



## BEIS HALEVI ON BITACHON VS. HISHTADLUS

### TWO MORE YEARS INSIDE FOR “REMEMBER ME”

Rabosai, what we’re about to share with you today is a subject which is **יושב בחושך**, a subject that sits in darkness. It’s shrouded in a lot of obscurity. Everybody feels he’s entitled to weigh in on this subject based on his emotions or based on what he heard from his mother’s emotions or his grandmother’s emotions.

In this week’s *parshah*, we start off with the fact that it was “at the end of two years.” (Bereishis 41:1). Yosef Hatzaddik was sentenced to a term of ten years in prison, but it was extended another two years. Yosef was a model prisoner. He never made any *tzaros*. The people in charge of the prison trusted him. He was running the whole prison. Why did they keep him for another two years? Usually, they make trumped-up charges or something. What did they get him on now? The Torah tells us that what happened was Yosef relied on the *sar hamashkim*. The *sar hamashkim* told him the dream, and then Yosef told the *sar hamashkim*, “Do you know why you had this dream in this prison? Have you dreamt before? How come you had this dream now? The reason you had this dream is because you are my vehicle to get out of this prison. Hashem made you have this dream to be *mechazek* me and let me know you’re my ticket out of here because you’re going to get out and come before Pharaoh. And when you come before Pharaoh, remember me. I’m an innocent victim. Put in a word for me.”

Now, that was the truth. That was the reason why the *sar hamashkim* had the dream, as it eventually came out. What happened was Pharaoh had a dream, and the *sar hamashkim* remembered, “Ah! A dream for a dream,” *gezeiras shaveh*, and that’s how Yosef got out.

But Yosef Hatzaddik erred. He tried to help it along. He tried to oil the road to make something happen. What did he do? He put in a good word for himself. He told the *sar hamashkim*, “You’re my ticket out of here. Make sure you get me out of here.” And he said it twice, “זכרתני... והזכרתני - Remember me. Remember me” (Bereishis 40:14).

*Chazal* tell us (Midrash Rabbah 89:3) because he said, “Remember me, remember me,” Hashem added two years to his sentence.<sup>1</sup> What a harsh sentence! Yosef is put through such *Gehinom* for another two years because he said, “Remember me, remember me.” And it wasn’t the wrong *shtickel* Torah. It was the right thing. It was true!

So imagine the following. Imagine a very rich man would call you up and say, “I’d like to have a chat with you. Your name came across my table. I know you’re looking for some money.” Let’s say you’re making a *chasunah*. You’re making a *bar mitzvah*. You’re trying to buy a house. He said, “I’d like to have a meeting with you.” You’d probably say, “Wow. Baruch Hashem.” So, you go to meet him and you say, “Reb Mendel, do you understand why my name came across your table? Because Hashem wants you to be my ticket to get me out of the hole I’m in. So don’t start up with Hashem. Make sure you carry out the mission that you were chosen for.” And then this Reb Mendel says, “You know what? It was a mistake. I regret having ever met you. Do me a favor - goodbye.” And when you leave, you say to yourself, “Where did I go wrong?! I mean, it was clearly *min hashamayim* that somebody mentioned my name to Reb Mendel. That’s clear. He doesn’t do it to anybody else.” But you wanted to make sure that he’s going to carry it out.

Yosef Hatzaddik saw it clearly. He had no doubt. But he told the fellow, “My friend, you’re my ticket. Remember me. Don’t forget.”

Now, from that *Chazal*, it would seem that Yosef had a *chisaron* in his *bitachon* in Hashem. On the other hand, we find that it says, **אשרי הגבר אשר שם ה' מבטחו**, “fortunate is the man who makes Hashem his source of security.” (Tehillim 40:5). And it says in the Midrash (ibid), the quintessential *ba'al bitachon* is Yosef Hatzaddik. *Zeh Yosef*. So, on one hand, *Chazal* say that Yosef is the epitome of *ba'al bitachon*, while in that *same* Midrash we find Yosef being criticized for not being a *ba'al bitachon* - when he said **זכרתני והזכרתני** - and being imprisoned for two more years as a result!

