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ספר דברים

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FROM THE SHIURIM OF

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# PARSHAS DEVARIM



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SHIUR PRESENTED IN 5773

## FEARING TALMIDEI CHACHAMIM

A *pasuk* in this week's parsha teaches us about the mitzvah of *yiras Hashem* (Devarim 6:13):

אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ תִירָא אֹתוֹ תַעֲבֹד וּבְשֵׁמוֹ תִשָּׁבַע

*“Revere Hashem, your G-d and worship Him alone, and swear only by His name.”*

The Gemora in Pesachim (22b) cites a *baraisa* stating that Shimon Ha'amsuni, and some say Nechamia Ha'amsuni, used to be *doresh* all the words “את” found in the Torah. When he got to the *pasuk* of את ה' אלקיך תירא, he was *poreish* (stopped) from *darshening* because he didn't know how to explain this particular את. The את implied a comparison to something else, it implied fearing someone other than Hashem! אמרו לו תלמידיו, his talmidim said to him, רבי כל אתים שדרשת מה תהא עליהן. If your *shitah* in explaining the את can't be explained over here, what are you going to do with all the other explanations of *esim* you said? אמר להם, he said to them, כשם שקבלתי שכר על הדרישה כך אני מקבל שכר על הפרישה, just like I got *sechar* for *darshening*, so too I will get *sechar* for the *prishah*. The gemara continues and says that Rabbi Akiva came and he was *doresh* חכמים לרבות תלמידי חכמים - לרבות תירא - את ה' אלהיך, to include the *yirah* of a *talmid chachom*. So we see that the *yirah* of a talmid Chacham is compared to the *yirah* of Hashem. That is a *moradige madreigah*. You *pashut* have to be afraid of a talmid Chacham like you're afraid of Hashem Yisborach! This is just incredible! The reverence one must have for talmidei chachamim is like the reverence for Hashem - since they represent and embody Hashem like no one else!

## A TALMID WHO SPOKE AGAINST TUMIM

The Brisker Rav told a story that he heard from his father, Rav Chaim. There was a famous *machlokes* regarding *kemeyos* (talismans), as to whether they were acceptable or not. As a result of the *machlokes*, one of the talmidim of the *heilegeh* Tumim (R' Yonosan Eibeschutz, 1690-1764), turned away from his rebbi and spoke inappropriately against him. When the Tumim heard about

it, he had a *kepeidah*, and said the following words: נע ונד תהיה בארץ (Bereishis 4:12). From that day on, this talmid had no more *menuchah*, *peshuto kemashmao*, and he used to wander around. Where he was by day, he didn't sleep by night, and where he slept by night, he didn't stay the next day. And he went from city to city and country to country. It was *yenne* wandering Jew.

One day, he came to a town in Turkey called Kushta. The Rav of that city was a Sefardishe Chacham by the name Rabbeinu Chacham Yitzchak Becher Dovid. He wrote the famous sefer called *Divrei Emes*. This talmid arrived there on Friday afternoon, and on Friday night, he davened in the *beis haknesses* of this Sefardishe Chacham. They had a minhag in that shul that after tefillah, all the guests would line up in a *shurah* and the Rav would arrange a place for each one to eat; this one in this home, the next one in another home, etc. This fellow was standing amongst all the *orchim*, and the Chacham did not arrange a place for him to eat. It was a *peleh*. He thought maybe the Chacham didn't notice him. The next morning, after *mussaf*, the *orchim* formed a line and the Chacham made arrangements for each one of them, but once again, he didn't assign a place for this talmid. The talmid got angry and upset, but he kept quiet. When it came to *minchah* time, the Chacham came to the shul to say a daf gemara before the *tzibbur*. The talmid was listening to the *shiur* and he asked a *shaylah*, which the Chacham didn't answer. Afterwards, he asked another shaylah and once again, the Rav didn't answer. Then he asked a third time, and again, no answer.

Finally, the talmid lost his patience and cried out, "What *ta'anah* does the Rav have on me? There must be some reason you weren't *mesader* me a place to eat yesterday and today, and didn't answer my *shaylos*!" So the Chacham answered, "There's a *kapeidah* on you from an Adam Gadol." The guy started to think of who could have a *kapeidah* on him, and he remembered the whole story that happened with the Tumim. So the talmid said to this Chacham, "If that's so, I'm going back to ask him for *mechilah*." The Chacham answered, "I'm not sure you're going to find him." Immediately after Shabbos the talmid set out on the road to Prague and when he arrived there, at that time, they were taking out the *heilegeh* Tumim to his *levayah*.

## THE BEIS HALEVI'S YIRAS SHAMAYIM

Rav Chatzkel Abramsky (1886-1976) was once sitting and describing the *yiras shamayim* of the Beis Halevi (1820-1892) and his son, Rav Chaim (1853-1918). He said as follows: "Do you know what the *pshat* was in the *yiras shamayim* of the Beis HaLevi? He

was *yarei es Hashem* twenty four hours a day - *po'ched mamash*, literally afraid.” Don’t think that’s a small thing. Try to behave for five minutes like you’re afraid. The Beis Halevi was not *m’siach da’as* from being afraid of Hashem Yisbarach twenty four hours a day without a *hefsek*, even for one moment. And then Rav Chatzkel added, “And so, too, was by his son Rav Chaim.”

