

TRUSTING HaSHEM

Positive Thinking

What is the definition of *bitachon*? Rabbeinu Bechaye writes in *Chovas HaLevavos* that *bitachon* is complete peace of mind, a state in which a person is fully calm, knowing that he can rely on *HaShem* and trust in Him. When a person contemplates how *HaShem* loves him, cares for him, is able to fill his needs, and knows what is best for him; when he considers how *HaShem* alone monitors his life, and always does good even to those who are undeserving; – he will then feel full *bitachon* in Him.

Such trust can be found only in *HaShem*, for any other option, such as mortal benefactors or financial security, can fail or discontinue.

(חובת הלבבות שער הבטחון פרק א')

When the revered *mashpia*, Reb Michael Beliner (better known as Reb Michael *der Alter*), was still a young man, his son fell deathly ill, and the doctors said that there was nothing they could do. Reb Michael went to the local *beis midrash* and shared his bitter news with the chassidim who were there at the time. Doing their best to encourage him, they assured him that *HaShem* would surely have *rachmonus*, and advised him to travel immediately to the Rebbe, the *Tzemach Tzedek*. Reb Michael began to weep, saying that he would strongly like to go, but the doctors said that it was only a matter of hours, so why should he set out on the road? One of the older chassidim berated him. He quoted from the *Gemara* that one should never despair of being granted *HaShem's* mercy, and added that surely the good *malochim* would succeed in having the Heavenly verdict postponed until he reached the Rebbe. One of those *chassidishe yungeleit*, a tailor, offered to join Reb Michael on his trip, and together they set out on foot, here and there hitching a cheap wagonride.

Arriving at last in Lubavitch, Reb Michael was fortunately able to be received for *yechidus* immediately.

He later related: "When I entered the Rebbe's room and handed him my *pidyon nefesh* for my son, I thought to myself, 'Who knows what has meanwhile happened with him? The doctors said it's only a few hours...', and I began to weep. The Rebbe read the note and said, 'Don't

cry. You must have *bitachon* in *HaShem* with simple *emunah* that He will save your son. *Tracht gut vet zien gut*. (Think good and things will be good.) You will yet celebrate the *bar-mitzvas* of your grandsons! "

Soon after, the boy recovered completely. From then on, whenever Reb Michael experienced difficulty he would bring to mind the luminous face of the Rebbe as he spoke those words, and the situation would change for the better.

(לקו"ד ח"א ע' קנט, אג"ק רי"צ ח"ז ע' קצו)

The Rebbe explains that when a person places his full trust in *HaShem*, feeling fully at ease with complete *bitachon*, that is enough for him to merit *HaShem's* salvation. This is true even for someone who is seemingly undeserving, for this *avodah* of *bitachon* alone gives him the merit to be helped. That is the deeper message of the words of the *Tzemach Tzedek*, "*Tracht gut*" – "*Think good and things will be good*."

(לקו"ש חל"ו ע' 4)

Unwavering Faith

Reb Shaul Ber Kobakov, a successful lumber merchant from Minsk, a *chossid* of the Rebbe Maharash and later of the Rebbe Rashab. Once, when on a business trip, as he waited on the railway platform, he heard an announcement that his train would be delayed, so he went to wash his hands and *daven Maariv*. Another Yiddishe merchant present, knowing that this *chossid* was not one to rush through his *davening*, went over and warned him that his train would probably arrive before he finished *Shemoneh Esreh*.

"That's of no interest to me," replied the *chossid*. "Now is the time for *Maariv*, so I'll *daven* now."

While he stood in a quiet corner and *davened* for a full hour, the train came and left. When he finished, he waited for the next train and repeated to the other merchant that nothing mattered to him, even his business, when it was time to *daven*.

Just then the next train clattered to a halt, but before the *chossid* climbed on, whom did he see, stepping down from the train? It was the

owner of the forests to whom he was about to travel! That man came over and greeted him, explaining that he had waited for him at his station as they had planned, but when the Yid had not shown up, he had decided to travel to see him. From this, Reb Shaul Ber understood that he must be desperate to sell his forests, and was thus able to strike a good bargain.

