



## CHANUKKAH: THE INNER WORKINGS OF BITACHON & MY DAUGHTER'S ACCIDENT

### THE BITACHON OF THE CHASHMONAIM

We speak about the greatness of the Chashmonaim. But any time you talk about the greatness of someone, you always have to know, how do you translate that to your life? We talk about the Chafetz Chaim or the Vilna Gaon, and I can tell you how superb and how great they were and how committed they were. But then the question is, "How do I plug into that?"

The first thing you have to know is that the Chashmonaim were the embodiment of the lesson that for Hashem, 100,000 or 200,000 armed soldiers with elephants, cannons, catapults or whatever they had in those days, are all like one. For Hashem, it's *mamash* like one soldier. We speak of the weak against the strong, but strength doesn't determine the results of success. It's Hakadosh Baruch Hu. So the question is, what was the tool that the Chashmonaim employed?

We grew up hearing that the Chashmonaim were *moser nefesh*. They went to war *bemesirus nefesh*. Now, that's right, but it's not right. And I want to explain why. Avraham Avinu was the first one we know who was *moser nefesh*. He went into the fire, the furnace of Ur Kasdim. That was *mesiras nefesh*. Why was that *mesiras nefesh*? Because Avraham was *not* planning on getting out through any trapdoor. It was a one-way ticket for Avraham. He went in there, and he was *moser his nefesh* to Hashem *al kiddush Hashem*.

However, what the Chashmonaim did was not like going into Ur Kasdim. You know why? Because if they were going into Ur Kasdim, that would mean that they were planning on having one battle and after that battle, they'd all die and their goal to overcome Yavan would be left unfulfilled. But that wasn't their intention. They didn't want to die. They *were* looking for the trapdoor. They were always looking for an escape route. They didn't have what you call a death wish. When Avraham walked into Ur Kasdim, he had a death wish. That was his *mesiras nefesh*. But that wasn't the position of the Chashmonaim.

So what was the position? How did they do it? What did they employ? And the answer is they employed number one, *emunah baHashem*, and they also applied the "fruit" of *emunah baHashem*. What's the "fruit" of *emunah baHashem*? *Bitachon baHashem*. They became *botchim baHashem*.

Now, in the *Sefer Chashmonaim (perek gimme!)* it talks about how this huge army with chariots came to take vengeance against Klal Yisrael, and Yehudah Hamacabi went out with a handful of people. When they saw the enemy's camp, they said, "Look at this. We are very few in number. We have been fasting. We're tired and weary. And look what's up against us." *Vaya'an Yehudah vayomer*, and Yehudah answered and said, "*Hayad Hashem tiktzor*, is the hand of Hashem short? Is Hashem limited? Is it difficult for Hashem to give the *rabim beyad me'atim*? Is it more difficult for Hashem to bring salvation when there are great numbers? Salvation is Hashem's. The enemy is *boteach* on their numbers and on their great armor to destroy us with our wives and children, and to take everything that we have. But we will fight for our lives and for our Torah. So don't be afraid because Hashem will destroy them before our eyes."<sup>1</sup>

Now, that means to say, they did not ignore the threat. If we were fighting a battle and we were 13 people against 100,000, I might have said, "Just imagine, we're thirteen against thirteen. Just imagine they're making more noise than they have," or I would tell my men, "You know, half these guys are decoys. They put decoy soldiers and decoy tanks."

I was reading that Saddam Hussein, during his war, had entire tank troops in the desert that were made from cardboard, and he had planes and all kinds of things. They were decoys so when the planes go by, it should look like he has a whole army over there. I heard that in England they employ cardboard police cars on the side of the highway in these radar traps, just to slow people down from going too fast. All they really are is cardboard. When you pass, there's a hand that goes like this, and waves at you.

So that's what I would think the approach would be. But, no, it says they raised their eyes. They *taka* saw. They wanted to know the odds they were facing. You know why? Because that's the test of their *bitachon*. If I would tell myself they're all decoys, I'm not being *boteach*. I'm being *boteach* in my own strength because it's me against them so I have a fair shake. One against one.