Now, there’s a famous question in regard to the *issur* of לא תחמוד (Shemos 20:14).<sup>1</sup> How is it *shayach* to tell a person he shouldn’t covet, desire, something that he sees? *Chemdah* is something that is in the heart of a person. So how can a person prevent his heart from wanting something that he sees? The Ibn Ezra says a *teretz* to this kasha.<sup>2</sup> The Beis Halevi offers another *teretz*.<sup>3</sup> He says the following, “Let’s say a person has a *gevaldige ta’avah* for something, and he finally has the opportunity to fulfill his *ta’avah*. As he gets close to a place where he will fulfill his *ta’avah*, his *teshukah* becomes stronger and his yetzer hara burns in him like a fire, and he goes closer and closer to the place where he is going to fulfill his desires. But in order to get to that place, he has to cross a frozen river. He starts to run across the river, and all of a sudden he feels that the ice underneath him begins to crack. The *pachad* that he feels in that split second is enough to remove any *ta’avah* that he had in his heart a second before. When he thinks to himself, “Uh, oh, I’m going to fall through the ice, and I’m going to drown!” - at that split moment, he forgets all his *retzonos* and all his *ta’avos*. That’s how Hakadosh Baruch Hu created the world! A little *pachad* that enters a man’s heart can remove all his *ta’avah vehachemdah*!

## HOW TO BE MEVATEL THE YEITZER HORA

The Beis HaLevi said the mitzvah of “*lo sachmod*” is really the mitzvah of *yiras Hashem*, meaning, a person should put a bit of *yiras Hashem* into his heart, so that it will be *mashpia* in being

<sup>1</sup> לא תחמוד בית רעך לא תחמוד אשת רעך ועבדו ואמתו ושוור וקמרו וכל אשר לרעך  
<sup>2</sup> לא תחמוד. אנשים רבים יתמהו על זאת המצוה. איך יהיה אדם שלא יחמוד דבר יפה בלבו כל מה שהוא נחמד למראה עיניו. ועתה אתן לך משל. דע כי איש כפרי שיש לו דעת נכונה והוא ראה בת מלך שהיא יפה לא יחמוד אותה בלבו שישכב עמה. כי ידע כי זה לא יתכן. ואל תחשוב זה הכפרי שהוא אחד מן המשוגעים שיתאוה שיהיו לו כנפים לעוף השמים. ולא יתכן להיות כאשר אין אדם מתאוה לשכב עם אמו או אע"פ שהיא יפה. כי הרגילוהו מנעוריו לדעת שהיא אסורה לו. ככה כל משכיל צריך שידע כי אשה יפה או ממון לא ימצאנו אדם בעבור חכמתו ודעתו. רק כאשר חלק לו השם. ואמר קהלת (לאשר) [ולאדם שלא עמל בו] יתנו חלקו. ואמרו חכמים בי ח"י ומזוני לאו בדוכות תליא מלתא אלא במזלא. ובעבור זה המשכיל לא יתאוה ולא יחמוד. ואמר שידע שאשת רעהו אסרה השם לו יותר היא נשגבה בעיניו מבת מלך בלב הכפרי על כן הוא ישמח בחלקו ולא ישים אל לבו לחמוד ולהתאוה דבר שאינו שלו. כי ידע שהשם לא רצה לתת לו. לא יוכל לקחתו בכחו ובמחשבותיו ובתחבולותיו. על כן יבטח בבוראו שילכללו ויעשה הטוב בעיניו, וכו'.

<sup>3</sup> חזו לשוננו שם: לא תחמוד. הנה רבים תמהו: היאך שייך אזהרה על זה, ומה יעשה האדם אם הלב חומד? הדנה כל אדם יוכל לשער בעצמו, וברור הוא, דאם יתאוה האדם לאיזו תאוה היותר גדולה אצלו, כל אחד לפי טבעו, ויהיה גם קרוב להשיג אותו וילך אחריה, ואז היצ"ר בוער בו כאש, רק דרך הילוכו הוא על-גבי הנהר הקפוי מקרה, ובדרך ריצתו נחלקה רגלו על הכפור וחשב ליפול, הרי באותו רגע שנחלקה רגלו ונסת ליפול יטיבל אז ממנו כל אותה התאוה, הדפחד שנתפחד מהנפילה העביר ממנו כל רצונו, דכן יסד הבורא יתברך בטבע כל הברואים דגם ממש פחד שיעלה על לב האדם מעביר ממנו כל כוחות התאוה והחמדה, איך אחרי שהזהירה התורה בלאו דלא תחמוד ואסרה לחמוד, אם היתה לאדם יראה מן האיסור - אפילו יראה קטנה כיראת הנפילה - גם כן שוב לא יחמוד כלל (מהדורת ירושלים תש"ז עמ' ק"ל)

completely *mevatel* the *koach* of the yetzer hara! He explained that a *mentch* is mistaken if he thinks that his *ma'asim ra'im* are a result of a powerful yetzer hara or a powerful *ta'avah*. The only power, *zugt* the Beis Halevi, that the yetzer hara has, is the fact that he makes you remove *yiras Hashem* from your heart. It says in the *pasuk* (Devarim 10:12), מה ה' שואל ממך כי אם ליראה. That means if you will have *yiras shamayim*, you're going to then fulfill everything that it says in the *pasuk* onward. The same concept is found regarding *ma'amad* Har Sinai. The *passuk* says that Hashem arranged the whole *ma'amad* Har Sinai בעבור תהיה יראתו (Shemos 20:17). That means to say that *al yedai* the *yiras Hashem*, a person will be spared from his yetzer hara and won't sin. So the *ta'anah* when a person succumbs to his yetzer hara and listens to his yetzer hara, is that he removed the *yiras Hashem* from his heart.

