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A Life of Joy Through Bitachon

Multiple Factors

In the previous shiur we learned that even if the alchemist can produce as much gold as he wants, he can't enjoy his wealth if he suffers from illness. The *baal bitachon*, on the other hand, enjoys whatever gifts he has, whether in illness or health. Of course, illness is just one of the countless challenges that prevent people from enjoying their hard-won wealth.

We also learned that pleasure, happiness and tranquility are what people really desire when they pursue wealth. Those feelings are in the spiritual realm and are not in our control.

This does not have to be a depressing realization. In fact, it frees us from feeling frustrated by our inability to guarantee our own pleasure, happiness and tranquility, just as we accept the reality that we are unable to fly like a bird since Hakadosh Baruch Hu did not enable us to do so.

Miserable in Business Class

A fundraiser for Torah institutions told me the following story.

I spend a lot of time on airplanes, traveling around the world to raise money. I always fly business class because I try to make sure my flights will be as comfortable and pleasant as possible. From experience, I also know which specific seats in the business class section of each airline are the most comfortable.

Recently, after having reserved my preferred seat in business class, I boarded the plane expecting to enjoy a very comfortable twelve-hour flight. To my dismay, the gentleman in the seat next to mine didn't stop coughing the entire flight; he must have been

quite sick. I could almost feel the cloud of his germs surrounding me. It goes without saying that I didn't sleep a wink.

To top it off, I caught whatever he had. It's now three weeks later and I still haven't recovered fully.

Hearing his story, I realized that it was an excellent illustration of this lesson of the *Chovos HaLeavos*. A person does everything he can think of to make sure he'll have pleasure, happiness and tranquility. A coughing passenger is just one example of countless factors he cannot control. No matter what he does, only Hashem decides if he will have a relaxing, enjoyable experience.

Flying with Bitachon

What is the *baal bitachon's* flight like? Sometimes, in the merit of his *bitachon*, he will reserve a seat in economy class, and then discover that he has the entire row to himself. Of course, that doesn't always happen. But even if the seat is uncomfortable, or his neighbor coughs, he still enjoys his flight because he knows that Hakadosh Baruch Hu has arranged all those discomforts for his benefit.

Certainly a person should invest in the normal *hishtadlus* that can help him travel more comfortably. However, the *hishtadlus* must be done hand in hand with *bitachon*. If you are trying to reserve the best seat on the plane, do it with the clear understanding that **only Hashem will determine if your flight will be relaxing and enjoyable**. If it isn't, realize that Hashem has designed those aspects of the flight for your benefit. Rather than spending the flight fuming, you'll relax as much as possible and **enjoy the situation that Hashem created for you**.

Relying on Miracles?

In reference to our ongoing discussion about *hishtadlus* and *parnassah*, a listener asked the following question:

If we only do *hishtadlus* because of Hashem's decree, with the understanding that Hashem will send the *parnassah* He allocated

for us in whatever way He chooses (which may be unconnected to our *hishtadlus*), aren't we relying on miracles? If my only skill is shoe repair, you tell me that I should fix shoes while having *bitachon* that Hashem will send me *parnassah* in ways I can't even imagine, none of which relate to fixing shoes? How is that different than relying on Hashem causing dollars to rain down from the heavens? Didn't Chazal say אין סומכין על הנס, we're not allowed to rely on a miracle?

The simple answer is that this process is not a miracle. Hakadosh Baruch Hu created a world in which **there are countless natural ways through which He can sustain any given person**; it isn't only through the person's choice of profession. Anyone can testify to this, but especially those people who approached weddings of their children with no idea of how they would cover the expenses. Often, when they realized the limitations of their own powers and there were no more avenues of *hishtadlus*, they turned to Hashem and received funds in ways they had never anticipated.

You Have to Leap

In the previous shiur, we learned from the *gemara* in *Maseches Taanis* that three keys remain exclusively in the hands of Hakadosh Baruch Hu – the keys of rain (*parnassah*), birth, and *techiyas hameisim*.

This concept leads us to a deeper way of differentiating between *bitachon* and relying on miracles.

If we visualize life as a road paved by Hakadosh Baruch Hu, we realize that **He intentionally left deep pits in the road at different points**. This forces us, the travelers on our journey, to leap upward and hope for a miracle. For example, successful farming depends on rainfall. This has been true throughout history, and it's still true in our time, even with today's technology. Hashem designed "nature" this way so there would always be endeavors **where we cannot succeed without a miracle**. By plowing, planting, and fertilizing, farmers take a leap of

faith that the rains will fall, even though they have no control over when, where, or how much rain will fall that year.