<sup>1</sup> וישמע סירון שר צבא ארם כי נאספו כל יראי ה' אל יהודה, וכי נקבצו אליו עם רב למלחמה, ויאמר. אכבדה ביהודה ובעמו ובכל בוזי דבר המלך, לעשות לי שם בארץ. ויאסור את רכבו, וחיל כבד מן הגויים עלו אתו להינקם בישראל, ויבוא עד מעלה בית חורון. ויהודה יצא אך במתי מעט לקראתם. ויהי בראותם את מחנה האויבים, ויאמרו הנה אנחנו יוצאים במתי מעט, ונפשנו יבשה מבלי אוכל, ואיך נעמוד לפני החיל הנורא הזה. ויען יהודה ויאמר: היד ה' תקצר לתת רבים ביד מעטים, ואם יש מעצור לו להושיע ברב או במעט. הן לה' התשועה, ורוב חיל לא ימלט. הם בוטחים על המום ועל רוב חילם להשמידנו עם נשינו וטפנו ולבוז את שללינו. ואנחנו נעמוד על נפשנו להילחם בעד חיינו ותורתנו, וכי' (ספר מקבים א ג')

## TRUSTING IN HASHEM IN SPITE OF REALITY

*Bitachon* means you're fully cognizant, you're fully aware of the odds against you and *af al pi ken* you are *boteach baHashem*. If *chas veshalom* a person is sick and you don't want to scare them you tell them, "You've got a little pimple. It's nothing. It'll pass." Now, that person can't have *bitachon*. If you tell him that he has pancreatic cancer *rachmana litzlan*, then the person says to you, "Isn't that one of the worst types of cancer?" "Yes." Now the person can have *bitachon*. I'm not saying that you should tell that to somebody. You have to know whether or not the person has *bitachon*. But you have to understand that having *bitachon* means that you know what you're up against. You're fully aware of what you're facing and *af al pi ken* you're *boteach baHashem*.

Now, let's say a guy is walking in the street at night and he starts to get paranoid. He imagines that there's a hundred thugs hiding behind every bush. So we tell him, "Calm down my friend. There aren't a hundred thugs in this city. There's not even ninety nine and not ninety eight." You try to get him to see reality.

But to ignore the reality is not *bitachon*. Remember that's a very important thing.

### BITACHON IS A "CONTINUOUS IV"

What did Yehudah Hamacabi and the Chashmonaim employ? We have to know what they employed. What did they use to get *bitachon*? If we could know the armor they used, we could use it too. I want to tell you how *bitachon* works. *Bitachon* is not like novocaine. It's not like anesthesia. If you ever go to the dentist, they give you novocaine. He says, "Open your mouth," and he says, "Here goes. Sorry for the little pinch now." He starts to give you little drillings. You say to the dentist, "How long will anesthesia last?" He says, "It will last you two hours." Okay, so for two hours, you're calm. *Bitachon* is not like a shot of novocaine. You took it and now you have anesthesia and you're not going to be afraid anymore. *Bitachon* is something that needs a constant drip, drip, drip. If you go to the hospital, they hook you up with this IV, and it's a constant drip. You've got to have a constant drip. That is what *bitachon* is. *Bitachon* is something constant. You have to be *mechazek* yourself in *bitachon* constantly. That's why it says 'קוה אל ה' חזק ויאמץ לבך וקוה אל ה'. If I'm 'קוה אל ה' already, why does it say again, 'קוה אל ה'? The answer is because the nature of *bitachon* is that it constantly needs input. You need a drip.

### THE POWER OF יושב בסתר - DESIRING HASHEM

So what are the drips? We know that the Chashmonaim said, *יושב בסתר עליון* - *the One who dwells in the shelter of the Most High* (Tehillim 91:1). That was the secret of how they won. This is what the Magen Avraham (סימן רצה) writes in the name of the Tashbatz.<sup>2</sup> The Tashbatz explains that when we say the *יושב בסתר*, the *minhag* is to repeat the last *passuk* בישועתי *I will let him live to a ripe old age and show him My salvation* (Tehillim 91:16), because that brings the total number of words to 130. That is the numerical value of *kohanim*. The *kohanim*, the Chashmonaim, at the time when they fought with the *Yevanim* repeated this *passuk* over and over to be *mechazek* their own *bitachon* and to be saved from the hands of the *Yevanim*.