It is brought down in sefer *Pe'er Hador* that the Chazon Ish praised this *p'shat* of the Beis Halevi and said ראויים הדברים למי – “these words, are befitting the one who said them and those who are like him.” Then the Chazon Ish added, “the *pachad* of Hashem indeed hovered upon him constantly; he always felt it, *mamash*, just as he writes in his sefer.”<sup>4</sup>

## A BUTCHER WHO CURSED BEIS HALEVI

Rav Chaim used to say, “Someone who didn't see my father (the Bais Halevi - Rav Yoshe Ber) never saw *yiras shamayim meiyamav*.” Rav Chaim would relate the following *ma'aseh*. Once Rav Yoshe Ber was learning in Slutsk (the place he was before Brisk). He was in the beis medrash learning his daily *sefer* with Rav Chaim, who he was then a young bachur. While they were learning, a man who was a butcher, came into the beis medrash, and started to *shrei* (scream) at the Beis Halevi and *mevazeh* (embarrass) him. He accused the Beis Halevi of being *mateh mishpat*, of having been *mekabel shochad* (accepted bribery) because there was a case that came before the Beis Halevi with another butcher, and this butcher went out *chayav bedino* and lost the case. When Rav Yoshe Ber heard that the other guy was accusing him, he put on his *kapote*, put on his hat, he stood on his feet with lowered eyes and he was silent. The butcher saw that the Rav was standing in front of him embarrassed and quiet, and he continued his tirade by cursing and shaming all the rabbanim. And

<sup>4</sup> כתב בספר ישורון מאסף תורני: “ידועים דברי הבית הלוי על תמיהת האבן עזרא על הלאו דלא תחמוד דהאיך שיך אזהרה על זה ומה יעשה האדם עם הלב חומד, וביאר כי בגודל הפחד מפני האיסור ודאי מטענות באדם רתיחת דמו ופוסק החימוד, עי' בדבריו בפ' יתרו בהרחבה. כשאב מרן החזו"א זצ"ל לדבר בשבחו של הביה"ל קילס מאד את הפירוש הזה, ולא נתקרה דעתו עד שקרא: 'שאכן ראויים הדברים למי שאמרם ולדומים אליו, שכן פחד ה' היה חופף עליו כל היום והוא הרגיש יפה את שכתב, ביאורו שבספר אינו אלא בבואה לדמותו שלו' (פאר הדור ח"ד עמ' קנ)”.  
 שו"ת אגרות משה, ח"ד פ"א סי' קנ"ב.

he used a language against Rav Yoshe Ber that implied that he was part of the mafia, that he's not a 'straight' person, and he picked up his hand and he threatened him with *makos*. Throughout the ordeal, Rav Yoshe Ber controlled himself and was silent.

When the butcher turned around and started to go out of the beis medrash, his mouth was full of *klalos* and he was disgracing the *kavod* of Rav Yoshe Ber. Rav Yoshe Ber didn't try to explain himself. He didn't *shrei* at him. Instead, he went after him, and kept on saying *mochel ani lach, mochel ani lach, mochel ani lach* (I forgive you, I forgive you) - because a person is not held responsible for what he does in a time of distress.

The next day this butcher was leading some oxen that he had bought and suddenly one of the oxen went a little wild, jumped on the butcher and he killed him. When Rav Yoshe Ber heard about it, he was very shaken and he said to Rav Chaim, "I'm afraid maybe because of my *hakpadah* on him, I caused his death." Rav Chaim told him that he heard his father clearly saying *mochel ani lach, mochel ani lach*. Rav Yoshe Ber asked, "Where was I standing when I said that?" Rav Chaim then showed him exactly where he was standing. Only then did Rav Yoshe Ber calm down a bit. Even so, he was very distraught and depressed for many days afterwards. He was *melaveh* the dead butcher to the *beis olam*. He cried terribly on his *kever*. He accepted upon himself to say kaddish for eleven months and to learn *mishnayos leiluy neshmaso*. On top of that, every single year until the last year of his life, Rav Yoshe Ber fasted on the *yahrtzeit* of that butcher and was *noheg* all the *chumros*, just as he was accustomed to do on the *yom hazikaron* of his father! It's unbelievable!

## THE FEAR OF SHEM SHAMAYIM

Somebody once said to the Brisker Rav that there's a *shamua* about his father, Rav Chaim, that when he was getting ready to utter the *shem* Hashem, his face would turn red from great *pachad*. The Brisker Rav answered, "Not only when he himself was getting ready to say the *shem* Hashem, but even if he just heard the *shem* Hashem coming out of somebody else's mouth, his face would turn red from fear and trepidation."

