

# The Torah Any Times

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## Rabbi Shaya Cohen

### Do Not Fear

I lived in Los Angeles for many years and established a yeshiva there. When the time came, I wanted to move back to New York. I planned on moving back during the summer, so when the time rolled around in March, I informed the people involved that I was going to leave. However, since I was carrying the financial burden, I promised that I would find them a successor and leave them \$120,000 in the bank, which was a lot of money in 1985.

Two weeks before the end of the school year, I had someone else take over my yeshiva handlings. At the time, I did not have the money secured. As I was saying goodbye to some of the students, one of the graduates said that he had an idea.

He had been studying at a prestigious university for a number of years, pursuing a dual degree. By now, he wanted to withdraw from the university and start a business of his own. His parents, however, wanted to coax him into staying, as he had gone so far and they wanted him to complete his studies. To encourage him to finish, they told him that they'd buy him a Ferrari if he finished the next year. "The Ferrari my parents want to buy me," the graduate of the yeshiva said, "is a \$120,000 car. I'm going to promise my parents that I'm going to finish the next year at the university, but instead of buying me the Ferrari, they should give the money instead to the yeshiva." It sounded wonderful to me.

The night before my flight to New York, I made up with this graduate's father that when the escrow closes for one of the businesses he was involved with and the business sells, he would donate \$120,000 to the yeshiva. This conversation took place during the summer.

As often occurs, escrows don't close when you want them to, and it was hours before Hoshana Rabba a couple months later, and the escrow had still not closed. The individual involved in running the financial affairs of the yeshiva called me about half an hour before Yom Tov was to begin and said, "We can't continue this way. If we don't have at least \$100,000 after Yom Tov, we may need to close down." It was a terrible situation. I didn't know what to tell him. I didn't have \$100,000 to give him. However, I had given a class the night before on a Gemara in Berachos (60a).

The Gemara recounts a story with Hillel who entered into a city and heard a frantic, wailing outcry coming from a home. Hearing this, Hillel remarked, "I am certain that these panicking outcries are not coming from my home." The Gemara justifies Hillel's remark from a Pasuk (Tehillim 112:7), "Of bad news he will have no fear; his heart is firm, confident in Hashem."

Remembering the topic of discussion from my talk the night before, I informed the person just that. "I don't know what's going to be, but we need to have bitachon, trust in Hashem."

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A few minutes later, I received a call from one of my closest friends. His father was a seventy-three-year-old man and was just diagnosed with a tumor at the base of his brain. The doctors gave him six weeks to three months to live. The seventy-three-year-old man was broken beyond belief.

I told my friend the same thing I had just told the person who was running the financial matters of the yeshiva. "I don't know, but we need to have bitachon. The Gemara says that if you have bitachon in Hashem, you don't need to be afraid of bad news. Just work on your bitachon. It is super powerful."

I went on to call my friend's father, the man who had just been diagnosed. I told him the same thing. "I don't know the answer, but we need to have bitachon." "How can you say that?" he asked me. "People die." "I don't know the answer to that question," I replied. "There must be some answer. But the Gemara says that if you have bitachon, you don't need to be afraid of a bad tidings."

It was now after Yom Tov.

I called up my close friend, and he told me the following. "After finding out about my father's diagnosis, I was so distraught that I went to the bank—a different bank than my father's, so he doesn't know about it—and I borrowed \$100,000 to give to the yeshiva."

That was one problem taken care of.

Ten minutes later, my close friend received a call from the doctor's office. The doctors consulted together, and they agreed to drop the diagnosis, as they realized that what

they found at the base of his father's brain had been there since birth. The father went on to live for another fourteen years.

Do not be afraid of bad news. If your heart is set, confident in Hashem, do not be frightened.

That is the story. As a post-script, the seventy-three-year-old man went on to donate another \$5,000 to the yeshiva out of his great relief, gratitude and appreciation.

The matter of the fact is that this seventy-three-year-old man asked a very good question. "People die," he said. "Even with bitachon, people still die." In the yeshiva world, there is a Yiddish expression, "You don't die from a good question."

