׂיתִנִּי – My Nile is mine and I have made myself. It means because the Nile belongs to me, I have been able to be self-sufficient. That's what it means that Pharaoh was יֵצֵא הַמִּימָה – he went out to the water; it means he went to worship the Nile. That's the plain *pshat*. There's a Medrash that everybody knows from Rashi (Shemos 7:15), but the plain meaning is that he went out to the water to pay homage to his benefactor. The Nile was his support, his everything.

Not only Pharaoh. You know our Sages tell us (Bereishis Rabbah 39) that there was an annual celebration in the land of Egypt, a big holiday. It was called *yom te'atron shel Nilus*, the day when the theater of the Nile was being presented. It means the nation assembled to give honor to the river Nile that every year it rose and performed its functions dutifully. Not only they were grateful to the Nile,

not only were they proud of it, *they put their trust in it!*

Ohh! That's already looking for trouble. To put your trust in an intermediary?! כְּרִי לְהִתְמַיֵּד הַטּוֹבָה אֵל יִבְטַח בָּהּ – *If you expect to continue receiving some benefit, the last thing you want to do is trust in it.* Because if you do, Hashem might have to teach you a lesson; He might send you a reminder about Who really is your Benefactor.

The Stricken Nile

And that's why the Nile was stricken first in the *makkos* in Egypt. Because the Mitzrim were so confident in their river, Hakodosh Boruch Hu struck them right in the river and the Nile became now a source of a great deal of trouble. First of all it turned into blood; it became a nuisance. Instead of the life-giving water, it became a messy substance that ruined the fields. You couldn't use it for drinking and it spoiled the vegetation. It means that the god in whom they had so much confidence turned around and gave them a big kick in the pants in order to show them that כִּי כָּל אֱלֹהֵי הָעַמִּים אֱלִילִים – *that all the intermediaries that you relied on are elilim; they're nothing-gods – from the word al; al means nothing.*

It doesn't mean the Nile is nothing. The Nile was very important! But it matters to whom you attribute your success. If you don't see the One standing behind the success, then sooner or later you might lose it.

I'm going to give you a little parallel. It's not exact but it's the same thing. Today in America we worship the ideal of democracy; we even consider it worthwhile to send American soldiers to fight to make the world safe for democracy. And not only the gentiles. *Frum* Jews praise 'democracy' and 'the Constitution' because we have our rights, our religious freedoms.

The End Of Democracy

Now it's a good thing to have democracy, absolutely, but once the people put their trust in it,

it can turn out to be a very great bane, a troublemaker. I'll give you an example. In Germany before World War I, they didn't have real democracy. There was a kaiser. The kaisers would never permit Nazis to get power. They would never permit Jews to be persecuted. They weren't lovers of Jews, but the kaiser had certain principles of decency, of law and order.

What happened? When Germany finally changed from a royalty, a monarchy to democracy, so many Jews thought it would be a *yeshuah*. "We can trust in democracy, in freedom, in rights and self-determination." So now Kaiser Wilhelm was no longer in charge and instead there was popular elections. And whom did they elect? They elected Hitler.

That's a lesson. "אֵל תִּבְטְחוּ" *b'democracy!*" I'm afraid to say that maybe one day it will be used here for terrible things. I'm not saying gas chambers *chas v'shalom*, but don't you see already that they're voting to allow all forms of immorality, the worst sins in the Torah. The Constitution might become the source of wickedness. And then we'll suffer terribly because of that.

In G-d We Trust

And therefore, those organizations like the American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee that are fighting to preserve the Constitution, they're a danger to us. They're fighting that the government should not give federal aid to the *yeshivahs* because it will attack the principles of the Constitution! They want to preserve the Constitution at all costs because that is their benefactor. That's their security blanket. These people are putting their trust in the Constitution instead of in Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

Oh no! That's the most dangerous thing. That's our big *sakanah*; to trust in something other than Hashem. If we Jews wish for America to continue as a country of tolerance, of freedom, we should not put our trust in the Constitution. Our minds, our speech, our attitude must always be that it's Hashem

and only Hashem. The Nile is nothing and democracy is nothing and the Constitution is nothing. It's a big error to think that the Constitution is the wall that stands between us and persecution.

If we wish the Constitution to remain as a guarantee of freedom, we should not trust in it. We should trust only in Hashem. And then with the Constitution or without, our good fortunes will persevere. It doesn't mean you shouldn't encourage democracy, but don't trust in it! Because if you trust in it, if you forget that it's all Hashem, then just like the Mitzrim trusted in the Nile, the Constitution might just turn the country over on its head.