### THE BRISKER SHITAH ON BITACHON

So the Beis Halevi says the *pshat* is simple. I want you to understand this is the Brisker *shitah*. The Beis Halevi - **כדאי הוא** - לטמור עליי. He knew what he was talking about. And he tells us a phenomenal *yesod*. He says, *hishtadlus* is only a *heter*. That’s the first *yesod*. Now, I want you to understand what the *chiddush* of the Beis Halevi is and from where others were led to believe otherwise. There’s a *passuk* in Devarim (15:18). It says: **Hashem is going to bless you in everything that you do.** *Chazal* come along and say **יכול**, I would think, **אפילו יהא יושב בטל**, even if a guy would sit there and do *garnisht*, Hashem will help him, **תלמוד לומר בכל אשר תעשה**, comes the Torah to teach us otherwise, that Hashem will bless you in

<sup>1</sup> **אשרי הגבר אשר שם ה' מבטחו** (תהלים מ, ה), זה יוסף. (תהלים מ, ה): ולא פנה אל רהבים, על ידי שאמר לשר המשקים (בראשית מ, יד): זכרתני והזכרתני, נתוסף לו שתי שנים, וכו'.

all that you do, meaning only if you put in some effort.<sup>2</sup>

This is the source of people reaching a (wrong) conclusion and saying, "Hashem helps those who help themselves." And this is the source of people saying the more *hishtadlus*, the more *brachah*. בכל אשר תעשה - the more you do, the more blessing.

Says the Beis Halevi, that's not correct. *Hishtadlus* is a *heter*. That's number one. And second of all, בכל אשר תעשה, doesn't mean as much as you do. It means in *any* amount that you do. That means the slightest amount could be enough for Hashem's *brachah* to come on you. Rabbosai, I want you to hear these two *noradige chiddushim*, *noradige* revelations.

How do you know how much you have to do? What does it mean you've got to "do something"? If it's a *heter*, why do you have to do anything?! *Zugt* the Beis Halevi, that a Jewish person understands that Hashem is the one who gives him his sustenance. If he doesn't understand that, he's totally out of the loop. It's like a guy imagining that when he's walking on the ground, he's walking upside down. (But I'll tell you he's right because if you look at the globe if I'm on the bottom and this is the top, I'm walking upside down.) You wish the guy a *refuah sheleimah*, and you tell him to get help. It's the same thing when a guy tells you, "You earn your money." The person who says he earns his money and he believes that, has no *shaychus* to reality because the fact of the matter is your money is fixed. It's designated. It's decided. You cannot "earn" any money - get that into yourself! That's not a Brisker *shitah* - that's a *shitah* of a Torah mind! That's the basic Jewish thought: you don't earn money. The statement of "I earn money" is *kefirah*. It has nothing to do with reality. At the beginning of every year, Hashem sets a certain amount of money aside for you. Now the *shaylah* is what's the delivery system? How is it delivered?

So Hashem allows Jewish people to do some *hishtadlus*. The Torah doesn't expect the average person to sit at home and wait for Hashem to come up with a "delivery system" and send him the money. No. That's for a big *ba'al madreigah*. That's not what Hashem demanded or expected from an ordinary Jew. So the ordinary Jew is permitted to go out and do work to create a delivery system. He enables Hashem to send him the money via carpentry, law, dentistry, or carrying packages. That's what *hishtadlus* means. You are allowed to be *meshtadel* to create a delivery system. You're not *meshtadel* to earn your money. When you go out on your work, you say, "Now I am certain that Hashem will deliver me the money He chose for me." That's the whole point here: to remember Hashem will deliver the money He set aside for me. Otherwise, you would expect that Hashem should think that everybody should sit around and just say, "Hashem, You choose how much money You're giving me. Send me the check."

## DOING JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF WORK

How much are you allowed to work? You're allowed to work the amount you decided allows you to feel secure that now there is a delivery system in place. If you believe that what you do creates a delivery system for Hashem, and now Hashem has a way of delivering the money, and you feel secure, He will. But if you go and do more than that and try to create a second delivery system, that is totally *asur*. Completely not allowed.

For example, let's say a guy has a job, and works eight hours a day. You ask the guy, "Excuse me, do you believe if you worked seven hours and forty-five minutes you would end up with less money than Hashem chose for you at the beginning of the year?" If the guy says, "Nah. It's not going to make any difference," then that fifteen minutes of work is *asur*. Here is a fellow who decides his wife should go to work. Why? He wants to make more money. Now you'll ask that fellow, "Do you believe that the system you set up is insufficient for Hashem to deliver the money to you?" The

guy says, "No, I believe it's sufficient. I just want more." That's totally *asur* because there's no such thing as "more." If the guy would say, "I don't believe that the system I have in place could get me all the money that I feel Hashem has in store for me. I am working a couple of hours a day or at this menial job, and I don't truly believe that Hashem could send me the money that He designated for me." Then you have to go to work. You could work more. Will you get any more than Hashem designated for you? No.

