

TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

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PARSHAS VAYISHLACH

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

WAR, GIFTS AND PRAYER

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Part I. Prepare With Strategy

A Nation in Need of Advice

When Moshe Rabbeinu criticized the Am Yisroel, he said (Devarim 32:28), **כִּי גוֹי אֲבֵר עֲצוֹת, הִנֵּה** – it is a nation that is devoid of counsel, a nation that doesn't seek advice. And on this possuk the Sifri makes a comment: **עֲצוֹת הֵינּוּ תוֹרָה** – *eitzos means Torah*.

Now, this could be understood as explaining the verse to say that they're a nation devoid of Torah, lacking in Torah learning – it's a criticism for not learning enough Torah. It's a big criticism because the Torah was given to elevate us and to offer opportunity for *chayei olam*. So naturally we understand what a great criticism it is when a person or when a group of people are *ovad eitzos*, devoid of Torah knowledge.

But actually the verse is saying something more specific. It's criticizing the people, not for lacking in Torah learning but for not seeking out *the counsel of the Torah*. It could be a person studies Torah, maybe even very much Torah, and yet he doesn't seek its advice. That, the Sifri says,

is called *ovad eitzos* because the Torah is the storehouse of good advice; always wise and always practical.

Judging a Brother

Now, we're not going to spread ourselves out in one evening over the whole panorama of Torah. Even if we would be able – and we're not because there's no end of advice in the Torah – it would take up not an evening or two but years and years to study every possuk. And so we're going to concentrate just on one little area of the Torah, one particular episode from this week's *sedrah*, and make use of it as a model for how the Torah gives us *eitzahs* on dealing with difficult situations. When we read about the famous incident where Yaakov Avinu is now, after many years, about to meet his brother, Eisav, we will study it now as a story full of *eitzah*.

Eisav, you have to know, had already decided long ago to do away with Yaakov. All these years they were separated Eisav had nursed against Yaakov a very big grudge for inveigling him into selling the birthright and then stealing the blessings from their father. All these years Eisav

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had been brooding over his brother's 'treachery', magnifying his grudge more and more, becoming a greater and greater enemy against his brother. And now he was coming with four hundred men to meet up with his younger brother, Yaakov.

Now, a brother who's coming to greet another brother doesn't need four hundred armed men. And Yaakov understood clearly what Eisav's intentions were – he's coming to settle all the old accounts. And when Eisav would settle it, it would be in a way that would be final. And so Yaakov understood this was a crisis, a very serious crisis.

A Three-Pronged Approach

What did Yaakov do? **התקין עצמו לשלשה דברים** – He prepared himself in three different ways: **לדורון ולמלחמה** – Gifts, prayer and war (Rashi, 32:9). And we should talk about each one and study them because how this crisis was handled by Yaakov Avinu is intended for us.

Yaakov in the Torah is not only one person, he's not just an individual – he symbolizes the Jewish nation. And Eisav too is a symbol, not only of the individual Eisavs that we'll encounter in life – and we all do – but he symbolizes all the gentiles in general. And so what this story is telling us is advice, Torah advice, for how to deal with our adversaries; that's part of this lesson that we're learning now.

Prepare for Battle

One of the three things was *milchama*, to prepare for battle. You have to remember that Yaakov Avinu was no slouch; he was a man of heroic physique, a *gibor*, a strong man who was quite capable of defending his family. You recall the story how when Yaakov came to Padan Aram and he saw that big stone on the mouth of the well? Normally it needed a number of people to take it off and he himself, all alone, removed the stone as easily as somebody pulls the cork out of

a bottle. You don't do something like that unless you have big biceps. And don't forget either that he was capable of wrestling with an angel too. That's a feat only for strong men! A *nebechel* doesn't wrestle with angels; and surely he doesn't wrestle all night long.

And so Yaakov of course prepared for battle. When something happens that is a peril to anybody's life, absolutely a person must fight for survival. There's a big mitzvah on us to take action to help a fellowman; and to help yourself is even a bigger mitzvah. No question that physical fighting certainly has its place. And so one of the ways he prepared for the encounter with Eisav was *milchamah*.