The Nile was everything to Mitzrayim. Very good, absolutely they needed the Nile. But they *relied* on the Nile. They trusted in the Nile. And therefore when the time came to deflate the arrogance of Pharaoh and his people, the first plague was sent upon the Nile and that source of prosperity turned into a source of foulness. As the river flowed through the land, it befouled the entire land and it became a source of desolation for Egypt. And that was the lesson that was intended.

Never Forget!

And that was the beginning of the end. The entire country began to totter because **וּבְכָל אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֵעֱשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים**, *Hashem was executing judgment on all the things that Egypt worshiped*, all the intermediaries they trusted in. They relied on the Nile. They relied on the soil. They relied on the weather and their secure borders and their fields. And it all turned out to be nothing but a great disappointment. Everything was smitten by the Hand of Hashem.

תִּדַע כִּי אֲבָרָה מִצְרַיִם, Mitzrayim was ruined. You have no idea of the ruination that came on the land. And it came in order to teach a lesson – so that *we* should learn the lesson – that a nation that trusted in its land, that trusted in its own power will lose that land and that power.

I'm not saying that Egypt didn't deserve destruction for other sins too. There certainly were forms of corruption in Egypt that deserved punishment, but of all forms of wickedness, the most extreme is forgetting about Hashem! Forgetting that what you have, whatever you acquire, what you achieve, whatever you will ever achieve and acquire is given to you from Hashem. Otherwise it's plain old atheism.

And therefore, if you're going to learn one lesson from the *makkos*, let it be this one: if you wish your good fortune to continue, do not put your trust in that thing that causes your good fortune. If you have a diploma, if you have a good head or good hands, if you have the gift of gab, if you have a rich uncle or a good business, or even a not so good business, whatever is the cause of your success, if you wish that it should continue, make it your business to have no confidence in that cause – instead always always always remind yourself that it's Hashem. Always attribute all of your good fortune to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. That's what it means to be a *baal bitachon*, someone who has acquired that precious jewel we call *bitachon*.

Part III. Proper Reliance

Bitachon and Hishtadlus

You know, some people ask questions when they hear the word *bitachon* – they want to know, “Am I supposed to be *mishtadel* this much or that much? In this situation am I doing too little endeavoring? Or should I have more *bitachon*?” There's always a tug of war. “Should I do or should I not do?”

Now if I could answer those questions, I wouldn't be here. I would open an office on the avenue and become a millionaire because very many people have asked me that question during the years. I get calls on the telephone all the time with this question. And you know what I tell them? I tell them that it's impossible to know.

It's not a simple subject; it's always complicated because that's one of the great tests of life. Nobody knows, and that's part of the test. And nevertheless, we're expected to stand up and do the best of our ability in choosing the right way. Someone who practices up trusting in Hashem, he'll find the way forward in life. He'll use his native intelligence and make the right decisions to the best of his ability. Could be he'll blunder once in a while too, but he's serving Hashem; he's doing the best that he can.

In Thought And In Practice

But even though there is no question that there is a difference in some respects how a *baal bitachon* will behave – a *baal bitachon* in some ways behaves differently than a non-*baal bitachon* – that's not our subject at all right now. Because we are learning Chovos Halevavos, which means not Duties of the Limbs, but Duties of the *Mind*. And it's important to know that whatever choices a person makes – “Should I make *hishtadlus* here or should I not?” – the real fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of *bitachon* depends primarily not on what you do but what you *think*.

In Slabodka, the Alter, *zichrono livracha*, was once approached by a *talmid*. “Rebbi,” he said, “Why is it that all your lectures, all the *shmuzen*, are not *lemaaseh*? There's nothing in practice – you only talk about thoughts and ideas?”

So the Alter said, “I don't understand. It's all for practice; everything I say is *lemaaseh*.”

Ad kan the conversation between the *talmid* and the Alter. That's the end of the conversation as it was reported by the *talmid*. But the person who related the story to me added a commentary: “Because who says practice is only with your hands? There is practice with your mind too.”

Hustle For Nothing

So how much exactly you should endeavor, only Hashem knows. But what we *do* know is how to think. When it comes to thinking, to the attitude of

the mind, there's no question about how much or how little – it's all Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

Of course, you'll try to make a living. And you'll hustle too – you're not fulfilling your side of the bargain if you don't hustle. Everybody should try to work and support himself. You'll buy life insurance too. And you'll save money to buy a house and to marry off your children. You'll treat your boss with respect because he's the one handing you your paycheck at the end of the week. You'll put window guards on all the windows and you'll watch your health. Everything you have to do, you'll do. But at the same time, *bitachon* requires us to feel that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is the One who is Feeding us; He's the One standing behind every success. It's to Him you attribute your paycheck and your health.