The Beis Halevi says as follows. This *heter* comes along with a very bad negative rap. There's a real downside to this belief. You know why? Let's say I believe that Hashem will not give me the money that's coming to me this year unless I work two jobs and my wife works two jobs. The Beis Halevi says you will not get the money Hashem designated for you unless you and your wife are doing all four jobs! So he says, if you believe that you need to work two jobs, you're not going to get the money without working two jobs - because you don't believe that Hashem will give you the amount of money you're earning from both jobs, by working one job! So if you don't believe it, that's fine; the delivery matches the work. But if you believe that it could come from one job, then the second job is *asur*. The second job is totally prohibited.

<sup>2</sup> מדרש רבה פרשת מקץ. אשרי הגבר אשר שם ה' מבטחו זה יוסף. ולא פנה אל הרבים שעל ידי שאמר לשר המשקים כי אם זכרתי והזכרתי נתוסף לו שני שנים. ורבים חקרו על המדרש מה שאמר בתחילה זה יוסף. וביאורו הפשוט, הדנה באמת התורה התירה לאדם ההשתדלות בצרכי גופו וכמשה"כ וברכתך בכל אשר תעשה. וכן כתיב ואספת דגנך ותירושך ואמר ר' ישמעאל במסכת ברכות (דף ל"ה) הנהג בהם מנהג דרך ארץ ועיקר הענין יש לומר דהוה כלל לאיש הישראלי שיהיה לבו שוקט ובטוח בה' והא דהתירה התורה להשתדלות הוא משום דלא כל אדם יכול להגיע למדרגת הבטחון הנגמור וע"כ הוה ל' ההשתדלות כדי שיהיה לו סיוע שיגיע למדרגת הבטחון צריך כל אדם לחדש לו מלאכה ועסק כדי שיהיה נקל לו לבטוח בה'. וכמו דמצינו בכל התורה שהתירה לפעמים כדי שיהיה לו סיוע לבא להמדרגה המבוקשת, וכמו שאמרנו לעולם יעסוק אדם בתורה ומצות אפילו שלא לשמה שמתוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה. הותרה שלא לשמה כדי שיהיה סיוע לבא לבחי' לשמה וא"כ שיעור ההשתדלות הנרצה אינו שוה בכל אדם רק כל אחד לפי ערכו, דמי שיכול להגיע לבטוח במעט מלאכה אוי מה שירבה להשתדל יותר מכפי הנצרך לו לזה השיעור כבר יחשב לו לחסא נגד מדת הבטחון כי הרבה להלך אחרי ההשתדלות ולא בטח. ומי שבטחונו עדיין קטן משל חבירו יוכל לעסוק במלאכתו יותר מחבירו עד שגם הוא יהיה יכול להשקט רוחו ולבו לבטוח בה' דעיקר בחינת בטחון הוא השקטת רוחו ולבו להשליך על ה' יהבו. ומי שמרבה בהשתדלות יותר מכפי הנצרך עונשו שגם השמים יוסיפו על הצטרכותו להשתדלות ולא יחזיקו לו פרנסתו רק ע"י יגיעת בשת. הדרך שבתר לו והנה השתדלותו של יוסף שאמר לשר המשקים כי אם זכרתי אל פרעה הוא השתדלות קטנה ופחותה שנוכל לשער דהרי אין בו רק דיבור אחד ופרט כי ראה יוסף כי מן השמים הוא בא, והרי יוסף הבין דכל מה שהובא והזכרתי אל פרעה והוצאתני מן הבית הזה. ולכאורה בפסוק זה הוא כפל ענין אריתך דברים ללא צורך, וי"ל דלא אמרו יוסף בלשון בקשה רק אמר לו בגדר מגיד עתידות שאמר לו מה שיהיה לעתיד והשיבך על כנך וכו' כי אם זכרתי אתך וגו' ועשית נא עמדי חסד גדולה כמקדם אשר רק כי אם זכרתי אל פרעה יפעלו דבריך אצלו רעשית נא עמורי חסד, ושוב אמר לו והזכרתי אל פרעה שכן יהיה לעתיד שאתה תזכירני לפרעה והוצאתני מן הבית), וכיון שרון חנן שיוסף נענש גם על זה הא מוכח מזה דכל כך היה בטחונו גדול עד כי גם זה המועט למותר נחשבה לו ומוזה העונש ניכר גדול בטחונו מה שאין לשער ממש. והוה שאמרנו אשר שם ה' מבטחו זה יוסף ולא פנה אל הרבים דלפי גודל בטחונו לא היה לו לפנות כלל אל הרבים ואפילו דיבור קל (בית הלוי, פ' מקץ)