Now, you have to know that this *mizmor* is a very special, and unique *mizmor*. You know how it's referred to? The *shir shel pega'im*. That's what it's called. *Pega'im* means different challenges; it's for animals, humans, all kinds of different challenges. *Pega'im* are catastrophes that you could meet up with. The Rambam in his *sefer Moreh Nevuchim* (חלק ג פרק נא) says as follows.<sup>3</sup> התבונן, contemplate, ותראה, and you will find, *ב'שיר של פגעים' ותראה*, the great *hashgachah* and great security, the great protection, Hashem who guards, מכל הרעות הגופניות, from all physical challenges, הכלולות, general ones, אותם, and specific ones that come to a man, whether those that arise as a result of nature, טבע המצאות, he calls it, whether *He will save you from the fowler's trap, from the destructive plague; He will cover you with His pinions; you will find refuge under His wings; His fidelity is an encircling shield.* And he goes on to describe the protection that Hashem affords a person from *pega'im* of *bnei adam*. It says even if you shall face war that breaks out and you're going on your way, even if a thousand dead people will be lying on your left side and ten thousand on your right side, לא יגע בך רע כלל, you'll be untouched. You have this magic gel. You put this magic armor on, the *שיר של פגעים* and *תביט מצדך*, look on your side and see the *elef*, the thousand, and see the *revavos*, ten thousand *מימינך*, look with your eyes, *ושלמת רשעים תראה*, and see the *revavos*, ten thousand *מימינך*.

The *perek* concludes with the reason for this phenomenal protection, and it says you know what the *sibah* of this great *hashgachah* is? *כי בי חשק*, because you were *meschashek* in Me; you desired Me, Hashem says, *ואֶפְלֹטְךָ*, and *I will save you*; Hashem says, *ואֶשְׁבְּרְךָ*, *I will lift you up*, *כי ידע שמי* - *because you knows My name* (ibid 91:14). And what it's saying, says the Rambam, is that Hakadosh Baruch Hu says to a man, "Do you know what the key to the secret of this protection is? You want to get this "security" system, and not be protected by Smith and Wesson? It's *שידעני*, since you knew Me, *ורשקני*, and you desired Me."

<sup>2</sup> פסוק ויהי נועם יאמרו מעומד [כתבים] ויש מקומות שא"א ויהי נועם בבית אבל רק מתחילין יושב בסתר [כ"ה] עסי רצ"ו ס"ז וכופלין פסוק אורך ימים וגו' שאז נשלם השם היוצא ממנו [טור מנהגים] ונ' במט"מ שהאריך בזה וכי שיש בישועתי ב' יודיין וכשכופלין אותן היא ד' יודיים והיא שם הוי"ה במילוי יודיין אח"כ מצאתי בתשביץ כשכופלין אותו יש בו תיבות כמנן הכהנים ק"ל שכהני חשמונאי אמרו אותו במלחמי ונצחו וכ"כ בסידור מהר"ה, וכי [מגן אברהם רצ"ה]

<sup>3</sup> התבונן ב'שיר של פגעים' - ותראה שהוא מספר ההשגחה ההיא הגדולה, והמחסה והשמירה מכל הרעות הגופניות, הכלולות והמיוחדות באיש אחד וזולתי שאר בני אדם, לא מה שהוא נמשך מהם אחר טבע המציאות, ולא מה שהוא מהם מצער בני אדם - אמר "כי הוא יצילך מפח יקוש מדבר הוות, באברתו יסך לך ותחת כנפיו תחסה - צינה וסוחרה אמיתו; לא תירא מפחד לילה מחץ יעוף יונם, מדבר באופל ילחך מקטב יסוד צהרים". והגיע לסיפור השמירה מצער בני אדם, שאמר שאתה אילו יקרה שתעבור במלחמת חרב פושטת - ואתה על דרך עד שיהרגו אלף הרוגים משמאלך ועשרת אלפים מימינך, לא יגע בך רע בשום פנים, אלא שתראה ותביט משפט האלוה ושלומתו לרשעים ההם שנהרגו - ואתה בשלום - והוא אמרו: "יפול מצדך אלף ורובה מימינך - אלך לא יגש; רק בעיניך תביט ושלמת רשעים תראה" - וסמך לו מה שסמך מן ההגנה והמחסה. ואחר כך נתן טעם לזאת השמירה הגדולה, ואמר כי הסיבה בזאת השמירה הגדולה באיש הזה: "כי בי חשק ואפלטוהו אשגבהו כי ידע שמי" וכבר בארנו בפרקים הקודמים שענין ידעתי השם' הוא השגתו - וכאילו אמר זאת השמירה באיש הזה היא בעבור שידעני וחשק בי אחר כך. וכבר ידעת ההפרש שבין 'אוהב' ו'חושק' כי הפלגת האהבה עד שלא תשאר מחשבה בדבר אחר אלא באהבה ההוא - היא החשק.