Exactly what does that mean? Well, he sharpened all of the swords; sharper swords are better than dull swords if you're going out to battle. And so the night before, Yaakov told his family and his servants, "Sharpen the swords. Get ready all the spears. Prepare yourself," and he gave them all instructions for battle. Certainly! That's how he got ready for battle.

Chinese War

But that's not the only way to prepare for battle. To ready the rifles, the swords, that anyone can do. But the wise battler understands that there are smarter ways of fighting; that the sword is the last case scenario. Because included in the stratagems of *milchamah* is the strategy of avoiding *milchamah*, of running away.

And so he took other steps. **ויחץ את העם** – He divided the people into two separate camps (*ibid.* 32:8) so in case there'll be a battle and one half of Yaakov's family will succumb, the other half will be able to escape.

Like the Chinese say – I told you this many times – "The best hero is the man who remains alive." The one who knows how to run away, that's the hero. Instead of dying like a hero in the

battlefield, it's better to run away and remain alive. To die an honorable death is not the real hero.

That's why I tell my people that they shouldn't learn karate, self-defense. I know that some advise it but honestly, I think not. There's nothing wrong with it, but once you know it you might be tempted to use it. And so when a *goy* throws a banana peel at you, you'll spread your feet into a karate stance and all you'll do is incite them. They'll come at you now with chains. Before they came with a banana peel, and now they'll come with big chains. And they'll do a good job. And so because you know karate, you made trouble for yourself. There are all kinds of fighting tactics but the worst tactic is to give him a hit or even to show you're ready for it because then he loses control of himself. These savages become frightened and then anything is possible.

Lesson #1: Escape

It's always like that. Who drowns? The man who knows how to swim! If you don't know how to swim, you stay on the shore and you keep out of danger. And therefore, the best defense is to stay out of trouble. If you know that you're not an expert in self-defense, you'll stay off lonely streets at night. The skinny helpless fellow who doesn't know karate, he is the one who avoids trouble.

Now if you're able to teach *goyim* a lesson successfully – which is a rare opportunity – I don't say you shouldn't utilize it. I'm not against a dangerous *goy* getting a punch in the nose but in most cases you'll be alone on the street and there are a bunch of hoodlums who by numbers alone, even though they don't know the science of self-defense, they can overcome you, so it doesn't pay.

That's what Yaakov Avinu wants us to know: To prepare for an escape, that's an important

part of *milchamah*. Learn that if you see them on one side of the street, you cross over and walk on the other side.

So you'll say, "Well, they'll walk on the other side to meet me." You'd be surprised how lazy they are! If you walk right past them, they'll molest you but if you go on the other side of the street so in most cases they're too lazy to bother. They may throw something, that's all. And you'll just pass by with your head flat down and you'll remain alive. That's called winning the battle.

Avoiding the Trouble

There are a lot of tactics to learn from Yaakov that are included in the stratagems of escape. Because later when Eisav said, "My brother, since we're reunited, I cannot part with you anymore! I want to go with you," that's the last thing Yaakov Avinu wanted. Who knows what he'll do?

So Yaakov made a rendezvous of trickery with Eisav. He said, "Not now, because I'll have to go too slow. You can't go as slow as we do. So you go ahead to your place Har Se'ir, **עַד אֲשֶׁר אָבוֹא אֵלַי** – **אַדְוִי שְׁעִירָה** – until I come to my master in Se'ir. There's still time for us to be together. I'll meet you in Se'ir."

Advice for Brooklyn Living

And our Sages studied that and said that if you're walking at night on a lonely street, let's say you have just one block to go till your destination and suddenly a 'gentleman' shows up and he starts walking alongside you. And he says, "Nice evening, isn't it?"

"Yes sir, it is," you say. You treat him with respect like Yaakov said, "Eisav, my master."

"You're going far?" he says.

So you tell him, "Yes. I'm going thirty blocks down this neighborhood."

"Thirty blocks?" So this 'friend' of yours is thinking, "In twenty blocks we'll pass through a

lonely district far away from the police station so I have time to make my move.”