## MACH A BISSEL PARNOOSAH?

When somebody comes and tells you, "How are you going to earn a living?" say to them, "When you talk like that, I can't have a conversation with you." I don't care who it is. It's your grandmother. It's your mother. "If you're asking how I'm going to earn a living, that is not a Jewish question. That's like saying which church I worship in. I don't have such conversations with anybody. I don't do that. We don't earn any money."

Now, if your mother wants to know, "How do you expect Hashem to give you the money He has designated for you?" You should say, "Ah! So I'll tell you, Ma. I sincerely believe that if I work x amount at this job, Hashem could give me the money that I have coming to me. And I don't have to push." Your mother would say, "Ah, you're being unrealistic! You're being childish!"

Now, it could be she believes that, and in her heart, she has the belief that you can't make money unless you work that much. Eight hours, nine hours, whatever she believes. I feel very bad for her. I hope she never has to go to work because if she does, she's going to have a very hard time making the money, and her poor husband may have to work more than he thinks is necessary. But if you believe that Hashem could give you the money with less *hishtadlus*, that's all you'll need to do.

That's the *pshat*. **בכל אשר תעשה**, Hashem will bless you, **וברוך**. Not as *much*. It means as *little*. As little as you do, if you believe that Hashem could give you the *parnasah* that way, it's finished. That's enough *hishtadlus*.

Now the Beis Halevi's *chiddush* is that *hishtadlus* is a *heter*. The Ramchal, in his *sefer Mesillas Yesharim* (Chapter 21) says it's not a *heter*.<sup>3</sup> It's an obligation. But the *chiyuv* is to do as minimal as possible because the work has absolutely nothing to do with you receiving the money. It's just a curse. After Adam Harishon sinned, man got cursed, and therefore, mankind has to do some labor. The labor has nothing to do with the earning. He says it's like a tax. It's like when you go on the road, and you pay a toll. It's just a charge that they charge you for going on the road, but there's no cost for you driving on the road. It just happens to be if you want to go down this road, you've got to pay the taxes.

Going to work is not a form of earning your money. You might have thought that the curse was that you now have to work and earn money. *Chas veshalom*, he says. It's a tax. The Beis Halevi says it's a *heter*. Meaning, you're allowed to be *meshtadel* as much as you need to have *bitachon* you'll receive what Hashem has in store for you. But according to the Beis Halevi you also have to work that amount. As much as you believe you need is the amount that is *mutar* and the amount that is required.

When you see a guy working two jobs, I look at that guy, and feel this guy is a slave for no reason.

## THE DOCTOR WHO SAVED 15 MINUTES

I once did this with two people I knew. One was a doctor, and one was a regular businessman. I said to the doctor, "Do you believe if you left fifteen minutes early, it would affect your income?" He said, "No." I said, "You should know it's *asur* for you to work that fifteen minutes." A few months later, I said to him, "Tell me, do you believe if you worked another fifteen minutes less, it would affect your income?" He said, "No." I said, "Now it's *asur* for you to work that extra fifteen minutes. Go use that time to learn." Last I heard, the guy was up to sixteen or twenty hours a week that he took away from his *parnasah* - and this doctor was a guy who promised me before I even started making him *frum* that if he didn't work on Shabbos, he wouldn't have any income. Then he saw. He stopped working on Shabbos, and he had an income. Even though with the type of practice he has, the most money is made on Shabbos because it's an elective type of healthcare. You don't have to do it. People could live without it. It's not an emergency. But you see *mamash* an amazing thing! He saw how he still made the same amount!

