

The Weekly Farbrengens

MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

למען ישמעו • שלח תש"פ • 571
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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 Michoel Beliner (better known as Reb Michoel *der Alter*), was still a young man, his son fell deathly ill, and the doctors said that there was nothing they could do. Reb Michoel 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 Michoel 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 *chassidische yungeleit*, a tailor, offered to join Reb Michoel on his trip, and together they set out on foot, here and there hitching a cheap wagonride.

Arriving at last in Lubavitch, Reb Michoel 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 Michoel 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' קצז)

CONSIDER

Did the *mashpia* Reb Michoel 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?

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 Yiddische 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' שמוא)

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)

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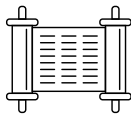
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PAR-BAKED AND PAS YISROEL

May I buy a partially baked pizza crust that is kosher but not certified *pas Yisroel*?

Chazal forbade eating bread or pastries baked by a non-Jew due to the concern that it may lead to intermarriage.¹ *Rishonim* dispute whether bakery products are included, or only privately-baked bread, since the latter engenders more closeness. Additionally, some *poskim* hold that the prohibition only applies where *pas Yisroel* is available, and others hold the decree never took hold since it didn't spread to all communities.² In any case, Chabad custom is to be extremely careful to avoid such bread, even for young children.³

For bread to be considered *pas Yisroel*, a Jew must take part in the actual baking process, either by turning on the fire, adding to the fire—even a mere match—or by inserting the dough into the oven.

Until what stage can the bread be “finished” by a Jew?

As long as the bread or pastry isn't fully ready to be eaten as is, even if it is already somewhat edible, a Jew can bake it to completion and make it *pas Yisroel*.⁴ However, once the baking process has been completed, *pas akum* bread can't be turned into *pas Yisroel* by further baking (or even crumbling it and boiling the mixture).⁵

A second opinion allows fully-baked bread that is enhanced through a Jew's further baking (not merely to make it taste fresher),⁶ but this view is not accepted *lechatchila*.⁷ Toasting *pas akum* bread doesn't make it permissible according to all opinions, since this new entity doesn't annul its previous status.⁸

Most “par-baked” breads or pastries are baked to around 85% completion and are then sold frozen. Some of these have a proper *hechsher* but are not certified *pas Yisroel*. If a Jewish consumer bakes it to completion, it is considered *pas Yisroel* since it needs this finishing touch to complete its taste and texture.

Graham-cracker and other fully-baked crusts would only be permissible according to the *b'dieved* view, if they are enhanced by further baking. However, partially-baked pie crusts that are meant to be baked further are fully permissible.

1. גמ' ע"ז דף ל"ה ע"א.
2. ראה רמב"ם הל' מאכלות אסורות פ"ז ה"ב, פ"ח ס"י קי"ב ס"ק כ"ב, וראה ערוה"ש ס"י תוס' ע"ז ל"ה ע"ב ד"ה מכלל, רא"ש ע"ז פ"ב ס"י כ"ז, שו"ע יו"ד ס"י קי"ב ס"ב.
3. מענה הרבי, הודפס בהיכל מנחם ח"א ע"י רכ"ד.
4. שו"ע יו"ד ס"י קי"ב ס"י"ב.
5. ראה שו"ת מן המשמים ס"י ע"ה, שו"ת מהרי"ל.
6. ס"י קס"ה.
7. פ"ח ס"י קי"ב ס"ק כ"ב, וראה ערוה"ש ס"י קי"ב ס"ח דאל"כ לא תמצא פת עכו"ם שאסורה.
8. שו"ע ס"י קי"ב שם.

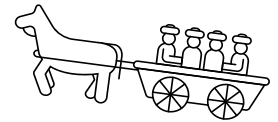
9. ראה קובץ מבית לוי גל' ח ע' כו, ובס' בישול ישראל ס"י ע"ה סק"ד.

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REBBETZIN STERNA

Rebbetzin Sterna was born to her parents Reb Yehuda Leib and Beila Segel. Reb Yehuda Leib was a prominent *gevir* in the city of Vitebsk, and was from the leading community members. On 12 Av 5520 (1760), she married the Alter Rebbe and lived in Vitebsk. Her husband's holy ways were strange in her parents' eyes and they pressured her to demand a *get*, and when she refused they began to suffer greatly. She had great *mesiras nefesh* for her husband and he in return respected her greatly. After the Alter Rebbe passed away, she moved with her son the Mittlerer Rebbe to Lubavitch and lived many long years.

Just then the Alter Rebbe finished davening and asked if there is what to make *kidush* on. She replied that she will go get something from her father's house, to which the Alter Rebbe said that according to Torah that is prohibited. Instead, her sister offered to bring something from her house.

(ס"ה ש"ת רצ"ז ע' 193)

Once during the early years of his leadership, the Alter Rebbe looked out the window and saw many *chassidim* flocking to his home, from far and near. He fell to the ground and exclaimed, "What do they want from me? What do they see in me?" His wife Rebbetzin Sterna, who understood that it was her job to direct the development of things smoothly, walked in and said to him "Why do you think they are coming for you? It is only that you merited being by the Mezritcher Maggid, so they are coming to hear what you received". "If that is their will", said the Alter Rebbe, "I will fulfill their will, I will teach and teach more".

One Friday evening after Rebbetzin Sterna refused to demand a *get*, her father drove her out of the house. Her husband the Alter Rebbe, was davening in the attic of her father's storehouse, so she went there and waited for him in the hallway of the attic. It was winter time and it was freezing, but she did not want to disturb her husband. She stood there for a long time until her sister found her almost frostbite.

A Moment with The Rebbe



WHAT IS A REBBE?

In a joint *yechidus* for college students in Elul 5712 (1952), one student took the courage and asked the question: "What is a Rebbe?"

therefore it receives energy from a generator. For this to happen, there must be wires, and the light fixture must be compatible.

The Rebbe responded, "A Rebbe's *neshama* carries a part of the *neshamos* of those that are connected to him. When a *chossid* comes to his Rebbe, he is looking to find that part of his own *neshama* in his Rebbe. Thereby, he also develops a connection to the Rebbe's *neshama*.

"Similarly, a Rebbe is like a generator, and the *chossid's neshama* is like the bulb. In order for him to be ignited, he has to connect to the Rebbe through his wire, which is his *neshama*.

"An example could be brought from a light bulb. The bulb doesn't have the power to create its own light,

"And the fixture, the *chossid*, also has to be compatible and turn his switch on."

(Teshurah Sandhaus, Shevat 5768)