A few weeks later, I was locked out of my car which I had parked in the shul parking lot. As I was thinking about what to do, I noticed that another rabbi in the community was heading into his own car. I asked if he could give me a ride to my home, which was a few blocks away, as I had a spare set of keys that would help me unlock my car. The rabbi graciously offered me a ride.

In the front seat there was a car seat, so I looked to sitting in the back, though there was a pile of seforim. It wasn't a problem. I picked up the pile of seforim, and placed it on my lap. Of the different books, I noticed that there was a commentary from the Vilna Gaon on Tractate Berachos, which includes the Gemara about Hillel which I had recounted to several people before. Immediately, I opened to the page where the Gaon speaks about this Gemara, and he explains exactly as above. Hillel had bi-

tachon, and it was because of this bitachon that he didn't fear that bad news was emanating from his home.

In added brackets, the question is asked as to how Hillel's statement can be true when righteous people suffer. The answer, says the Gaon, is that everything depends on the level of bitachon, trust in Hashem.

To the degree that a person puts his bitachon in Hashem, to that degree he need not be afraid of bad news. He can remain firm and confident in Hashem.

Bitachon is very powerful. It is real. The Chofetz Chaim writes, "According to the level of bitachon is the level of success." It is not all-or-nothing. Whatever level your bitachon is, to that level your success will be. They are commensurate.

Bitachon works and is a real source of power. The Gemara as well is explicit, as understood by the Vilna Gaon. To whatever level of clarity, depth of confidence, sureness, total reliance on Hashem's kindness and the feeling that Hashem is always going to help you, He will. This feeling actually effectuates results.

We live in difficult times. The needs of Klal Yisroel are more than many. They are manifold. But bitachon carries the potential that can accomplish a resolution to so many of our needs, change the issues that we have, and grant us a sense of peace of mind.

Always remember, Hashem takes care of everything.

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## Rabbi Moshe Don Kestenbaum

### No Doubt

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When a baal bitachon, someone who is strong in his bitachon, walks into a grocery store with no money and someone gives him money, his reaction isn't, "Oh, it's a

miracle!" Rather, the baal bitachon is not surprised. He had no doubt that Hashem is being good to him, and

will find a way to take care of him and his family. Such unwavering certainty and confidence in Hashem causes him to react in a way along the lines, "I had no doubt that Hashem would take care of me." Such is the level of his certainty, reliance and trust in Hashem.

Rav Zundel of Salant lived in Jerusalem, and had a daughter who needed a shidduch. Rav Zundel had bitachon and decided that he would go to the port in Yafo and the first man who would come off the boat would be the one he'd take for his daughter.

Rav Zundel headed to the port, and there he saw a young man. He was wearing pants which were held up with ropes. He was clearly poor in means. Rav Zundel approached him and told him to follow along, as he wanted him to marry his daughter.

Rav Zundel brought the young man back to the yeshiva, and the surrounding townspeople began talking to him and about him, trying to learn more about who he was and where he had come from. What was he learning? They were sure that he was a learned young man if Rav Zundel had selected him as a husband for his daughter. But the young man replied that he wasn't learning anything, sending the townsfolk into shock. He seemed to be nobody special. How could it be that Rav Zundel would

want such a poor and unlearned man for his daughter? No one understood. But they let him be, and allowed him to remain sitting in the beis midrash. Maybe some Torah would enter his mind, and he'd learn a couple of things here and there. But otherwise, the talk of the town was that this young man was a real nobody, both financially and in terms of his learning aptitude.

It was shortly before Pesach when the town Rav was giving his annual Shabbos HaGadol Derasha. It was a complex talk, weaving together intricate Talmudic subjects along with halachic analyses. Somewhere in the middle, this soon-to-be son-in-law of Rav Zundel piped up and said, "My grandfather, the Shaagas Aryeh, was of this opinion..." Immediately, everyone turned their heads to the young man. They couldn't believe it. The grandson of the Shaagas Aryeh? Incredulously, they ran to Rav Zundel and informed him. "Your future son-in-law is a brilliant Torah scholar and he stems from a distinguished family, going back to the Shaagas Aryeh." Rav Zundel sat there unfazed. "Great... that's great..." he said. Rav Zundel acted as if the news was no big deal, as if he never held any doubt that the husband he chose for his daughter would be right for her. Hashem would orchestrate it to work just as it needed to be.