You’re only going one block, however. And so at the next block you say, “It was nice meeting you, sir.” And you quickly run up into the first house and ring the bell as if that’s your house. Finished.

And that’s what Yaakov Avinu did. He told Eisav, “I’ll meet you in Se’ir. We’ll have time to talk then,” and he never showed up. Which means, as much as possible be polite, be diffident and appease, but get out of the place as soon as possible. That’s included in fighting the enemy – the Torah’s *eitzah* of keeping out of trouble.

Part II. Prepare With Gifts

Gifting the Enemy

Now, all that is very good. Strategies, knowing what it means to fight, how to fight, dividing, escaping, tricking the enemy, that’s all very important. But Yaakov didn’t rely merely on preparing for battle. Because we see that when he went to meet Eisav what did he do? Did he show that he wanted to fight? Did he show that he has strong children, fighters? After all, he had children who were good fighters – Shimon and Levi, others – so he could have made a show of strength.

But we find just the opposite. Because when Yaakov was about to confront his brother Eisav, he didn’t put up any front of defiance, of bravery. Instead he prepared gifts: *מנחה לעשיו אחיו* – He prepared gifts for his brother Eisav (*ibid.* 14).

Gifts? Eisav is coming with four hundred armed men and Yaakov is thinking about gifts? Absolutely. Because Yaakov wasn’t interested in being the kind of hero that ends up in a cemetery. He wouldn’t approve of having 2,000 Jewish soldiers buried on Har Hertzl or some other military cemetery just so that once a year they’ll

be able to come and put little blue and white flags on the graves and say, “They gave their lives for the country.”

The Door to Peace

It doesn’t mean that the rifles don’t have to be readied but you need wisdom, Torah *eitzos*, to know how and when and where. And so what did Yaakov Avinu do? He prepared gifts for Eisav in order to appease him. “I’m not so easily going to get rid of him and I can’t turn back either so I’ll give him a gift to soften him up.”

It’s good advice you’re hearing now. *מתן אדם ירחיב לו* – A man’s gifts open the doors for him (Mishlei 18:16). A gift helps; you can make *shalom* with gifts. Let’s say there’s a boy on the corner, a bum, a little Eisav, making trouble for you. So are you going to make a battle with him? Yaakov Avinu says that’s not the way; at least as a first strategy it’s not the way.

So tomorrow as you’re walking by this little goy so you drop a \$10 bill and say, “Look kid. I think you lost a \$10 bill.” He looks down. “Yes,” he says, “I lost it. It fell out of my pocket.”

“Happy to help,” you say.

He won’t bother you anymore. He’ll appreciate that and he won’t be your enemy anymore. I once did that by the way. Only it was a \$1 bill, not a ten. But it worked. It worked like a charm.

All In The Delivery

And that’s what Yaakov is teaching us, that it works. That’s why he went all out in preparing and sending gifts.

And so as Eisav was approaching, a group of people were coming toward him bringing gifts, cattle and other things. “What’s this?” he asked and they told him, “It’s a gift to my master Eisav, my lord Eisav, from your brother Yaakov.”

Then he went on further and another camp was coming towards him with some more gifts.

Because Yaakov put thought into it. He didn't bring the gifts in one lump – instead he spread it out in such an effective manner, so that it looked much bigger than it actually was. And each time Yaakov's servants are giving over the message: לעבדך ליעקב – *We are messengers of Yaakov your servant*, מנחה היא שלוחה לארני לעשו – *and he said we should tell you that "These are gifts being sent to my lord, Eisav"* (ibid. 19). "My lord, Eisav." That's something we shouldn't overlook. That's the way, Yaakov says, to speak to your enemy.

It was a softening up process, these gifts, a remarkable plan. And when Yaakov finally saw Eisav he bowed down and he bowed down and he bowed down and he bowed down. Seven times he bowed down. And by the time Eisav actually met Yaakov, instead of drawing his sword and attacking him, he was so softened up that he fell upon him and he kissed him! Whether he kissed him with *pintelach* or without *pintelach*, that's not important. He kissed him, though!