## THE MARKETING MAN WHO SAVED HOURS

The other guy was someone I used to learn with. I told him, "Eight hours a day is too much. It's not necessary in your business because you make sales. There's no reason you can't make sales for seven and a half hours." Then he went to seven, and eventually he was working four hours a day. He had a partner. He and his partner both made the exact same money, with the partner working eight hours. The partner had a *ta'annah* on him. The partner's *ta'annah* was, "You see, you're a better salesman than me. If you would work eight hours, you would make double." He said, "You forgot how I used to work with you eight hours a day. I always made the same money. You and I always made the same money. Now I've just learned how to make that money in less time."

## PICK A JOB WITH POTENTIAL FOR BITACHON

This is a very *lomdishe zach*, but you have to understand this before you go to work. That's why I tell people, "Don't get a job that's going to pay you \$8 an hour or \$10." You know why? Because in that job, it's going to be very hard for you to believe how you could make more *parnasah* per hour. You always want to get into something like sales. It's a tremendous *zach*. Or get into a *zach* that's not fixed.

So you know what happens? People have a double-edged sword. One guy said, "If there's no fixed income, then I get scared. I've got to see cash in my hand." So the guy will sell himself for \$10, but then he can't figure out how Hashem could

<sup>3</sup> אמנם מה שיוכל לשמור את האדם ולהצילו מן המפסידים האלה הוא הבטחון, והוא שישליך יתבו על ה' לגמרי, כאשר ידע כי ודאי אי אפשר שיחסר לאדם מה שנקצב לו, וכמו שאמרו ז"ל במאמריהם (ביצה ט"ז א'): כל מוונותיו של אדם קצובים לו מראש השנה וגו', וכן אמרו (יומא ל"ח ב'): אין אדם נוגע במוכן לחברו אפלו כמלא נימא. וכבר היה אדם וכול לקיות יושב ובטל והתורה היתה מתקיימת, אם לא שקדם הקנס לכל בני אדם, (בראשית ג:יט): בעת אפך תאכל לחם, אשר על פני אדם להשתדל איזה השתדלות לצורך פרנסתו, שכן גזר המלך העליון. והרי זה כמס שפורע כל המיון האנושי אשר אין להמלט ממנו. על פני אמרו (ספרי): יכול אפלו יושב ובטל (יראה סימן ברכה) תלמוד לומר: בכל משלח ידך אשר תעשה (דברים כח:ב). אף לא שהשתדלות הוא המושל, אלא שהשתדלות מקרה, וכיון שהשתדל הרי יצא ידי חובתו, וכבר יש מקום לקרבת שמים שתשרה עליו ואינו צריך לבלות ימיו בתריצות והשתדלות, הוא מה שאמר דוד המלך עליו השלום (תהלים עה:ח): כי לא ממוציא וממערב ולא וגו', כי אלהים שופט וגו' ושלמה המלך עליו השלום אמר (משלי כג:ד): אל תיגע להעשיר מבינתך תדל. אלא תדרך האמת הוא דרך של החסידים הראשונים, עושים תורתך עקר ומלאכתן ספלה, וזה היה נתנים בידם, כי כיון שעשה אדם קצת מלאכה, משם והלאה אין לו אלא לבטח בקונו ולא להצטרע על שום דבר עולמי, או תשאר דעתו פנויה ולבו מוכן לחסידות האמת ולעבודה התמימה.

deliver him \$50 for an hour's work if all this job pays is \$10. So he's stuck. But if a person undertook a job with endless possibilities, you could say, "Okay, how much *bitachon* do I have now? \$10? \$20? \$30 per hour?" Whatever it is. But you know for sure you're getting all the money that's intended for you.

## FAMILY TIES

But the worst thing is when you get a *bachur* whose dear loving mother or grandmother, who loves him to death decides to take him out of the misery of his life, and put him into the miserable life that she came from. What does she do? She says to him, "You can't sit and learn. That's not a life of reality. You've got to get into the real world, my son. *Yeshivah* is not the real world. You don't make money from a *yeshivah*. How do you think I pay the bills? How do you think your mother pays the bills? Not from *yeshivah*. They work hard. These people work hard." *Nebach*, they worked hard. They didn't have to work hard! If they would have learned more and worked less, they would have seen the hand of Hashem. But if a person doesn't have *bitachon*, he thinks he needs five jobs - that is a nightmare.

