

The Need For Bitachon In The Teshuva Process

Based on the weekly Shmuess given by HaRav Shaya Cohen, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Zichron Aryeh

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנחם | הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | רפאל חיים דוב בן בן-ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע | דב בעריש בן פסח צבי
לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל | יעקב אליעזר בן חנה נשא

In the sixth Derush in Drashos HaRan, he writes, “A Baal Teshuva needs to place his sins in front of him all the time. We find this by Dovid, who didn’t sin, and even so he said ‘My sin is always in front of me’. Therefore it is appropriate for every person to reflect on his actions at set times, and be meticulous regarding the details in order to return to Hashem with complete Teshuva. After this, it is not proper for a person to be afraid of suffering, rather he should strengthen his Bitachon. His heart should be entrusted to Hashem, as even in times of great fear and danger it is fitting for a person to put his trust in Hashem ... because even in a situation of grave danger and the gates of salvation are closed, Hashem will save those who trust in Him.....to say that Hashem is good to those who trust in him, meaning to say that He does not act towards them with the Middas Hadin, rather with his goodness...”

The Derashos HaRan seems to connect making a Cheshbon Hanefesh, and the need for Bitachon. It sounds like that when a person focuses on his sins, that will generate a fear which will need to be addressed with Bitachon. The purpose of the Cheshbon Hanefesh is for the purpose of doing Teshuva, which should reduce the fear, so why is it necessary to immediately work on Bitachon?

It seems that when a person begins to focus on his sins, he becomes overwhelmed as he realizes that what he did was wrong, and there are consequences for his actions. These thoughts can cause a person to be gripped by fear, thereby creating a natural aversion to Cheshbon Hanefesh in order to avoid these overwhelming feelings. However, making a Cheshbon Hanefesh is critical to Teshuva, which is why it is so important to remove this interference to the Teshuva process.

Bitachon has the ability to reduce the fear generated by a Cheshbon Hanefesh and can serve as the antidote to the fear. If a person focuses on the fact that Bitachon even protects him from the Middas Hadin, he will be able to confront his sins and make a Cheshbon Hanefesh.

The Derashos Haran in Derush nine, shares another idea with us that can help us confront our sins. He writes, “One who wants to straighten out a person that has sinned, should use these two approaches. One is to let him know what he did wrong, and to rebuke him so that he does not make this same error in the future. For as long as he ignores his sin, it is impossible that he will do Teshuva from it.....The second approach is to let him know that even though he sinned he is still positioned for great things. As he is still loved and wanted by the one who wants to bring him close....”

One would think that after showing someone what they did wrong, the next step to straighten him and bring him to Teshuva, is to let him know the consequences for his sins, not to tell him that although you sinned you can still be great and are loved by Hashem.

It seems that when a person focuses on his sin, this focus itself creates a barrier to Teshuva, as a person thinks this sin has impacted his relationship with Hashem. It is therefore necessary for him to know that even after he sinned, he is still able to reach great heights and is loved by Hashem.

As we approach Rosh Hashanah with the mindset of doing Teshuva, we need to be aware of these psychological interferences to the Teshuva process. Focusing on sin can cause a fear and a feeling of distance from Hashem, which blocks the Teshuva process. Through working on Bitachon, and knowing that we are still loved by Hashem, even when we sin, we can overcome these barriers to Teshuva.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

“For the Lord desires you, and your land shall be inhabited... and the rejoicing of a bridegroom over a bride shall your G-d rejoice over you.” (Haftorah Parshas Nitzavim, Yeshaya 62:3-5)

The owner of the wedding hall looked on in amazement. He had been taken by surprise when he was informed that the Chosson and Kallah were remarrying each other after having been divorced for years, for usually such a celebration would be low key. However, what he was now witnessing was the happiest Chasuna he had ever seen. He pulled an acquaintance of his aside and asked him for a little more background to the story. What he heard explained it all. The reason the husband and wife had originally divorced was the exact opposite of the usual cause. Their love for each other was the envy of many a couple, however there was a medical issue that had forced them to separate. Following their divorce, they had both fallen into a tremendous depression as they both could not imagine going on in life without the other. After years of suffering, doctors had discovered a cure for the medical issue that had caused their separation and they had immediately booked a hall for a Chasuna like no other!

The Malbim explains the above Pasuk: “The rejoicing of a bridegroom over a bride shall your G-d rejoice over you,” as follows: Usually when a divorced couple remarries, the happiness is more low key. However, when Hashem will take us back to Him with the coming of Mashiach, like “the rejoicing of a bridegroom over a bride shall your G-d rejoice over you.” Why is this so when we in fact have suffered so terribly during the thousands of years of our being distanced from Him? For just as in the above analogy, it was only out of His infinite love that Hashem had been forced to send us away for our own good. In truth, His love for us had never diminished and deep down neither did our love towards Him. Rather, we both suffered for thousands of years refusing to give up on each other. Therefore, when the time finally comes when we can return to each other, the celebration will literally be the happiest day since the creation of the universe!



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The Chovos HaLevavos writes: “When one places his trust in something other than Him, Hashem removes his Divine Providence, so to speak, from upon him, placing him under the natural ability of that which he has placed his trust in.” (Introduction to Shar HaBitachon)

One may think to say: Who says I’ll lose if Hashem places me under the natural ability of that which I have placed my trust in. Perhaps I trust in my clever business mind, or a wealthy relative, or one whose natural abilities are indeed significant? However, we see from the Chovos HaLevavos that no matter what you have going for you under the natural order of the world, what Hashem has planned for you, His beloved son, that He loves endlessly, is significantly better.

How does one practically live this life of bliss? He must simply stop relying on anything other than Hashem, including himself. He should continue performing Hishtadlus but with the proper intent, i.e. to fulfill his obligation of: “With the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread.” (Bereshis 3:19) By doing this he can be assured his lot in life will improve immensely now that he will be, Kaviyachol, allowing Hashem to give His dear son the lot in life that He had always planned for him.

Many people are discouraged from working on their Bitachon because it is too hard for them to attain the higher level of Bitachon, i.e. trusting that Hashem will grant them their specific desire. However, it is important to remember that there is a lower level, as we mentioned above, that is much easier to attain, while still providing us with priceless benefits in every area of our lives.

Additionally, this level of Bitachon is also the stepping stone to reach higher levels of Bitachon about which the Pasuk (Tehilim 37:3-4) states: “Trust Hashem and do good, dwell in the land and attain sustenance through your belief [in Hashem]. And take pleasure from Hashem and He will grant your hearts desires.”