*Zugt* the Rambam, there is a difference between an *ahavah* and a *cheishek*. He explains כי אהבה המפלגת, outstanding love, עד, שלא תשאיר מחשבה בדבר אחר, to the point that no other thought enters your mind besides the thing that you love, היא החשק - that is *cheishek*. *Ahavah*, on the other hand, means: I do love you but I love him too. I love “that” also. *Cheshek* means: my full focus is on you, and there’s nothing else that I’m looking forward to; כי בי חשק, *zugt* the Ribono Shel Olam, you were *chosheik* in Me, ואפלטו. So it’s very important and it behooves us to learn and practice before we go to the war, how to turn this on.

### למנצח בנגינות THE POWER OF

You have to know that Dovid Hamelech did the same thing. When Dovid Hamelech went to war, the Maharshal says Hakadosh Baruch Hu showed him *beruach hakodesh* a golden tablet and on it was etched out שיר אלקים, למנצח בנגינות מזמור שיר אלקים, and so on. That’s in *Tehillim perek samech zayin*. That’s another *perek* that we read *besha’as* the lighting of the Chanukah candles; we read *tzadi alef* and *samech zayin*. It says Dovid Hamelech used to look at that *shir* and think about it, and that gave him that power!

The *passuk* says יחננו, *be gracious to us*, ויברכנו, and *bentch* us, יאר פניו אתנו סלה, *give us a shining face, ha’aras panim*. It behooves a person to learn these *perakim ba’al peh*, to commit them to memory. A person should study the words of יושב בסתר, and a person should think about them. Then, if you ever face some calamity, the first place you go is there.

### A PRACTICAL EXERCISE IN BITACHON

So you go into a doctor’s office and you get the worst news possible. The worst. What’s the first thing you do? Most people hear this and either burst out crying or they lose themselves. Some people *shrei* and scream. I’ve seen a lot of different responses. The first response is not to grab your head.

Just imagine you’re getting the worst news possible. This is how you do exercises. You’re getting the worst news possible. Your first thought is: יושב בסתר עליון בצל שקי יתלוך. That’s what you think about. כי ידע שמי. That’s what you have to turn to and then you’ll have *menuchas hanefesh*. Then you’ll have strength to go on. Then you’re keying in to the source of all power.

The *boteach baHashem*, says the *Chovos Halevavos* in the first *siman*, is someone who has *menuchas hanefesh*. The Chazon Ish, writes in his *sefer Emunah U’Bitachon* that על הברוטח שורה רוח הקודש, *ruach hakodesh*, a holy spirit, rests upon someone who has *bitachon*, ומתלווה עמו רוח עוז, and he’s accompanied with a *ruach* of strength, המבשרו, that tells him יעזרהו ‘כי ה’, that Hashem will help him. You hear that? You hear what this *ruach hakodesh* tells you? Here’s a person driving a car, and all of a sudden the cop pulls up next to the guy and the guy loses himself. Wrong response. You know what the first response should be? Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Now, it’s not easy. You know why? Because if the cop grabs your *kishkes* first, it’s very hard to loosen his grip. You’ve got to train yourself that the first place you go, כי בי חשק ואפלטו. I tried it many times. Sometimes it works. Sometimes it doesn’t.