The Gift of Humility

And that's because Yaakov didn't climb a high horse and say "No. I'm in the right and my brother is a wild man." Instead he lowered himself and was able to placate him. And he made Eisav love him so much that Eisav, when he parted from Yaakov, he had forgiven him entirely and he considered himself as a loyal brother. It's a remarkable thing. The whole war plan of Eisav dissipated into thin air.

That's the Torah *eitzah!* That's how to deal with *umos haolam*. Yaakov's strategy has to be followed. And it's not enough to offer the bribe. Eisav said, "I don't need it, my brother," but Yaakov applied pressure. ויפצר בו – *He pressed him*, ויקח – *and finally Eisav took it*. Make sure you get it into their pockets finally.

The Good Hearted Jew

I recall a story about Lord Montefiore, who was that famous English Jew renowned in the world for his wealth and for his influence in his home country, in England. One time when he was Lord Mayor of England and he heard of the persecution of the Jews in Russia he decided to make the trip across Europe into Russia to visit the Czar and to intercede on behalf of his people. His heart was full of compassion for all Jews all over the world so he decided to travel to Russia.

Now in those days you had to travel by coach and Lord Montefiore traveled in his own coach with his own footmen and as he went across Europe, everywhere he was received with great honor. And as he arrived in Russia, with the influence of the mighty England behind him, he came to speak with the Czar.

Now, Montefiore, although he had a golden heart and his intentions were the best, but he wasn't prepared with the counsels of the Torah. He didn't know any of the stratagems, the cunning of the Torah. He was a straightforward English Jew and his way of dealing with the Czar was to come directly to the Czar and present his petition to request that the Jews of Russia should no longer be persecuted.

The Gullible Jew

So this honest, sterling-hearted man came and he was admitted to the Czar's presence and he gave his petition to the Czar and the Czar looked him in the face and said, "We don't persecute Jews in Russia. We don't believe in persecution here in Russia. It won't be allowed."

Montefiore was so overjoyed when he heard that declaration. He came out beaming!

And on his way home as he was traveling home, he had to pass through Vilna. And in Vilna, the *nechbadim* of the city, the dignitaries, made a party in his honor to greet him. And when he was

there and the people were inquiring about the results of his intercession on behalf of the Jews, so Montefiore told them the great good news, that there's no persecution of the Jews in Russia.

Now one of the Jews who was present, when he heard that, his heart almost burst with distress and he broke out in tears. He was weeping aloud.

Montefiore didn't understand. What's this man weeping for all of a sudden? He had succeeded after all.

The Underhanded Russians

So one of the people said to him, "Lord Montefiore, how much did your journey from England to Russia cost you?"

And so Montefiore told him so-many and so-many thousands of sterling pounds.

So this Jew said, "If you would have remained in London and you would have given us the money, we would have handed it out the Czar's people and all the decrees would have been revoked."

So Montefiore became angry. He said, "That's the trouble with you Russian Jews," he says. "You do underhanded things. That's why you won't succeed."

And that's the end of the story. Montefiore's journey to Russia accomplished zero. Because he didn't learn what we learn from the Chumash, that number one is **מנחה לעשיו אחיו**! Money has to be transferred!

Money Talks

And so, when Jews don't listen to the **עצות ה'ינו תורה**, to the Torah advice, so they're lost; they're a **גוי אבר עצות המה**. So when somebody from an American Jewish organization wants to accomplish something on behalf of the Jewish people, what does he do? He issues a broadside in the press, a press release loudly condemning some course of action, or some gentile politician.

He makes a demonstration instead of greasing the wheels quietly and having the purpose accomplished without any fanfare.

Now to American people, it may seem 'unethical'. "You mean bribery?!" The answer is, yes! Because that's the way that good things can be expedited. It doesn't mean that's the only factor, but there's no question it's an important factor.

And don't tell me it's only Jews who do this. People shouldn't be that naïve. Money is being exchanged on behalf of every cause. Everything in the government is being greased by money exchanging hands. So what if they find ways of covering it up with campaign donations, with other methods? It's all bribery. Even the ones who seem to be big idealists, liberals and Marxists espousing certain causes, so people don't dream that big real estate operators have been slipping funds into their hands! It goes on all the time!