One time the Brisker Rav said, "When my father said kiddush on Rosh Hashanah and he said *מקדש ישראל ויום הזכרון*, the walls *shuckled*."

Rabbosai, we are standing in Chodesh Av. We're starting Sefer Devarim today. Sefer Devarim records the *tochachah* that Moshe Rabeinu was *mochiach Klal Yisrael* for thirty six days

straight. He tried to instill *yiras shamayim* in Klal Yisrael. It's a month before Chodesh Elul. We have to start thinking about the things we saw in the Chafetz Chaim regarding *yom hadin* and *yom hazikaron*, and take it to heart. We have to remember that we are going to have to give a *din ve'cheshbon* for everything and give an answer for every *ma'aseh* and every *machshavah*. We have to start acquiring some *yiras Hashem*. If we acquire some *yiras Hashem*, that's our only hope to be able to drive away our yetzer hara.

## CAN HISHTADLUS BE DETRIMENTAL? - PART II

### THE TALE OF TWO KINGS

Chazal tell us that Chizkiyahu Hamelech did six things (Pesachim 56a).<sup>5</sup> Regarding three of them, the *Chachamim* were appreciative to him, but regarding the other three, they were not. One of the things he did was cut down the doors of the *heichal* and he sent them to the *melech* of Ashur.

They were not *modeh* to him for doing that. He also stopped up the waters of Gichon, and they also weren't *modeh* to him for that.

Now let's understand what those actions entailed. The first *ma'aseh* appears in Sefer Melachim (Melachim 2, 18:16). It says that Chizkiyahu Hamelech "cut down" the doors of the *heichal* of Hashem and sent them to the *melech* of Ashur. Why did he do this? Chizkiyahu was afraid that the *melech* of Ashur would wage war against him, so Chizkiyahu removed the gold coating from the doors of the *Beis Hamikdash* (as the meforshim explain) and sent the gold to the *melech* in order to appease him. That was the first *hishtadlus* that Chizkiyahu Hamelech did in order to get the *goyim* off his back.

The second episode appears in Sefer Divrei Hayamim (II Divrei Hayamin, 32:1-8). The passuk there describes that Chizkiyahu blocked the waters of the upper Gichon that brought water to Yerushalayim because he wanted to make sure that when malchei Ashur, the kings of Ashur, came to Eretz Yisrael and overran the country, they should not find a plentiful water supply for themselves.

The Chazal, however, did not agree with Chizkiyahu. They had a *ta'anah* against him for what he did. What exactly was the *ta'anah*?

<sup>5</sup> תנו רבנן: ששה דברים עשה חזקיה המלך, על שלשה הודו לו, ועל שלשה לא הודו לו: גירר עצמות אביו על מטה של חבליים - והודו לו. כיפת נחש הנחשת - והודו לו. גז ספר רפואות - והודו לו. ועל שלשה לא הודו לו: קיצץ דלתות של היכל ושיגרן למלך אשור - ולא הודו לו. סתם מי גיחון העליון - ולא הודו לו. עיבר ניסן ב' ניסן - ולא הודו לו.

## CHIZKIYAHU LACKED BITACHON?

The Meforshim explain that Chazal were critical of Chizkiyahu Hamelech regarding these *ma'asim* because: היה לו לבטוח בהקב"ה - "he should have been *boteach* in Hakadosh Baruch Hu."<sup>6</sup> Chizkiyahu Hamelech did these *ma'asim* of natural *hishtadlus* to prevent *milchamah*. First, he tried appeasement. Then, he did the second *ma'aseh* of stopping the water out of concern that perhaps the enemy will come. He was preparing himself as if the enemy was going to come and win the battle; therefore, he sent them appeasement. If they wouldn't take the appeasement and come anyway, he would stop the water up. Therefore, Chazal criticized him because he should have been *boteach* in Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Now, you have to understand that in this situation, there was no promise from Hashem that everything would go over well - i.e. there was no *nevuah* that no evil would happen to Klal Yisrael. So we are talking about undertaking necessary actions to prevent war, which, understandably, is a *matzav* of *pikuach nefesh*. Yet despite this, Chazal had a *ta'anah* on Chizkiyahu Hamelech. So we have to understand: does bitachon in Hashem obligate a person to refrain from any action to prevent possible *pikuach nefashos*? At first glance it seems so because Chazal have a *bikores* against Chizkiyahu for trying to prevent the war by removing the gold from the doors of the *heichal* and stopping the water supply.

## YOSHIYAHU HAMELECH'S BATTLE

We find, on the other hand, that Yoshiyahu Hamelech was judged for just doing the opposite. He was *boteach* in Hashem and he went to do battle. Yoshiyahu Hamelech - the great, great king! It says that Pharaoh Ne'cho became the *melech* of Mitzrayim and wanted to battle the king of Ashur. On his way to that war, Ne'cho needed to pass through the Kingdom of Yehuda, but Yoshiyahu refused his transit and went to battle against Ne'cho's army. We all know the tragic story of how Yoshiyahu died in that battle after being mortally shot by Egyptians archers.