I remember one time when it worked. I was going at 55 miles per hour in a 35 mile zone, driving a big van with all my children. None of them were in seatbelts. So a fine was going to be about \$1000 just for the seat belt thing. Some cop pulls me over. I tell my kids, “Everybody, everybody say אין עוד מלבדו, everybody, everybody.” I closed my eyes, and I was fighting to get into that ‘zone.’ I was fighting my way into that ‘zone’ of אין עוד מלבדו. The guy is knocking on my window, אין עוד מלבדו, אין עוד מלבדו. I start rolling the window down. My wife is saying her *passuk* that she always says, ה. אלקי ישראל תשועת עולמים, That’s her radar detector. I roll down my window. The cop says, “Is everything all right?” I say, “אין עוד מלבדו, אין עוד מלבדו.” “License and registration, please.” He came back after a few minutes. I was staying in the ‘zone.’ He said, “I’ll let you go with a warning.” He said, “Put everybody in seat belts also.” That would have been an expensive fine. It’s \$135 for each kid who is not in a seatbelt.

But other times, I wasn’t as lucky. I couldn’t get into that zone. I couldn’t make it to the point of *chashak*. I couldn’t get to the point where I felt there is Hashem and there’s no cop. If there’s a cop there in your reality, instead of כי בי חשק, you’re already stuck.

Rabosai, do this exercise. I’m telling you train yourself. This is how you train yourself. The exercises will also give you a tremendous jolt of *simchah*. This comes from the *sefer Hatanya*. The *sefer Hatanya* says that if a person wants to get an instant shot of joy. He wants some joy juice. How do you get some joy? So some people take vodka. But I didn’t see that *eitzah* in the *sefer Hatanya*. I’m still looking for it. But what he does say is that if a person were to *masiach da’as* from everything and just focus on the concept of *Hashem hu haElokim*, Hashem is the master of all powers, אין עוד מלבדו, at that point you will feel the juice starting to flow. It’ll flow into your *kishkes*. No matter what your *matzav* is. I’ve been in awful *matzavim* in my life, and I’ve done this thing. I’m telling you, it works amazingly! But you first have to be *zocheh* to practice it. If you don’t practice it, you lose your mind. Your mind is so feeble so the second some guy blows you away and a little wind comes across your nose, you’re *ois mentch*. So let’s get past that stage.

## NEGATING A NEGATIVE PROGNOSIS

You can do whatever you want, whatever practice.<sup>4</sup> You picture you're in a doctor's office getting the worst news. And then one day you find yourself in that situation and you're almost shocked. You're sitting in a doctor's office and the doctor says, "Are you able to handle this?" You just look at him and you say, "Yes." He says, "The news is not good. Your kid is not going to make it." All of a sudden that stuff starts coming up on the inside, and all of a sudden the *yetzer hara* just comes from the bottom and tries to grab you from the bottom. Then, all of a sudden you look at the guy and say, "Do you have *ruach hakodesh*? Are you telling me about the future?! What are you, a new *mekubal* on the block? You're just a man in a white coat. What you do is, you go into people's stomachs, and you clean out garbage and hopefully get it all out, but you can't decide the future of a person!"

### A BABY DAUGHTER WITH THIRD DEGREE BURNS

I'll never forget the first major test of bitachon that I had in my life. I had a daughter that was burned right before Shabbos. 85% of her body was burned. Her entire skin peeled off. It was awful to see. I've never seen another sight like that, to see a human being with a burn like that from the top to the bottom of their feet. The whole entire skin came off in one complete piece. Separate from the body. You see it peeling. It's the worst degree of burns. My wife ran to the hospital. I had to make the arrangements for the kids. It was right before Shabbos. I followed her shortly after. I sent her to the big burn unit, a big trauma burn unit. In Cleveland they happen to have one, *baruch Hashem*.