When Chazal said אין סומכין על הנס, they were referring to someone who shirks his responsibilities and relies on miracles to provide his needs. They were teaching us that a person must take his responsibilities seriously and do all necessary *hishtadlus*.

At the same time, though, we must remember that our *hishtadlus* isn't the source of our *parnassah*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu provides sustenance, and it may arrive in ways we could never have predicted.

If we live with this mindset, we are not relying on miracles. We are simply seeing the world as Hashem designed it: the natural system of a *baal bitachon* receiving his *parnassah*.

In fact, if a non-Jew would turn to Hashem with the clear understanding that only Hashem determines success or failure, he would live a successful, happy life. But since he is lacking Torah, *tefillah* and *bitachon*, he is unable to take advantage of this phenomenon. In Hashem's love for Am Yisrael, He gave us the Torah and taught us how to daven and rely on Him so that we would lead good, happy lives within this natural system of *Olam Hazeh*.

The key of *parnassah* is in the hands of Hashem, and without *tefillah* and *bitachon* there is no "natural" way to acquire it.

Jumping Over by Jumping Up

Of course, all *shefa* comes from Hashem. What distinguishes these three keys?

Most *shefa* begins as a spiritual emanation, and only materializes in this world after it becomes more and more constricted and material as it descends through countless worlds to our physical world. The systems of nature, created by Hashem just like the power of gravity, help us access and benefit from that *shefa*.

When it comes to these three special categories of *shefa* that bring new life into the world, **Hakadosh Baruch Hu left them in their original state of connection to *Shamayim***. The exceptional nature of the three keys helps a person get closer to Hashem.

Let's return to the image of a pit in the road. When someone walking along the road encounters a deep pit, he has to jump up and over the pit in order to reach the other side and continue his journey. Hakadosh Baruch Hu designed the world in such a way that **we find ourselves stuck when we need those three types of *shefa***. We then realize that the only way we can continue our journey in life is by jumping up, asking Hashem to help us reach the other side. **The need to jump is a gift, because it elevates us to new levels of *kirvas Elokim***.

Rav Tzadok Hakohen of Lublin (*Pri Tzaddik, Shemini Atzeres 42*) applies this concept of the three keys (**rain, birth, and *techiyas hameisim***) to explain another puzzling *gemara*. In *Maseches Moed Katan* (28a), Chazal say, "בני חיי ומזוני לאו בזכותא תליא אלא במזלא" – **Children, life, and sustenance** are not dependent on merit but rather on *mazel*." Rav Tzadok explains that these three, בני חיי ומזוני, are the same three categories. They are not dependent on *zechus*, the merit of performing mitzvos, but rather on *mazel*, the aspect that is beyond human comprehension.

Connection Leads to *Techiyas Hameisim*

There are levels of *kirvas Elokim* that enable human beings to access the "three keys."

The *braisa* of R. Pinchas Ben Yair, upon which the structure of *Mesillas Yescharim* is based, lists the progression of *middos*. It begins: "Torah leads to *zehirus*, which leads to *zerizus*, which leads to *nekiyus*..."

And it concludes: "*Ruach hakodesh* leads to *techiyas hameisim*."

If *techiyas hameisim*, bringing the dead back to life, is one of the three keys that are held only by Hakadosh Baruch Hu, how can a person

acquire that unreachable ability?

Mesillas Yesharim explains that someone who attains the level of *ruach hakodesh* has such total *deveikus* to Hashem that the key of *techiyas hameisim* is shared with him, as it was with Eliyahu and Elisha.

Along the same lines, Rav Tzadok resolves the question posed by Tosafos in *Maseches Taanis* as to how those *nevi'im* were able to bring the dead back to life if the key to *techiyas hameisim* is held exclusively by Hashem. He explains that when the Gemara says the three keys were not given to messengers, it means that those three forms of *shefa* retained their original spiritual state and did not descend into the physical systems of the world. When a human being achieves a state of *deveikus* that elevates him to exist on the same level as the source of the three keys, he is able to access those keys.

This helps us understand why we ask tzaddikim for *brachos* even for children, life, and *parnassah* – בני היי ומווני. When our needs are beyond what humans can achieve, we go to the tzaddik, whose level of *deveikus* imbues him with the power described as “צדיק גזור והקב”ה” מְקִיִּים, the tzaddik decrees and Hakadosh Baruch Hu fulfills.”

All Your Work Is Done

The concept of the three keys also helps us reach a deeper understanding of Shabbos.