Chazal ask why Yoshiyahu was punished. The answer is because he should have sought counsel from Yirmiyahu Hanavi, and he didn't (*Ta'anis* 22b). What did he *darshan*? He made the following *drashah*. It says in the *pasuk* that, "no sword will pass through your land" (Vayikra 26:6). What sword? He said it means any sword, even a sword of peace. He thought that this

<sup>6</sup> כתב רש"י בג' פסחים (נו ע"א): ולא הוודו לו (לגבי סתם מי גיחון העליון) - שהיה לו לבטוח בהקב"ה שאמר (מלכים ב' י"ט:ל"ד) וגונתי על העיר הזאת להושיעה; כתב תוס' י"ט במשנה פסחים (ד"ט): קיצץ דלתות היכל - כדכתיב במלכים (ב' (יח:טז) בעת ההיא קצץ חזקיה את דלתות היכל ה' וגו' ויתנם למלך אשור ולא הוודו לו שהיה לו לבטוח בהקב"ה.

*pasuk* applied to his generation, and the *gemara* (ibid.) said he made a mistake. He didn't realize that his generation was not *ro'uy* (fitting) to have that *pasuk* fulfilled for them. So we see that Yoshiyahu was judged because he didn't seek counsel from the *Navi* and he did things on his own, without a prophetic *havitachah*, since he had absolute bitachon in Hashem. Instead, if he would have done natural hishtadlus by giving in and checking to see if he was right, he would have submitted to the will of Pharaoh and allowed him and his army to pass through Eretz Yehuda.

## RESOLVING THE CONTRADICTIONS

So we see that Chizkiyahu got criticized because he did too much hishtadlus to prevent war, while Yoshiyahu was faulted for having too much *bitachon* and not being *mishtadel* more. Needless to say, the *shaylah* is: what's the barometer by which we can figure out when to have bitachon in Hashem and when to be *mishtadel*? This is what we have to decide and figure out from these two *ma'asim*.

People often hear things and they think they've found *stiros* (contradictions). People have questions. The Gemora asks *kashas* all the time, but there are not always *stiros*. You just have to know the differences between a situation and to figure out what that difference is. So here we need to figure out why Chazal had a *ta'anah* on Chizkiyahu Hamelech for not being *boteach* enough in Hashem, while Yoshiyahu Hamelech was faulted by Chazal for being *boteach* in Hashem too much. Chizkiyahu Hamelech took all kinds of steps to try to prevent war, while Yoshiyahu Hamelech, who had bitachon in Hashem, didn't do that. Yet we see that both kings failed. The difficulty in understanding the actions of Chizkiyahu Hamelech becomes sharper because Chazal tell us the *madreigah* of bitachon Chizkiyahu Hamelech had (as we will learn in the following *medrash*).

## FOUR KINGS, FOUR APPROACHES

There's a famous *medrash* in Eichah. The *passuk* (4:12) says, וְכָל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֶל, "the kings of the land did not believe," לא האמינו מלכי ארץ, "and all the dwellers of the earth," כִּי יָבוֹא צָר וְאוֹיֵב בְּשַׁעֲרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, "that a *tza'ar* and an *oyev* would come upon the gates of Yerushalayim."

Chazal say (Eichah Rabbah 4:15) היו ארבעה מלכים, "there were four kings," מה שתבע זה לא תבע זה, "what this one expected from ashem, the other one didn't." ואלו הן דוד ואסא ויהושפט וחזקיהו. Dovid's approach to war was as follows: דוד אמר ארדוף אויבי, "I will pursue my enemies," ואשיגם, "and I will catch them." אמר לו הקב"ה, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to him," אני עושה כן, "I will do this," meaning that

I will enable you to pursue your enemies and catch them. זהו שכתב, "Dovid smote them," ויכם דוד, *that's what is written in the passuk*, "from the morning until the evening," למחרתם, מהנשף ועד הערב, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu would light up the night," והיה הקב"ה מאיר לו בלילות, "through lightning" בזיקין וברקים, "in order to enable Dovid to fight even during the night."<sup>7</sup>

"I don't have the koach to go and kill them." אני אין בי כח להרוג להם, "Asa got up and said," עמד אסא ואמר, "what I can do is I can run after them. That's all. I could pursue them." ואתה, "Hashem said, אני, "the rest, Hashem, You have to do." אמר לו, "Eusha, "because the enemy was broken," כי נשברו, "Asa pursued with the people that were with him," לפני ה' ולפני מחנהו, "before Hashem and before Hashem's camp." Chazal say it doesn't say the enemy was broken before Asa; rather, it says the enemy was broken before Hashem. It means Hashem broke the enemy.

אני אין בי כח לא להרוג, "Yehoshafat got up and said," עמד יהושפט ואמר, "I don't have any koach to chase my enemies or to kill my enemies." ולא לרדוף, "Hashem I'm going to say shirah to You," אלא אני אומר שירה, "and the rest, You do, Hashem." ואתה עושה, אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא אני, "And Hashem said, I will do this, and it brings a pasuk.

אני אין בי, "Chizkiyahu Hamelech got up and said," עמד חזקיהו ואמר, "not to pursue," ולא לרדוף, "I don't have the koach to kill," כח לא להרוג, "I'm going to sleep on my bed," ואתה עושה, "and Hashem You do the rest." Rather, "not to say shirah." ולא לומר שירה, "And Hashem said, I will do this," as it says in the pasuk, "it was in the night," ויהי בלילה, "The Angel of Hashem came and smote the camp of Ashur."