The doctor came out. He's *zachur latov*. He was a *goy* named Dr. Bob Gerding. He said, "Sir, it doesn't look good." I said, "What does that mean, 'it doesn't look good?'" He said, "There's a very small chance that she's going to make it." I said, "What do you think the chances are?" He said, "At most 15%." I remember it welled up in me. I'll never forget the feeling of how it welled up in me, a feeling of *You shtick goy that you are*. I pointed at him and I said, "Doctor, don't ever overstep your bounds. Don't ever overstep your license that you were given to practice. The only thing you are allowed to practice is healing people. In the Bible it says, 'and heal you shall heal.' You know what that means? It means, 'from here a human being was given a license to heal.' To kill, to give a negative prognosis - you're playing G-d. You're overstepping your bounds. You've never learned anything about that subject. I *have* studied that subject. Please, I won't go into your area of expertise, but you shouldn't go into mine." He says to me, "Oh, I understand. You're nervous. You're agitated. You understand?" I said, "Doctor, you don't understand it. You and I are on two different planets. You and I are like Martians from two different universes. You have no idea what's in my mind whatsoever." I told him, "Don't ever give a negative prognosis! You will find out that there's a higher power. There's a G-d who decides all, and He's the only one who decides. And by Him there's no percentages. It's 50/50." And I went home.

I won't tell you that I wasn't all nervous. I went home for Shabbos. And I was thinking about it the whole Shabbos. My wife stayed with the baby. There was no one else to watch the other kids. So I went home and I was thinking, "I wonder what's going to be on Motzei Shabbos?" But I kept on telling myself, "It's Shabbos today." I was with Hashem on that Shabbos, something serious. It might have been the first Shabbos that I observed. I was so focussed on Hashem. I remember calling up on Motzei Shabbos, not sure what the response was going to be. I just said to my wife, "Is she still breathing?" She said, "Yes."

### BITACHON TO THE RESCUE!

When I went to the hospital for the first time, there were literally 10 to 15 doctors around my daughter's bed trying to stabilize her in the emergency trauma unit, in order to bring her into the burn unit. I said, "I want to see my daughter." They said, "You can't. She's in too much pain." I said, "What kind of law is that? What kind of *shtus* is that, that you can't see your daughter!?" He said, "You can't see her because you're not going to handle it." "I see. Now you're telling me what I can handle." I said, "You don't know me." I went into the room. My daughter was screaming. You can't imagine the *tza'akos* and the *za'akos*. I went over and I said her name firmly. I looked into her eyes, and I said, "Look into my eyes. Look into Tatte's eyes." I said, "My eyes." I hooked her eyes on my eyes, and I said, "Doctor, let's start moving." They had to get her to the burn unit from the trauma unit. He said, "What?" I said, "Let's start moving." She stopped crying. I said to her, "Baby, you're with me. I'm with you. I'm watching you. Hashem is watching you." They started moving the bed out. They couldn't believe it. I hear the doctor saying behind my ears, "It's amazing. It's some magic." We went to the sixth floor in the elevator, and then I had to say good-bye to go back.

I came back to the doctor on Sunday. I saw him Sunday morning. I said, "Doctor, you see what I mean?" He said, "We're not out of the woods." I said, "We're out of the woods." Then he gives me a whole *shtickel Torah*. He said, "Those are very bad burns." I said, "Did you make a mistake? What was your mistake? Did you not assess the degree of the burns or were you right, but you made a *lokshen shtickel Torah*." So he said, "No. The degree of the burns was correct. It was as I said. But you got lucky." So I said, "Doc, in the next little while, we will become friends, and you will learn a lot from me and I hope to learn a lot from you."

Then what happened was that this *goy* told me, "Your daughter will be in the hospital for at least a year. She's going to have skin grafts all over her body. It's going to be operation after operation after operation." *Pilei pela'im*. I remember telling the guy, "Dr. Gerding, don't you guys ever learn? I won't be here for a year. I'm going to be here as long as the One Above determines. I don't think I'm going to be here for a year. I'm not planning on being here for a year. That's number one. Number two, as far as the skin grafts, you don't decide that either. He's going to decide - the One Above. If the healing process goes well, we won't need skin grafts."

Anyway, we walked out of the hospital in three and a half weeks. This *goy* followed me out with the whole team of 11 doctors.