It's not easy. "But I went to school. I learned how to be a computer man and I worked hard all week. Certainly I deserve to get paid." So we have to understand that it's all nothing. Zero! It's zero! Hakodosh Boruch Hu is giving it to you.

If you made money on the stock market or you made money by being a hustler, or you made money because you patented an invention, it's all a deception. No matter how much effort you invested in making a living, at the end of the week when you come home with your check, Hakodosh Boruch Hu gave you a handout, not your boss.

Full Of Mercy

And therefore, all of life becomes nothing but a test. We're being tried and tested, we go through all the motions and therefore we're doing it ourselves, but we must know that nothing is being done by us. It's all nothing but Hashem!

And so we come back now to those sagacious words of our teacher, the Chovos Halevavos. כִּי לְהַתְמִיד הַטּוֹבָה אֵל יִבְטַח בָּהּ – *In order that some cause which supplies you with happiness or benefit should continue, it is necessary not to trust in it.* Because if you rely on something, that trust you have may cause that thing or that cause to be removed.

Now what's the reasoning behind this? Is it just a punishment? No, no. The principle is that כָּל מַאי לְטַב לְטַב – *whatever the Merciful One does, He does for good.* Hakodosh Boruch Hu is חַסִיד מְעֵשִׂיו בְּכֹל מְעֵשִׂיו; *He is kindly in all of His deeds.*

Now, there's no question that it's a misfortune for a person when his benefactor is removed. Absolutely. But it's a much bigger misfortune when one transfers his trust from Hakodosh Boruch Hu to something else. Much bigger! And sometimes that bigger misfortune is rectified by means of a smaller misfortune – by means of removing the intermediary.

Removing The Splinter

Just like sometimes when you go to a physician because you have a splinter under your fingernail, so what does this kind doctor do? He seizes your hand and holds it tightly and then he presses the forceps underneath your nail and begins wrenching. That kindly physician is making your finger hurt like nobody ever did before. But that's the only way that he can extract the splinter.

Same thing, when Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants to remove a splinter from our minds sometimes it must be done by painful methods. And you know what is one of the biggest splinters that we have stuck in our minds? It's the feeling, the attitude, the belief that whatever I achieve, whatever I accomplish, whatever I acquire, it's the means that helped me.

That's the poisonous thought that comes sneaking in whenever someone is afforded success. When a person has happiness or security or pleasure or honor or *parnassah* by a certain means, it's easy to fall into the trap of attributing his success to that means.

The Wise Guy

Let's say someone is a capable factory worker or a successful businessman. He has a good head or capable hands or whatever it is, and this has caused him – as far as he understands – to be promoted or

to be successful. He pays the rent on time and he's up to date with the *schar limud*. He's a success! Like it says, **הַחָכָם בְּעֵינָיו אֵישׁ עָשִׂיר** – *a rich man is wise in his own opinion* (Mishlei 28:11). He considers himself wise, otherwise how was he *matzliach*? “I was a hustler. I worked hard. I was a good businessman. I had the good sense to make investments.”

“Oh,” Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, “You’re leaving Me out of the picture.”

And so Hakodosh Boruch Hu has pity on this man and He wants to rescue him from this dangerous ‘success.’ Hakodosh Boruch Hu in His mercy performs an operation and He removes the wealth from him. That’s a great kindness because now as he goes from job to job applying for positions and everywhere he’s turned down despite his business ability, he is taught the great lesson that **אָרוּר הַגִּבּוֹר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בְּאָדָם** – *accursed is the man who puts his trust in men*, **וַיִּשֶׂם בְּשׂוֹר זֶרְעוֹ** – *and he makes flesh his strength*.

If a man transfers his *bitachon* from Hakodosh Boruch Hu to his business and then his business goes lost – even if he has nothing at all now – he should be happy. It’s the best thing for him. An operation was made. It’s like a man who had a dangerous tumor and now he walks out of the hospital minus a tumor. He’s minus \$10,000 too, but now he’s happy. He considers it a success because the tumor is gone. So Hakodosh Boruch Hu made an operation and took his business away from him. That was a tumor that caused him to forget about Hakodosh Boruch Hu. But had he had trust in Hakodosh Boruch Hu, he would have had the business and it wouldn’t have been a disease.