Negotiating With Hitler

It's a remarkable thing that even the Nazis, Hitler's lieutenants, the ones who were idealists, dedicated to slaughtering Jews, they were capable of being bought off. And the *roshei yeshivah*, the Torah leaders who studied the *parsha* of **מנחה לעשיו** – *give a gift to Eisav*, they began negotiations with Hitler's men; even with Himmler, with Eichmann. And the negotiations were succeeding! But the secular organizations were 'lost of Torah counsel' and they stymied the negotiations. They didn't want to give money to save Jewish lives because they knew only war and demonstrations and high-handedness.

Now I cannot tell you what is being done today by Torah leaders. These things are better untold! They're more successful when they're secret! And they have been going on all the time under the leadership of the Torah teachers because they follow the ways of the Torah.

Part III. Prepare With Prayer

Prayer Helps

Now, these two prongs of Yaakov's strategy, *milchamah* and *doran*, were important; they were eminently important and eminently successful too. And they stand for us – as individuals and as a nation – for all time as a teaching, a lesson in how to deal with the gentiles in general and especially when there's trouble brewing.

But there was a third thing that Yaakov made himself busy with that was more important than those two strategies, much more important. And that's *tefillah*; prayer, calling out to Hashem for His help: **הצילני נא מיד אחי מיד עשו כי ירא אנכי אתו פן יבוא והכני אם על בני** – *Rescue me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Eisav, for I fear he will come and strike me down, the mothers together with the children (32:12).*

Now when we hear this so everyone imagines they understand it right away. To *daven*? Of course, what's the question? After all, He's the only One Who can save you anyhow. No war strategies and no running away and no gifts and no being polite is going to save you if Hashem is not on your side. So absolutely you have to *daven*. Anytime you're faced with Eisavs – it means with troubles – coming your way you have to *daven* to Hashem that He should give you *hatzlachah*, that He should give you advice and solutions. If you want to succeed, absolutely it pays to pray to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. **והניא בעותא** – *Tefillah helps.*

But I'm going to tell you something now about *davening* that may be a *chiddush* to you. And even if you're a regular in this place and you heard it already once it's worth hearing this again: *Davening* for the purpose of getting what you ask for, that's only part of the story. And actually it's the smaller part because there's a much more fundamental purpose, a bigger

accomplishment than being answered. And so when we hear that Yaakov Avinu was *davening* we have to understand what it was really all about.

Summa Cum Laude

So let's go back again to our story and study it a little more. Eisav is coming now with four hundred men and **וירא יעקב מאד** – *Yaakov was very much afraid (32:8).* **ויצר לו** – *Yaakov was distressed (ibid.).* He was in a vice, in a tight situation – **ויצר** from the word **צר** – and he was very much afraid. That, the Torah tells us, was the first reaction of this great *tzaddik*.

Now that's something we have to understand because at the beginning of Shaar Habitachon when the Chovos Halevavos is trying to sell you the idea of studying this chapter about achieving trust in Hashem, so he tells you that one of the great benefits is *menuchas nafsho*, the peace of mind you're going to have as a result of *bitachon*. When you'll gain a true understanding of the way that Hakadosh Baruch Hu controls and manages everything then you're going to live in constant tranquility because you know, you're absolutely certain, that He's doing everything and that He's doing it for the best.

And yet here we see a big contradiction. Yaakov Avinu, after all, was a great man. He was already an elderly man and he had gone through a number of great *yeshivos* and *kollelim*. He had studied for more than sixty years at the yeshiva of his father and mother – a wonderful institution of *bitachon* and *emunah* – and then another fourteen years he studied in the yeshiva of Shem v'Eiver; that was post-graduate courses in *bitachon*. And then the years that he spent with Lavan certainly were finishing off years. It was post-post-graduate.

Bitachon and Fear

And so when he was coming back now to Eretz Canaan he was returning as an *ish shaleim*, a *tzaddik* who was certainly reinforced and corroborated and strengthened in all of his principles. He was the epitome of a *baal bitachon*, a man who lived intimately with the ideal that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is in charge and doing everything for his benefit in a kindly manner.