Chizkiyahu Hamelech put all his bitachon upon Hashem. He did not do any natural hishtadlus whatsoever. When the huge army of Sancheriv besieged his city, Chizkiyahu did not even gird himself to sing shirah to Hashem. He was טון על מטהו - he simply slept in his bed. And he asked Hakadosh Baruch Hu to do battle for him completely, without any hishtadlus on his part.

<sup>7</sup> לא האמינו מלכי ארץ כל יושבי תבל, ארבעה מלכים היו, מה שכתב זה לא תבע זה, ואלו הן: דוד, ואסא, יהושפט, וחזקיהו. דוד אמר (תהלים יח, לח): ארדוף אויבי ואשיגם וגו', אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא אני עושה כן, הלא הוא דכתיב (שמואל א' ל, יז): ויכם דוד מהנשף ועד הערב למחרתם. מהו למחרתם, רבי יהושע בן לוי אמר לשתי לילות יום אחד, והנה הקדוש ברוך הוא מאיר לו בלילות בזיקין וברקים, כמה דתנינן תמן על הזיקין ועל הזוועות ועל הברקים, הלא הוא דכתיב (תהלים יח, כט): כי אתה תאיר נרי וגו'. עמד אסא ואמר, אין בי כח להרג להם, אלא אני רודף אותם ואתה עושה. אמר לו אני עושה, שנאמר (דברי הימים ב' יב): וירדפם אסא וגו' כי נשברו לפני ה' ולפני מחנהו וישאו שולל הרבה מאד, לפני אסא אין כתיב כאן אלא לפני ה' ולפני מחנהו. עמד יהושפט ואמר, אני אין בי כח לא להרג ולא לרדף, אלא אני אומר שירה ואתה עושה, אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא אני עושה, שנאמר (דברי הימים ב' כ, כב): ובעת החלו ברנה ויתהללו וגו'. עמד חזקיהו ואמר, אני אין בי כח לא להרג ולא לרדף ולא לומר שירה, אלא אני ישן על מטתי ואתה עושה, אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא אני עושה, שנאמר (מלכים ב' יט, לה): ויהי בלילה ההוא ויצא מלאך ה' ויך במחנה אשור וגו'.

## WHAT'S OUR BITACHON RESPONSIBILITY?

So what should a person do in such a situation? Does the *chovas habitachon* relate to every single person? My rebbi (HaRav Meir Soloveichik, zt"l) used to say over a lesson from his father. A person has to behave according to his level of bitachon and according to his level of ability to be physically *mishtadel*. To go to war is something sanctioned by the Torah. The Torah doesn't say a person shouldn't go to war if he's able to. It doesn't say a country shouldn't have an army and go to war. Dovid Hamelech was on the *madreigah* where he was able to go to war and he had full bitachon in Hashem that he was going to win. Asa felt he didn't have the *koach* to kill, so he only pursued his enemy. Yehoshafat felt he could only say *shirah*, and Chizkiyahu felt that he didn't have the *koach* to either kill his enemy or pursue his enemy or even to say *shirah*. So it comes out that Chizkiyahu was on a very high *madreigah* of bitachon, but he was on a low *madreigah* of having the physical ability - relative to his grandfather, Dovid - to fight the war. If a person doesn't have bitachon, that if he goes to war, he is going to win, he should not go to war. But if he is not able to fight, he should do what he can and be boteach in Hashem.

The Brisker Rav applied this once in his shul. There was a choir in his shul. Menachem Begin's father decided that the shul needed a choir. The Brisker Rav was very against it. One time it came time for *chazaras hashatz*. Menachem Begin's father brought the choir, and told the choir to run up to the *bimah* and start to "gargle." So the Brisker Rav made a *macha'ah* (protest). He made a protest for the choir to go down. He made two protests, and after that he decided that he can't protest anymore. He felt he didn't have the *koach* to protest again. He turned back to the wall and the third time he told the choir to go back up to the *bimah*, all of a sudden the ladies from the *ezras nashim* opened up the curtain from upstairs and started to scream, and they stopped the whole thing.

So the Brisker Rav said over this Chazal (Eicha Rabbah) afterwards. He said that the *emes* is that he had already decided that he had no *koach*. He only had *koach* to be *mocheh* twice. After that he said, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu, You have to take care of it. I can't take care of it anymore. I did this for Your kavod. I did what I had to do. I was *mocheh*." He said that at that exact point, Hakadosh Baruch Hu arranged for the women in the gallery to do the job for him and to stop this choir from quacking.

# TOILING FOR PARNASSAH - PART III

## ACTIONS BRING DOWN THE BROCHAH

Despite the sources we cited earlier which seem to indicate that bitachon is without *ma'asim* (i.e., you could have *bitachon* and *hishtadlus* is not required) it seems, however, that there's another school of thought and there are many sources to support that *tzad*. There's a *pasuk* in Devarim (15:18), which says וְבֵרַכְךָ ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ, "Hashem will bless you," בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה, "in everything that you will do." The *Sifri* (Devarim 123) says, יכול, "you would think," אפילו עומד, "that even if a person stands and does nothing," תלמוד לומר, "the Torah comes to teach you that," בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה, "in everything which you'll do."