Rav Zundel didn't view this unfold-

ing of events as a miracle. He saw Hashem in everything, and he had no doubt it would be good.

The more we see Hashem in everything, the less the miracle is pronounced. Everything is Hashem. The reason we are not privy to miracles is because Hashem doesn't reveal Himself. It is our job to reveal Hashem. The Ramban (end of Shemos) writes that Hashem performed the miracles in Egypt in order to demonstrate to us that everything that occurs in the world is from Him.

To work on bitachon is not simply to work on trusting Hashem, but to see that Hashem is involved in everything that goes on. The level of bitachon can be more aptly described as the level of seeing Hashem in your life. If you really see Hashem in your life, then you will trust Him. If you really see it as Hashem, you will not see it as, "I need to get this job, and therefore this person needs to help me or I'm stuck." That person would only be Hashem's method. But why would I be stuck on that method? "Is Hashem's hand short?" as the Pasuk tells us in Parshas Behaaloscha. Hashem doesn't have many methods? He only has one trick up the sleeve? He has many, many ways.

He most certainly does.

## Rabbi Uri Lati

### Hashem's Promise

Let's take the work te'aser (Devarim 14:22), a word used in reference to tzedakah, specially giving away maa'ser, or a tenth of your earn-

ings. Te'aser is spelled taf, ayin, sin and reish.

If we take ten percent of each of these four letters, we will discover something incredible. Taf is equal

in gematria (Hebrew numerical value) to 400. Ten percent of 400 is 40. The letter mem is the gematria of 40.

The next letter is ayin, which equals 70. Ten percent of 70 is 7. The letter

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zayin is the gematria of 7.

The following letter is sin, which equals 300. Ten percent of 300 is 30. The letter lamed is the gematria of 30.

The final letter is reish, which equals 200. Ten percent of 200 is 20. The letter chaf is the gematria of 20.

If you put these letters together, each of which is ten percent of the letters comprising the word te'aser, we arrive at a new word: Mazal'cha, spelled mem, zayin, lamed, chaf.

Mazal'cha means, "Your mazal." Mazal refers to your lot in life, to how Hashem infuses into your life goodness and blessings, as when we wish another person upon a joyous occasion, "Mazel Tov."

When you give maa'ser, your mazal will be filled with Heavenly blessing and goodness from Hashem. Hashem has good credit to believe that when He tells us that if we give maa'ser, our mazal will change. This assurance comes from Hashem, let-

ting us know that if we give generously of our own resources to others, He will pay us back in ways that we'd never imagine.

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## Rabbi Igal Cohen

### Have Faith

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When a child approaches their mother or father with a problem—they don't have socks, shoes or clothing, or they're having a problem with their friends—they say, "Abba, I have a problem." He thrusts his problem on his father.

Dovid Hamelech tells us something simple. Hashem is your shepherd. There is nothing except Hashem. What else is there? What is there without Him? Our entire life—our breath of life, our soul—is Him. If you take Hashem to be your shepherd—to engage with Him in a conversation every day, every moment—you will not lack anything. We all want to be in a place in our lives where we don't

lack anything.

Rav Shalom Arush shlita once remarked that when people come to him seeking blessing and guidance for their financial difficulties, they ask, "Please give me a blessing for parnassa." Rav Arush tells them, "You should be blessed to have emuna, faith in Hashem. Because if you have emuna, you will have everything."

Sometimes, a person hurts you or attempts to scare you, and you grow into a panic and become nervous. At that moment, Hashem is saying to you, "My beloved child, the true antidote to your worries, to your pressures, is to stop worrying, and throw your worries on Me." Throw your worries on Hashem verbally,

actually expressing them with your mouth. Our mouth has an influence on our soul. When you say with your mouth, "I am not afraid of anyone in the world, because no one in the world can hurt me, because Hashem is protecting me. Hashem, Who runs the entire world, is my guardian. No one in the world can raise a finger, even their smallest finger, against me. Even if the person wants to hurt me from today until tomorrow, this doesn't bother me. He won't succeed."

A person like this lives with the Pasuk (Yirmiyah 17:7): "Blessed is the person who places his trust in Hashem, and Hashem will be his fortress." Of such a person, everything that he does will succeed.

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