In every instance of the spiritual descending to the physical, Hashem left an aspect that is more connected to the spiritual so that we would always understand that the physical draws its *chiyus* from a higher Source. Unlike the other six days of the week that descended into the physical world of action, Shabbos is the day that Hashem introduced *ruchniyus* to the world, and it remained with its original spiritual nature. As Rashi says on כִּי בּו שָׁבַת מְקָל מְלֶאכֶתוֹ – *for on that day He rested from all His work*: “When Shabbos comes, let it be in your eyes as if all your work is done.”

Some wonder how this *pasuk* can be reconciled with the idea that Hakadosh Baruch Hu constantly renews the entire creation, המחדש בטובו בכל יום תמיד מעשה בראשית. Doesn't Hashem renew creation on Shabbos as well?

Since Shabbos is not part of the weekday physical world, the ongoing processes of the world on Shabbos don't contradict the idea of Hashem resting on Shabbos. Even if they look the same to our eyes, the systems of nature on Shabbos are not those of the six weekdays, because the entire world is elevated to a different place on Shabbos.

The exalted nature of Shabbos makes it the conduit of *chiyus* for the other days of the week. Just as Hashem left three keys in His hand so that we would need to turn to Him, so did Hashem leave one day of the week in a heavenly realm so that we would live with the knowledge that we draw everything from Above.

And just as Hashem designed this system in the realm of time, He also implemented it in the realm of place. **The role of Eretz Yisrael in world geography resembles the role of Shabbos in time.** It retains a spiritual nature that is different from the rest of the physical world, and all other lands receive their *shefa* and *chiyus* via Eretz Yisrael.

A Small Cup in a Large Bowl

Someone once confessed to Rav Shlomo of Zhvil that he found it difficult to accept the idea of Eretz Yisrael being the source of all *brachah* in the world when he saw so much poverty in Eretz Yisrael, while many wealthy people lived in other countries. The Rebbe explained that Eretz Yisrael is like a small cup in a large bowl. If you pour water into the cup, it will quickly fill up and overflow into the bowl. The cup never contains more than a small amount of water, but **all of the water in the large bowl comes from the small cup.**

When Eretz Yisrael was in its full glory, in its optimal state of *binyan*, it was like a large bowl that received much *shefa* and from which a small amount flowed to the rest of the world. In its state of *churban*,

Eretz Yisrael retains only a small amount of *shefa*, and all the rest flows to other places.

Finally, just as this idea applies to time and place, it also applies to mankind. **A *talmid chacham* is the human counterpart of Shabbos and Eretz Yisrael.** *Sefarim hakedoshim* state that a *talmid chacham*, who lives in a state of connection to Hashem, is analogous to Shabbos and is also a source of *shefa* and *brachah*.

illuminating Weekdays with the Light of Shabbos

Why can't a *baal bitachon* ascend to the spiritual level of Shabbos on Tuesday as well?

This question isn't as far-fetched as it seems. There is a well-known story that illustrates this idea.

The talmidim of a certain tzaddik feared that the special feelings they experienced on Shabbos might not be genuine. What if the sense of elevation they felt on Shabbos came from wearing Shabbos clothes and singing *zemiros*, rather than from the essence of Shabbos itself? They decided to test this by wearing Shabbos clothes and singing *zemiros* on a weekday.

To their dismay, they experienced the same feelings they felt on Shabbos. Therefore, they concluded that they must have never experienced the true *taam* of Shabbos.

They told their Rebbe of their painful discovery. He immediately corrected them:

"The feelings that you experience on Shabbos are the authentic *taam* of Shabbos! You were able to bring an aspect of the light of Shabbos into the weekday. What you experienced by wearing Shabbos clothes and singing *zemiros* on a weekday was also a true *taam* of Shabbos."

The *baal bitachon* brings an aspect of Shabbos into the six days of his workweek, even as he diligently performs all necessary *hishtadlus*.

Knowing that the *chiyus* of those six days comes from Shabbos, the day on which we are instructed to feel that all our work is done, the *baal bitachon* is able to bring some of that clarity into his weekdays. The clarity reached on Shabbos allows him to work hard, **while still remembering that his *parnassah* is not a product of his work.** It will come from the hand of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, Who holds the key of *parnassah*.

Rav Mendel of Rimanov taught that with each bite of challah on Shabbos, a person should have *kavanah* to transmit *parnassah* to a weekday. With the first bite, he should think of Sunday, with the second, Monday, and so on.

The combination of this *kavanah* on Shabbos with constant awareness during the week that *parnassah* comes only from Hashem empowers the *baal bitachon* to achieve true success. He may not amass a large fortune, but he will attain the *oneg*, the happiness and tranquility, that fortune seekers truly desire. That happiness can't be purchased or won. Only Hakadosh Baruch Hu can bestow that gift.

The *baal bitachon* who receives that gift can experience the *oneg* of Shabbos every day of the week.



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