## CALCULATIONS THAT ARE OFF THE MARK

It could be that a guy is working very hard, but he really thinks that to get the money he needs a year, he needs to work two jobs. Hashem will never give him that money otherwise. The money is *pashut* waiting for him. The money is sitting there and waiting for this guy. Hashem says, "You turned the faucet off too early." Hashem says, "You thought you needed 80 grand a year? That's what I have for you." I also thought so. Sometimes a person makes a wrong *cheshbon*. He thinks 80 grand, and Hashem says you're wrong. I think 60 grand. You don't need five cell phones, one for every one of your kids and one for your grandkids. Even if you've got a family-plan deal or something. Who said you need two cars in your family and lease them at \$600?

Not long ago, I spoke to the guy running Mesila over here. They take care of families with *parnasah* problems. He said, "I can't begin to tell you," he tells me, "how many families come to me, and they have an income of, let's say, \$1400 a month. It's amazing. They have no qualms to lease cars for \$800. I ask them, 'What are you thinking? How could you lease two cars for \$800?'" He said one family came with two leases for \$1000 each. Each one had a new car. He told them, "But you can't afford it! How are you paying for the car?! How are you paying for your life?!" Credit cards. Stupidity deluxe. It does say **שומר פתאים** ה, Hashem does watch the fools, but sometimes He watches the fools go down the drain.

A person has to understand this system. I went to my *rebbe* (Rav Meir Halevi Soloveichik) before I got married, and said to him, "Rebbi, I'm concerned. Help me find a rich girl to marry so I should be able to have *parnasah*," because I didn't have a lot of *bitachon* and I felt that I had to create some kind of delivery system. I needed a system. So I figured my wife's father would be my system. That would be my ticket. So I decided on a big price tag for those days. I made a nice little sales sign, for sale, attached a tag to myself and anybody who wanted to do a *shidduch*, this was the price.

## EASY MONEY - THE REAL WAY

My *rebbe* told me, "Let me give you some advice. Instead of worrying how Hashem is going to give you the money, work as much as you can on being *meshtadel* to acquire *bitachon*, because if you'll be *meshtadel* to acquire *bitachon*, that will minimize your necessity for *hishtadlus* later on." He told me, "You're thinking wrong. The more you think about, 'how am I going to have easy *hishtadlus* to get big money,' the more you think about *hishtadlus* and how much you need, you're going to need to be *meshtadel* more. Instead, be *meshtadel* to believe and to understand that Hashem could give a person money in so many ways, in the easiest way. Once you come to that, for the rest of your life, you won't have to be *meshtadel* anymore. But if you're thinking, 'The lifestyle that I'm trying to live - I want to live in Yerushalayim... You want to buy an apartment today, \$850,000 for a *chatzi* decent apartment...And I'd like a car too. And I'd like to have guests'... Start off with a million, and then you need a few hundred thousand dollars every year...It's not *shayach*. How is it coming?"

So now, the Beis Halevi says, the understanding of Yosef Hatzaddik is *pashut*. He says Yosef Hatzaddik was the quintessential symbol of *bitachon*. He knew that Hashem could do anything for him and he didn't need to put in any *hishtadlus* whatsoever. And he got that 'phone call' from the *sar hamashkim* - that was Hashem calling him on the phone and saying, "My dear Yosef, heads up. Your time is coming. I'm getting you out. I'm sending you the *sar hamashkin*." You know what he should have said? "Hashem, *baruch Hashem, baruch matir asurim*." You know what happened? He said twice to the guy, "Remember me. Remember me." A little *hishtadlus*. You know what Hashem said to him? "You don't have any *heter* to do that *hishtadlus*! I know that you know I'm getting you out. Not this *sar hamashkim*. Not this Egyptian alcoholic. He drinks wine all day long and feeds the king wine all day long. He ain't getting you out. I just used him to give you a message that you're getting out." But Yosef jumped at it, and said, "Remember me, remember me." Hashem said, "You didn't need to do that. That was *hishtadlus asurah*. And for doing that you're getting another two years." Even a tiny, little *hishtadlus* was considered too much for Yosef.

How many times do we mess ourselves up? That's what a person has to know. Oy yoy yoy yoy.