And if Eisav is coming now, Yaakov surely knew that he couldn't come unless Hakadosh Baruch Hu stirred him to come. Otherwise, he's not a *baal bitachon*. If he thinks it's an accident, that despite what Hashem wants to do for him, Eisav is intending to do otherwise, that's not *bitachon*. If somebody can contradict Hashem's plans you can't have *bitachon*. So the *baal bitachon* understands that Eisav is coming because Hashem is sending him. And so it would seem that this great *baal bitachon* shouldn't be afraid. Hashem is pulling all the strings. He's pulling Eisav and each one of the men; if not, they would have stayed in Edom.

And so it's a big question: What's there to be afraid of? Maybe for me, if I would have been there, it makes sense I would have been paralyzed with fear. But Yaakov? Why was he afraid?

Bitachon to Act

The answer is that just because the *baal bitachon* understands this fundamental principle of *bitachon* that everything that happens to him is done by Hashem, therefore, when a certain peril is approaching, *chalilah* a big *sakana*, he knows right away that Hashem is sending that on him. He's not thinking "Eisav this" or "Eisav that". It's *kulo* the *Yad Hashem*.

Now, why is He sending him? If He's sending Eisav with four hundred men does He want Yaakov to be stoic and just look boldly at Eisav and dare him to do anything? He should push the

natural emotion of fear out of his mind, out of his heart completely?

Chas veshalom! The *baal bitachon* is supposed to be afraid because fear is intended to be a stimulus in a certain direction. Not that he was paralyzed with fear; not that he was depressed and despondent. He was electrified with fear! That's the purpose, to electrify a person into action, to electrify him to do what has to be done. And that's why Yaakov got busy with strategies; he got busy with *milchamah* and *doran* and his fear encouraged him to do it in the best way possible.

The Main Result

And now we come to the main point of tonight's lecture. Because strategies, *milchama v'doran*, that's very important. Absolutely fear is intended to be a stimulus to go all out to do whatever has to be done. But there's something much bigger than that, something much more important. And that's the third thing that Yaakov prepared with: *tefillah*.

Yaakov knew that if a peril is coming to confront him now, he was supposed to react with fear. Not to be afraid of Eisav, no that's nothing. To be afraid of Hashem! And what should be the result of that reaction? To cry out to Him with all his heart! That's what Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted – Yaakov's *tefillos*. And that's what he did and that was his success.

The question is why does He want our prayers? He needs our prayers? Of course not. I explained this to you already once. To the Almighty, your prayers are as important as the prayers of bacteria on the rug. Suppose all the bacteria on all the big rugs would pray to our friend, Rabbi Price, over here. All the bacteria are *shukeling* and praying to Rabbi Price. He wouldn't even turn a hair; it would mean nothing to him.

But relatively speaking, the bacteria here are more important to him, than we are to the Almighty!

Praying for Ourselves

And still, He wants us to pray *because it's for our benefit*. Praying is a big achievement! When you pray to Hashem, you're changing your character. Your mind is developing in the right direction, the direction of *yiras Hashem*, of reliance on Hashem, of love of Hashem, of *emunah*.

And we understand now that *this* was Yaakov's success. Hakadosh Baruch Hu didn't create us in this world we should conquer Eisavs. That's a big error. We didn't come in this world in order to overcome our enemies and obstacles. We're in this world for one purpose and that purpose is *shleimus*, to gain perfection in knowledge of Hashem, in awareness of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. That's our perfection. That's our success.

And Hakadosh Baruch Hu therefore gives people the opportunities always for the great success in life of gaining more and awareness of Him. And even Yaakov Avinu, although all the years he had been making progress, coming closer and closer to Hashem – he was so close to Hashem before this incident that he even had contact with a *malach*, physical contact. That's something that others never had, even those who had visions of *malachim*. Yaakov wrestled with a *malach*! That's the most tangible contact that anybody can have. So he was so great and yet Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted him on the next day to become greater.

Emergency Stimulus

And how did he become greater? By the stimulus of an emergency, a crisis. And when, in his fear of Eisav he called, out that was his greatest success. Not the success that he prepared for battle with various stratagems. Not

the success that he was able to placate Eisav with gifts and words. Of course that was a great victory for Yaakov but the real victory was that he responded to the stimulus of fear and he cried out. He utilized the fear as a stimulus to cause him to cry out from the bottom of his heart and come closer to Hashem.