<sup>4</sup> The following paragraph was in response to an audience question of: "What can you do to practice getting to that level of bitachon?" (for the full Q&A, see footnote #5)

He said, "I've been humbled. I've been taught a lesson, and it's my duty and my honor to accompany you to your car. You taught me the lesson of the power of the One Above." He's a *goy*. He said, "This baby walked out of the hospital in three and a half weeks." It was unheard of. The only skin graft she had to have was the size of a dime on the bottom of her foot. From all my children, her skin is the smoothest out of all. Not *stam*. The doctor wrote me a letter. He said, "You have opened up worlds of discovery for me, of things I didn't know." I said, "Doc, you never went to that course. I took that course. Don't you understand?" The guy was *pashut* so humbled. This guy was a god in his department, in the area of burns. But Hakadosh Baruch Hu showed that *Hashem hu haElokim*.

That's what a person has to know. Now, did I try to use *hishtadlus*? Sure I made *hishtadlus*. At that time, I was learning with about 30 doctors in the city. I had every single doctor call the burn unit of Metro Hospital twice a day and say, "I'm calling to find out about the Brog baby." "Who's this?" "Doctor So and So." The next guy called, "Hello, this is Dr. So and So calling for the Brog baby". Finally, the head nurse asked me, "What are you, some kind of doctor or something?" I said, "You could say that." I said, "All these doctors are all different types of doctors. I'm a doctor of doctors." She said, "I don't understand this." I said, "You live and you learn."

And then we had a fight with them over *kashrus*. They wanted to give the baby ice cream. They wanted to give her a tray of ice cream. I said, "My kids only eat *chalav Yisrael* ice cream." The *goyishe* nurse said, "Are you always this stubborn?" I said, "Am I stubborn? Are you always this stubborn?" I said, "What difference should it make what ice cream I give my kid? If you want to give my kid ice cream, I'll provide the ice cream." "Well it has to be sterile ice cream," she told me I said, "What do you want me to do? Stick it in alcohol first? What kind of stupid thing is that? I'll put it in a *mikveh* before." I told her, "The ice cream you serve in the hospital doesn't go through any x-ray machine before they serve it. You buy regular ice cream and give it to the kids. Mine is kosher and yours isn't." They could not understand what I was trying to get through to them. But I definitely made waves in that hospital *besha'as ma'aseh*. And the doctor was amazing in how he responded. His bill alone was quite high. He wrote me a letter that he's dropping the bill to \$600, and he appreciates everything that he learned from the experience.