A Principle For Life

Oh, now he’s living successfully! The Doctor removed that tumor of **וּמִן הַשֵּׁם יִסּוּר לְבוֹ**, *a mind turned away from Hashem* (Yirmiyahu 17:5). If you trust in something else, so your mind no longer dwells on Hakodosh Boruch Hu and that is the biggest of all splinters because you’re losing one of the chief purposes of life, and that is to learn the

awareness of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. We are in this world to learn Awareness of Hashem, and by putting our trust in something else, we are being robbed of this awareness.

And that’s one of the great principles of the conduct of Hakodosh Boruch Hu towards men. He wants to teach them this important lesson because success or failure in this knowledge spells success or failure in one’s entire life.

And therefore it’s our job to apply this attitude to all fields of life.

When you take a medicine, when you go to the best physician, do not trust in anything but Hashem. It’s a great error to think that the medicine will heal. Of course you must take medicine because it says **וְרַפָּא יִרְפָּא** – *you must heal by natural methods*, but when you take the medicine, you should say as follows – if you can’t say, then think it: **יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ** – *May it be Your will that this business should be for me a cure*,” because Hakodosh Boruch Hu is the One Who heals.

Run Until You Drop

Don’t rely on your healthy exercises. Do it, absolutely! I recommend walking. But don’t trust! There are people who have *bitachon* in the wrong thing – James Fixx wrote a book on jogging; a book about how jogging prolongs a man’s life. If you jog this and this amount every day, your heart will be healthy into your old age. That’s what he said. What happened? He died while jogging at the age of fifty-two. That heart that he relied on, turned on him.

Or the man who was particular about carrying a revolver to protect himself; but once in the middle of the night, he had a bad dream and he pulled out the revolver and shot himself. So his protection killed him.

I’m not saying you shouldn’t take care of yourself. Absolutely you should go through all of the motions. But you should never, never attribute success to the motions. Whatever you do – and you should do – you should do everything that’s

necessary to preserve your health, to preserve your property, to succeed at everything in the home and outside the home; and nevertheless we should beware of the pitfall and keep in mind always that the way to guarantee our safety and our success is by putting our trust solely in Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

And the more a person reminds himself throughout the day – it’s never too much – the more of a success you become. You’re doing the same thing that everyone else; you’re working and cooking and eating and doing and going, but you’re always always reminding yourself that every success, from the most complicated to the most simple, it’s not yours – it’s His. I’m not relying on my family or my job or my hands; I’m not relying on the food stamp money or welfare or my rich uncle. No! All day long, in everything I do, I constantly remind myself that all these things are deceptions. It’s only You. It’s only You! All day long. That’s the way a person begins to transform himself or herself into the *baal bitachon* of the Chovos Halevavos.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET’S GET PRACTICAL

Acquiring Bitachon

The Egyptians relied on the Nile and it was smitten first by Hashem. As the Chovos Halevavos explains, “something you rely on will not last”. *Bitachon* means that we rely exclusively on Hashem.

This week, I will attempt to acquire this attitude of relying only on Hashem. Every day during *davening*, when I say the words “וְלֹא יִבּוֹשׂ כִּי כָד בְּטַחְנֵנוּ” - *let us not lose out because we trust in You*”, I will *bli neder* take a moment to reflect on this great lesson, that we rely only on Him.

This week’s booklet is based on tapes:

S-13 - Bitachon 4 | 31 - Hashem Is King | 47 - Reliance on Hashem
118 - Preface to Pesach 2 | 504 - Pesach 13 | 937 - Aspects of Bitachon

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If I see a *frum* Jew who’s not so good, should I love him for being a Jew or hate him for the bad things that he’s doing?



If you see a *frum* Jew who is doing something wicked, let’s say. Let’s say a *frum* Jew is standing in line in front of the movies. Of course he’s not a *frum* Jew. But suppose you see a Jew with a *yarmulke* standing in line in front of the movies.

So you say, “Ah, a *yarmulke*! Ah! That’s wonderful!” A *yarmulke* means “*oter Yisroel b’sifarah*, You crown Yisroel with glory”; and that *tifarah*, that glory, means you believe in Hashem.

Anybody who wears a *yarmulke*, he’s demonstrating, “I believe in Hashem.” Even a small little *yarmulke*; so he’s a *modeh b’miktzas*, but he’s still one of ours. That already is very great. But it’s a pity that he’s taking that crown and he’s taking it into a stable full of manure, full of *tzoah*.

So you have two attitudes: here, he’s a *meshugene* or a *shoteh*; he’s wasting his money. Suppose a man stands in line for a chance to dip his head in a trough full of manure. Only four dollars today! A special! You get a headful of manure! So he’s a *meshugene*. It’s a pity on him. At the same time you should think he’s wearing a *yarmulke* too. So it’s a problem; you have to have both attitudes.



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