So we learn now from our *parsha* that *chalilah* when troubles come in life, *bitachon* means that you know it's being sent by Hashem. And the purpose is to cause us to cry out to Hashem. Be afraid of Hashem and cry out to Him.

Let's say the doctor says, "I'm sorry, you have to go to the hospital for further observation." So **וירא יעקב מאד** – *the Jew becomes very afraid*. And right away he gets busy making appointments. That's *milchamah*. Very good! And *doran*, gifts? He has to start paying bills, doctor bills. Some people, maybe they buy a nice gift for the doctor before the surgery. Why not? He'll take it, I'm sure. And maybe he'll remember it when he's putting on his surgical gloves to open you up.

So absolutely you have to do things. The fear should stimulate that. All the steps are necessary and they're all required of him. If a man will just pray and he doesn't take any steps to take care of himself, Hashem says, "You're a failure!" That's part of the *nisayon*. *Bitachon* means *bitachon* and *hishtadlus*. Sure you trust in Hashem, but at the same time you have to take steps to protect yourself to the best of your ability.

Your Success

But what about crying out to Hashem too? That's the most important of all things! It's the first and last thing. And in between too. And so when you're about to be strapped down on the operation table – it should never happen to you – the first thing is to cry out to Hashem. Oh yes! "I'm afraid of You, Hashem! Please save me!" Cry out to Hashem! That's what it's for!

And not only when it comes to Eisavs and sickness. You must pray for everything! All forms of trouble that are coming towards you. You're afraid? *Daven* to Hashem! That's how you should respond! You should rise to the opportunity and call out to the Almighty. And this will transform your time of fear and worry into a time of real success. Because the biggest success of all is that *tefillah*. No matter what happens later, that's the success. You became more aware of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, more reliant on Him, closer to Him. And no matter what happens, even if the trouble continues, you have succeeded thereby more than at any other time in your life!

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

Let's Get Practical

Growing Through Adversity

"We're in this world for one purpose and that purpose is *shleimus*, to gain perfection in knowledge of Hashem, in awareness of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. That's our perfection. That's our success." In our parshah we learn three tips for dealing with adversity, *Milchamah*, *Doran* and *Tefillah*. We learn from this the appropriate approach of the *baal bitachon*, to do everything we can extricate ourselves from difficult situations, but also to pray and recognize Hashem's Hand in our predicament. This week I will *bli neder* spend some time each day reflecting on how I can utilize my situation in life to grow in Bitachon and Tefillah by internalizing these lessons.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

R-15 – Prayer of the Perfect | **376** – Counsel of the Torah
527 – Gift of Speech | **864** – Seven Objectives of Tefillah
937 – Aspects of Bitachon

Q&A

WITH
 RAV AVIGDOR
 MILLER ZT"L

שאלות ותשובות על כל נושא



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QUESTION

What does Hakadosh Baruch Hu want us to be – Chassidish or Litvish or what?

ANSWER

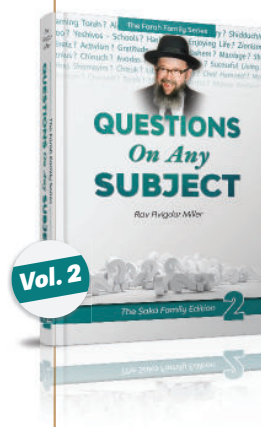
Now that's some big order. He wants me to make enemies, the one asking this question.

Hashem wants you to be the best that you can be. Some people can be their best if they're Chassidish. Some people can be their best if they're Litvish. Other people can be their best if they're Sefardi. You have to figure out for yourself what will help you be the best. And you have to really think about it.

And therefore it's like asking – "What is the best diet for all of mankind?" The best type of diet depends on each individual person. People are different. Some people are so different that their diets are radically different.

So whatever it is that you choose, you should make it a principle in your life to always choose whatever it is that will give you the most success in life – and success in this world means preparing for the Next World.

July 1979



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