Rabosai, there is a Ribono Shel Olam in this world. He does exist, but you've got to practice beforehand so then when it comes *besha'as ma'aseh* you don't lose yourself. Sometimes, when the challenge arises you're with your wife. Your wife loses herself. And your parents, oh, they start *shrei'ing*. "Oh, our life is over. Oh no." You say, "Just everybody, please calm down. It's going to work out. There's Hashem on the case. You've got the biggest doctor on the case. It's being taken care of."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The following was the Q&A following the shiur: (Q): Does having bitachon mean that you don't feel any fear or pain? A: Menuchas hanefesh doesn't mean [that you are unaware of reality]. It's not that you're not concerned anymore. You are not lost. It doesn't mean that you're not aware of the story. It's a bit like novocaine. If you go through an operation, you're experiencing the operation, but it doesn't hurt because there's novocaine there. That's what it does. You're aware that you're in a matzav. (Q): But if a person thinks like that, they're not really living. Aren't they denying reality? A: You didn't hear what I said. I never said anything about living or not living. I said bitachon gives you menuchas hanefesh that you're with Hashem, and Hashem is the only one who can help you. (Q): The Chashmonaim knew they were going to lose, but they tried anyway. Why wasn't it mesiras nefesh? A: They had no choice. It wasn't a death wish. They were fighting for a cause. They knew that to reach the goals of the cause they had to fight, and fighting is dangerous. That's where their bitachon came in. (Q): How can you make your wife feel the same bitachon that you work to achieve? A: If you instill it in yourself and your wife sees that you've got it then they say, "Hey, what's that pill?" You know what happens. If your wife takes a pill and she's nervous before and now she takes the pill and she becomes un-nervous then the husband says, "Can I have one of those pills please?" Or she's sleeping like a baby at night, snoring away. You say, "What did you take before you went to sleep?" "I took this melatonin. I took this Ambien. I took this valium, whatever you took." "Pass one over here now." I don't believe in medication but I do believe in sleeping. (Q): What type of Bitachon was Rabbi aiming for, when Rabbi said, "Ein od milvado?" A: I wanted to just get [to the point of feeling] that the policeman should be like, it's only you standing by my window. (Q): Did Hashem make the cop come to give Rabbi an exercise in bitachon? A: Maybe it was an exercise just to recognize it's not the cop giving me a ticket but that ticket is being given by Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Have you ever gotten a ticket? Did you ever get stopped? Have you ever seen those flashing lights behind you [in the rearview mirror]? Generally, what happens - for some strange reason, I'm not sure why - is you imagine the guy is going to shoot you. I don't know what the pshat is, but the teva ha'adam is that when he sees such a thing, he imagines that this is it. That's how people are. It's a funny thing. But the idea is, you have a fear. You're overcome by fear. People face all sorts of fears. You may see a guy walking on the street on a Friday night, or one night you're walking home quietly and a guy has his hands in his pockets. All of a sudden the yetzer hara comes with a fear. Maybe somebody is coming up behind you and is going to jump at you. You start to think about it. Sometimes, you just look around. And then all of a sudden you see somebody across the street. Ahhh! The guy across the street. You're sure he's coming at you. That's where you employ bitachon. It's to rid yourself of that fear. [Having bitachon] is to become a person in a matzav of menuchas hanefesh. (Q): Was the zechus of the Chashmonaim their bitachon? A: That's the story of the Chashmonaim. They had bitachon. They won one war, they won a second war, a third war, a fourth war, a fifth, a sixth, a seventh. They won all the wars. (Q): If you have bitachon, do you always win? A: If it's the right war, if you're fighting the right battle in the right way ein hachi nami. (Q): Can you have bitachon to win a war that is not a milchemes mitzvah? A: I told you, the Ramban says if a guy is doing [milchemes] reshuv, he could have bitachon. (Q): So can you have Bitachon and expect to get saved? A: That's not what I'm here to discuss today. I'm trying to teach you first, to have bitachon. That's another shmooze, whether you should expect or not expect to get saved or not. That's another shmooze. (Q): So bitachon makes you feel menuchas hanefesh? A: I told you - bitachon means: Hashem is with you. That's what gives you menuchas hanefesh. You feel a ruach hakodesh shoreh alecha, and the ruach hakodesh is going to help you. It's going to give you ezra to take you through this challenge. You're going to get through it. That's why the novocaine mashal is a very deep mashal. I thought about this many times. Novocaine doesn't mean I'm going to get out of the dentist chair. It means I'm going to go through the operation and it'll be painless. It'll be with menuchas hanefesh. That's what it is. You can't avoid the situation if you need the tikun. If I have to lose money, I lose money: I could lose it through someone else, like a cop, or I could lose it through dropping \$100 on the floor.

## ❧ THE BOTTOM LINE ❧

Avraham Avinu didn't expect to leave the fiery furnace of Ur Kasdim alive, and was ready to be *moser nefesh* and die *al kiddush* Hashem. However, for the original band of thirteen brave Chashmonaim, going into the battle against 100,000 strong army, incredibly, wasn't a "death wish," because they knew that to restore the Torah way of life in Eretz Yisroel and throw off the influence of Syrian Greeks, they had to win their military battles. This seemingly impossible, against all odds victory, was accomplished by deepening their *cheishek*, their desire for connection to Hakodosh Boruch Hu until Hashem was 'with' them and they were 'with' Hashem. They accomplished it through expressing their *emunah* and *bitachon* with repetition of the incredibly powerful ideas of the *mizmor* יֵשֶׁב עֲלֵיוֹן בְּסֹתֵר עֲלֵיוֹן, which enveloped them in a "protective shield" and brought them the ultimate victory. In the remaining days of Chanukah, I will, *bli neder*, start learning the deeper meaning of the words of יֵשֶׁב עֲלֵיוֹן בְּסֹתֵר עֲלֵיוֹן - to eventually commit these incredible pesukim to memory, because this is the first place where I should turn to when facing life's serious challenges and battles.