From here we learn that the *brochah* of Hashem is only sent to someone who does a *ma'aseh* and not someone who does nothing. A person has to do something on his part in order that the *brochah* of Hashem should be *chal* on him.

Similarly, a *pasuk* in Devarim (14:29) says, למען יברכך ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ, "in order that Hashem should bless you," בְּכָל-מַעֲשֶׂה יָדְךָ אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה, "in all of your handiwork which you will do." And the *Sifri* there says, ואם לאו אינו, "if a person does, he receives *brochah*." מתברר, and if not, he's not מתברר.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, the *Tosefta* (Brochos 6) says, that when Hashem said to Yitzchak (Bereshis 26:4), וברכתך, "I shall bless you," והרביתי את זרעך, "I will increase your offspring," it says יצחק expounded from that, "since *brachah* only rests upon an action," עמד, "he got up," וזרע, "and he planted."<sup>9</sup>

## THE LESSON OF BASYA'S HAND

We find the same concept with Basya, Bas Pharaoh. The *passuk* says that she went down to bathe in the river and she saw the *teivah* that was in the reeds, and she sent forth her hand and she took the *teivah* (Shemos 2:5).<sup>10</sup> Chazal point out that it says, "her hand" in a very strange language. It says אמתה, which means to say that her hand became much longer when she reached out to get Moshe's *teivah*, and that is how she was able to reach it. The question is

<sup>8</sup> ע"ע ילקוט שמעוני על נ"ך (תר"צ): אמר רב חמא בר חנינא אתה מוצא אין לך אומנות בזויה יותר משל רועה שכל ימיו הוא הולך במקלו ובתרמילו וידוד קרא להקב"ה רועה. אמר דוד מזקנים אתבנו. יעקב קרא אותו רועה שנאמר האלהים הרועה אותי, אף אני קורא אותו רועה שנאמר ה' רועי לא אחסר. ד"א זש"ה כי ה' אלקיך ברכך. יכול אפילו אתה יושב ובטל, תלמוד לומר בכל מעשה ידך, אם עושה אדם מתברך ואם לאו אינו מתברך. מהו ידע לכתך הלוך לכלוך עערך בפרנסתך

<sup>9</sup> דוסתאי ברבי ינאי אמר משום ר"מ הרי הוא אומר ביצחק (בראשית כו) וברכתך והרבתי את זרעך דרש יצחק הואיל ואין ברכה שורה אלא במעשה ידיו עמד וזרע שנא' (שם) ויזרע יצחק בארץ ההיא וימצא נוג' מאה מנין מאה שערים מאה דגנים ומאה דגנים ששערום מאה פעמים ונמצא על אחת מאה במה ששיערו.

<sup>10</sup> ותפד בתפירה לרחץ על-היאר ונפרתיה הלכת על יד היאר ותפא את-התבה בתוך הסוף ותשלח את אמתה ותקחה

asked: if Moshe was that far away, why did she even put forth her hand to try to get the *teivah*? If I understood that something was six feet away from me, I wouldn't try to reach for it! Maybe if it was falling off the table, you reach out to try to catch it, but if it was sitting there, far away from you - beyond your reach - why would you stick out your hand?!

This teaches us that Hakadosh Baruch Hu could present you with something that's very "far" from you and still perform a *nes*, but on the condition that you have to do as much as you possibly can, and then Hakadosh Baruch Hu will assist you.

## THE OIL FROM THE FLASK

We have another story in Sefer Melachim (II, 4:1-7) with the wife of Navi Ovadya. It says that Achav came to take her children as slaves, in lieu of her deceased husband's debt, and the Navi Elisha saved her from the King Achav in the following fashion. It says there was a woman (Ovadya's wife) who was *mibnei hanevi'im* who cried out to Elisha saying, "My husband who was your talmid died and you know he feared Hashem, and now the collector is coming to take my two children as *avadim*." After Elisha asked her, "What can I do for you?" he told her the following, "Tell me, what do you have in the house?" She said, "The only thing I have in my house is one jug of oil." So he said, "Go to your neighbors and borrow as many empty *keilim* as you can. Then go into your house with your kids and lock the door. Take that one flask of oil you have and use it to fill up all the *keilim*." So she went and she closed the door and, *mamash*, the oil didn't stop pouring! We've heard of water from the rock, but here it was oil from a flask! It just kept on going. And she told her kids, "Bring me more *keilim*, bring more *keilim*!" They said אין עוד כלים - "there are no more *keilim* around." No more *keilim*? At that point, the *shemen* stopped pouring.

So you see, even when the Navi made a *nes* and he produced *keilim* with oil, he still required her to do a *ma'aseh* and to prepare the *keilim*, because the *brochah* is only *shoreh* (rests) after a person makes a *k'li kibul* (receptacle). You have to first have a *kli kibul*, a *kli* that is able to be *mekabel*. As soon as there were no more *keilim*, the *brochah* stopped.

All above mentioned examples demonstrate that a person has to do what he can, and then Hakadosh Baruch Hu sends him *hatzlachah*.