## BUY BITACHON, NOT BITCOINS

So therefore Rabbosai, our job in life is to acquire *bitachon*. People who stay late at work, it's *asur*. Instead of getting your mind fried on, "How do I come up with ideas? I need better ideas, how to bring the cash in," you have to be *mechazek* yourself over and over, "I don't earn any money. I cannot earn any money. Whatever money was designated by Hashem is going to come to me in some fashion." As you go through life, if you keep your eyes open, you'll see how Hashem gives people who believe, "I'm doing what I can, and the rest is up to Hashem." Let's say there's a guy working. He's working six hours, or he's working



eight hours. Whatever he's doing. He is saying, "The rest is up to Hashem." That is called having bitachon. But when a guy says, "I'm not working enough," then it's oh boy, oh boy, oh boy!<sup>5</sup>

#### Participant Questions:

Q: Participant: (inaudible) [How do we see the way the Rishonim and tzaddikim, who had a lot of bitachon, but had less money?]

A: I can't answer those questions. You don't know what they had and what they didn't have. You don't know. [However,] you don't know of any great people who died of starvation. Hashem is mechalkel chaim bechessed.

Now, when Chafetz Chaim had a dream one night that he won the lottery, oooh. The next day, he woke up very worried. He was meitiv the chalom. He didn't want to win the lottery. That's interesting. That's a reason Hashem didn't give all the tzaddikim [parnasah] by winning the lottery. But [we do see that] they all had what they needed, and they were able to learn. That's the [ideal] nekudah of hishtadlus.

So, no two people, you realize, could work the same amount. Every person could work what he believes he needs to come to bitachon in Hashem. Somebody who could get bitachon with a small amount of work or with a small job, can't work harder. Somebody who thinks he needs to work more and he can't get more than an \$8 an hour job, that fellow, nebach, is allowed to work more - because it's a cheit [to work more if you don't believe you need to]. Bitachon is a mitzvah. You can't just say, "I'm not having bitachon." You have to have bitachon. But Hashem gave you a heter to do the minimal amount that it's going to take for you to get that bitachon.

Q: Participant: (Inaudible). [If someone does more hishtadlus, does it harm him?]

A: It's asur. It will definitely harm him. Two things will happen. The first thing, the immediate thing that will happen is that he won't get his parnasah unless he works that extra [amount]. That's the first harm that's coming to him. And if the guy taka doesn't need it, he may also be harmed in other ways like by Yosef. Hashem prolonged his imprisonment.

Q: Participant: How do you get off that?

A: You work to be koneh bitachon. You do teshuvah. You have to do teshuvah. If a person didn't have bitachon in Hashem, he could definitely do teshuvah that he didn't have bitachon in Hashem. And [he could] now start to wean himself off his dependency [on hishtadlus] and say to Hashem, "I realize that I made a mistake and it's not necessary," and then he comes back [to doing the right amount of hishtadlus].

Q: Participant: (Inaudible) [Regarding raising money for yeshivos, should a yeshiva have someone who raises money so people can learn?]

A: That's the same thing. That's what Rav Meir [Soloveichik] once told me. I wanted to get somebody to collect money for my rebbi, so my rebbi said, "If you get somebody to collect money for me and I'm going to say 'Okay,' that means I'm going to become dependent on that meshulach, and now I'm going to be stuck. In six months or a year, when that guy says he's not [collecting or] giving anymore, I'm not going to have my parnasah. Because Hashem says, 'You believed it was only going to come through somebody collecting money for you, now you're not getting it otherwise.'"

## THE BOTTOM LINE

We should not make a mistake and think that hishtadlus is what brings our parnasah, or that we "earn money" with our hishtadlus. Rather, as the Beis Halevi explains, hishtadlus is merely a heter that creates a "delivery system" which then enables us to receive what was already decreed for us by Hashem on Rosh Hashanah. Whatever time at - or type of - work that we decide would allow us to feel secure in establishing this "delivery system" for Hashem to give us our parnasah, that's how much we may work.. However, we are bound by our beliefs regarding a standard "eight hour" work day. If we truly believe that Hashem could provide for us, with us doing less hishtadlus, that's all we need to do. Creating additional "delivery systems" - because we think that Hashem will not give us parnasah unless we exert extra effort - is not only assur, but it unfortunately locks us in into another "system," whereby we would be required to do that extra (but according to the Beis Halevi, unnecessary) hishtadlus just to receive the basic parnasah we think we need! This coming week I will ask myself if my choices in parnasah make it easier or harder to have bitachon. Is there potential for endless possibilities in my paycheck? Is there potential to reduce time spent working in order to learn a little bit more or to be mekarev someone? I will try one time this week to focus less on how Hashem is going to give me money, and more on whether I am being meshtadel to acquire bitachon.