On another occasion, this same Reb Shaul Ber went to *toivel* before *davening*, with a few thousand rubles in his pocket. In the midst of his *davening*, he suddenly realized that his pocket was not as heavy as it had been before, yet he did not rush to finish. He continued *davening* at his accustomed leisurely pace, then put on Rabbeinu Tam's *tefillin*, and at about two o'clock, when he was ready, he went back to the river where he had *toiveled*. There, at the place he had put his clothing down, he found his money – covered with sand that had been blown by the wind!

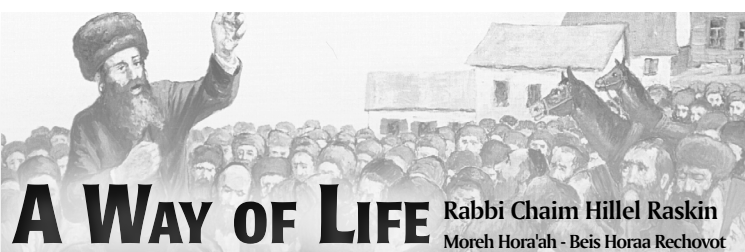
(לקוטי סיפורים ע' שמא)

In response to a man who was troubled and downcast because of his many debts, the Rebbe wrote that his biggest trouble was his lack of *bitachon* in *HaShem*, for that is the key to everything. The Rebbe encouraged the writer to toil in strengthening his certain belief that even if there seems to be no way for matters to work out, he should nevertheless trust in *HaShem* – for He works above nature, and thus all can be good. When a person lifts himself out of his worldly mindset to the point that he appreciates that there is no power over him except *HaShem*, he is then able to cause everything to be good in actuality.

(אג"ק ח"ו ע' קמז)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Did the *mashpia* Reb Michael not know that *HaShem* could heal his son? What did the *Tzemach Tzedek* teach him?
- Was Reb Shaul Ber obligated to neglect the train or his wallet? Was he allowed to? Why?



A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin
Moreh Hora'ah - Beis Hora'ah Rechovot

Weapons on Shabbos

When may Jewish security personnel carry weapons on Shabbos?

- In places without an *eruv* carrying a weapon is forbidden due to carrying. Even in times and places where it is common to wear a gun in its holster, it is not a "garment" but a carried object.¹
- However, it is self-understood that if there is reasonable concern of life threatening danger, it is permissible to break Shabbos.² In a case of reasonable doubt one must follow *pikuach nefesh*, yet try to minimize *chilul Shabbos* that isn't necessary.³ Each situation must be evaluated individually as to whether there is a real need (and whether a non-Jew could do the same job) and to what extent (how many personnel are needed).⁴

What is considered a reasonable doubt?⁵

- Some *poskim*⁶ write that the danger is defined by common response, and if locals feel a serious threat it is *safek pikuach nefesh*. One way to gauge this is by how much they invest during the week to protect themselves. (The same rule applies to driving to the hospital on Shabbos in case of a health predicament).
- Others argue that feelings are not a fair indication since people tend to overreact, and a proper evaluation is needed.⁷ Some state that a chance of less than 1/1,000 it is not a reasonable *safek*.⁸ (Some point out that the evaluation must include the total day, not a specific moment.⁹) One who protects others is evaluated based on the collective chance of danger for all those under his protection.¹⁰
- Whenever there is no immediate danger it is not considered *sakonas nefashos*. For example, desecrating Shabbos to take preventative medication¹¹ or study medicine¹² is not permissible, since there is no danger at hand.¹³
- In practice, one must consult a competent halachic authority to decide on every individual situation.