## HISHTADLUS VS. TEFILLAH

Now, the Mishnah in Kiddushin (4:14) says, רבי מאיר אומר, Rabbi Meir says, לעולם ילמד אדם את בנו, "a person should teach his son,"

ויתפלל למי שהעושר והנכסים שלו “a clean and easy craft.” “and he should daven to the One who owns the wealth and assets.” “there’s no business that doesn’t have in it people who become rich or people that stay poor.” - שאין אומנות שאין בה עניות ועשירות ולא עשירות מן “because poverty does not come from the job,” האומנות אלא הכל “and likewise, wealth does not come from the job,” לפי זכותו “rather, everything is according to the *zechus*.” So, it says that a person’s *hatzlachah* depends upon the *tefillah* of a person and upon the *zechus* of a person. But an אומנות one needs to learn in spite of that.

That’s what the gemara says in *masechta Nidah* (70b). The gemara there says that the people from Alexandria asked Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya a number of *shaylos*.<sup>11</sup> They asked him, “What should a person do to become a Chacham?” He told them, *ירבה בישיבה*, that means increase the time you spend in a yeshivah, “and limit the time you do business.” אמרו לו “they said to him,” הרבה עשון “many have done so and they weren’t *matzliach*.” Many have increased the time spent in yeshivah, and limited their business and they’re still not *Chachamim*. So he said אלא, what should you do? יבקש רחמים ממי שהחכמה שלו. In conjunction with being in yeshivah, a person has to be *mevakesh rachamim* from the one to whom the *chochmah* belongs.

The gemara says מאי קא משמע לן, what’s the chiddush? The chiddush is that דהא בלא הא לא סגי - *tefillah* without hishtadlus is not going to be sufficient! If a person davens from today until tomorrow for *chachmah*, he’s not going to get it unless he’s *ירבה בישיבה*. He has to actually take some action and be *ירבה בישיבה* in order to be *zocheh* to it. Likewise, if he sits and learns, there’s no guarantee. He has to daven in conjunction with that sitting and learning.

The gemara says מה יעשה, they asked him, “what should a person do to become wealthy?” אמר להם “he said to them,” *ירבה בסחורה*, “you should increase business.” It’s interesting, the Vilna Gaon erases those words from the Gemara. “He never said that,” the Gr”a said. He never told anybody to increase business. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya just told them the gemara’s second *teretz*, which is *וישא ויתן באמונה*, that you should do business honestly. If you want to be *מתעשר*, “deal honestly in business.” אמרו לו “they said to him - many have done so and they weren’t successful.” He said, יבקש רחמים ממי שהעושר שלו, “you should be *mevakesh rachamim* from the one to whom wealth belongs, as Hakadosh Baruch Hu says,

<sup>11</sup> שלשה דברי דרך ארץ מה יעשה אדם ויחכם אמר להן ירבה בישיבה וימעט בסחורה אמרו הרבה עשון ולא הועיל להם אלא יבקשו רחמים ממי שהחכמה שלו שנאמר (משלי ב, ו) כי ה' יתן חכמה מפיו דעת ותבונה. תני ר' חייא משל למלך בשר ודם שעשה סעודה לעבדיו ומשגר לאוהביו ממה שלפניו. מאי קמ"ל דהא בלא הא לא סגי. מה יעשה אדם ויתעשר אמר להן ירבה בסחורה וישא ויתן באמונה אמרו לו הרבה עשון ולא הועילו אלא יבקש רחמים ממי שהעושר שלו שנאמר (חגי ב, ח) לי הכסף ולי הדבר. מאי קמ"ל דהא בלא הא לא סגי.

‘ה' to Me belongs all the *kesef and zahav*.” The gemara asks, מאי קא משמע לן, “what’s the chiddush?” סגי דהא בלא הא לא סגי. Meaning, *tefillah* alone is not going to be enough. You have to do some kind of *sechorah*, some kind of באמונה נושא ונותן.

It is apparent from these sources that *tefillah* and *bitachon* alone is not sufficient. There definitely is a *mehalech* of physically doing required work, in conjunction with davening to Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

## TWO CONDITIONS

The question is whether these sources actually prove that there is such a thing as *bitachon* without *hishtadlus*. We may say that it is just a general rule that a *ma’ase* needs to be done, while in truth, it is possible for a person to be on the *madreigah* of *bitachon* that Hashem will provide for him even without *hishtadlus*. Regardless, what we do see from this Chazal is that there is definitely a *mehalech* that requires doing an action, such as going to work, together with *bitachon*. And we see from Chazal that when a person does that *hishtadlus*, it must be on two conditions. Number one, your *hishtadlus* has to be in conjunction with *tefillah*. And number two, you have to understand that it’s not your efforts - it’s not your work - that earns you money, but that your work acts only like the *keili* through which Hashem could now give you the *brachah*. It wouldn’t make sense to say that the lady in the story with Elisha simply brought *keilim* and that’s why she got all that oil, correct? No. Bringing the *keilim* has no *shaychus* to getting oil. You and I could bring *keilim* from today until tomorrow and no oil is going to come. You could pour out from one flask to another flask and all that’s going to happen is that it will go from one bottle to the next. Bringing the *keilim* was obviously only a *peulah*, (action), that had to be done, but it was not what created the oil. A person has to understand that you have to do a *peulah*. You have to understand that the *peulah* is just the *ratzon Hashem*. Hashem prefers to do things without open miracles, so unless you have a better choice, you should do it through the most natural means possible!

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