1. שבת ס"ג ע"א, שו"ע ראו"ח סי' ש"א. ובנוגע מש"כ בערוה"ש סי' ש"א סנ"א, ראה ארחות שבת ח"ג הע' רצ"ה ובקובץ תשובות ח"ג סי' נ"א.
2. ראה שו"ע ר"ס סי' שכ"ט ס"ו, וראה ש"כ סוף פמ"א.
3. ש"כ פל"ב סכ"ח ופמ"א סל"א.
4. שו"ת כמראה הבזק ח"ו סי' ל"ז.
5. ראה תחומין כרך כ"ט מאמר גדרי פיק"ג ציבורי מאת הרב יצחק ברט.
6. ראה מנחת שלמה תנינא סי' ל"ז, שבת מיהודה ח"א יט, ב.
7. שו"ת ציץ אליעזר ח"ט סי' י"ז ס"ק כב וחו"ח סי' ס"ו, ולדעתו שכאשר אין סכנה מוחשית הולכים לפי רוב.
8. ראה תחומין שם ע"פ רעק"א ח"א סי' ס', ועיי"ש שלדעתו אין זה הגדרה מדויקת רק כיוון כללי. וראה שיעורי תורה לרופאים
9. הגר"ש ישראלי בס' עמוד הימיני סי' י"ז אות ח'.
10. התורה המשמחת עמ' 168.
11. ראה נשמת אברהם אור"ח סי' שכח אותיות צ"ג צ"ד על סוגי התעמלות ופיזיותרפיה בשבת.
12. ראה ס' נשמת אברהם סי' ש"ז סק"ו האם מותר ללמוד בלי חילול שבת.
13. ראה נו"ב מהדו"ת יו"ד סי' ר"י שו"ת חת"ס יור"ד סי' שלו שו"ת בנין ציון ח"א סי' קל"ז (ועיי"ש שכאשר יש רק חשש לסכנה הבאה אזלינן בתר רובא).

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

OUR HEROES

Reb Akiva Eiger

Reb Akiva Eiger was born on Yud Daled Cheshvan, תקכ"ב (1761). After relocating several times, he was appointed as the Rav and Rosh Yeshivah of Poznan. He was one of the outstanding *acharonim*, and left a strong impact on the study of Gemara and Halacha. He was known to be very modest and exceptionally humble. He passed away on the Yud Gimmel Tishrei, תקצ"ה (1837).



In the summer of תקפ"ה (1815) the Mitteler Rebbe traveled to the health spas in Karlsbad at the instruction of his doctors. On his way there, he stopped in Poznan and met with Reb Akiva Eiger. In a letter to his son-in-law, the Tzemach Tzedek, he reports his impression of him:

"In Poznan I visited the elder *gaon* Reb Akiva whose last name is Eiger. He is a genuine person and knows nothing of worldly matters, wearing a simple *kapota* and torn *shtreimel* (though his wife and children are surprisingly dressed like the German Jews). He greeted us with great honor as he is humble and unpretentious with all people.

"I asked him for a *bracha*. He shared a thought on a *possuk* and I shared with him its *kabbalistic* meaning that I had heard from my father [the Alter Rebbe]. He enjoyed what I said, but had a hard time hearing.

"He asked me to tell him about my father, since he had heard of him. I gave him two volumes of my father's *Shulchan Aruch*, *Tanya*, and my *seforim*. He accepted them gratefully and we parted with great honors."

When Reb Akiva Eiger came to the city of Poznan to become Rav, he was brought in a chariot, harnessed to strong stallions. With him, sat his son-in-law, the Chasam Sofer, who had married his daughter two years prior. The entire city came out to great them and stood cheering at the sides of the road.

The Chasam Sofer, who understood that this entire honor was meant for his father-in-law, on his appointment as Rov, climbed down the chariot and joined the crowds at the road side. But after a bit of time, he looked up at the other side of the wagon and to his astonishment saw his father-in-law, Reb Akiva Eiger also walking at the side of the now empty wagon, convinced that all this honor was being given to his illustrious son-in-law...

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

A Broader Objective

The Yom Kippur War raged in Eretz Yisroel through the winter of 5734 (1973), costing many lives. In 770, the Rebbe constantly spoke of the power of the *tefillin* campaign, as well as the security gained by having *seforim* and a *tzedaka pushke* in the home.

During the *farbrengen* of Yud Shevat, the Rebbe surprised the chassidim with a new campaign: *mitzva mezuzah*. Aside from the physical protection the *mezuzah* will provide, the Rebbe explained that it will protect the dwellers from the negative influences of the street.

Anash and *bochurim* spread the message, educating and encouraging *Yidden* to put up a *mezuzah*, and often subsidizing the costs.

When the campaign first began, the *bochurim* of the Lubavitch yeshiva of Miami proudly reported to the Rebbe that they had already put up *mezuzos* in forty homes throughout Miami.

The Rebbe was not satisfied and replied in writing: In a city of forty-thousand *Yidden*?

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