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HOTLINE**

US - 718.686.8300

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## ***Bitachon* Is the Answer to Any Aggravation**

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### **The Serene Life of the *Ba'al Bitachon***

#### **The Material Benefits of *Bitachon***

In the first part of the introduction to the *Sha'ar HaBitachon*, the *Chovos HaLevavos* enumerated the many *ruchmiyus* benefits of *bitachon* that come to a person. The *ba'al bitachon* will have everything he need *b'ruchmiyus* in order to properly serve the Ribbono shel Olam.

In the following segment, however, he reveals to us that the benefits of *bitachon* extend to the material/*gashmiyus* realm as well. **The *ba'al bitachon* will have a serene and blessed life in the simple and real sense.** All his *gashmiyus* needs will come to him in a much easier and lighter way.

But since the main purpose of a person's life on this world is *ruchniyus*, the *Chovos HaLevavos* addressed those first, and then turned to the *gashmiyus* side.

#### **Familiarize Yourself with the *Gashmiyus* Benefits of *Bitachon***

It is important to note that every person is on a different *madreigah* and *matzav*. For some people it's important to learn the second part first. For them, it's more important to learn how *bitachon* will change their life in the *gashmiyus* realm, and *later* learn about how it helps us spiritually.

The rule is that **we must always begin speaking to a person with words that speak to his heart.** Therefore, if a person is worried about his

*gashmiyus*, and these worries take up space in his heart, this person must learn well this section in which the *Chovos HaLevavos* convinces us: **You have no idea what kind of *Olam HaZeh* awaits you if you will have *bitachon*—in addition to the great benefits in *Olam HaBa*.**

### Serenity from Worldly Worries

Says the *Chovos HaLevavos*: **Among the benefits of *bitachon*, here, on This World, is the heart's serenity from worldly worries.** The *ba'al bitachon* will not have to endure all the worries that exist in the world. Every person who lives on This World experiences worries that are called דאגות העולמיות, *worries that pertain to life on this earth*. People on *Olam HaZeh* walk around with these worries. But the *ba'al bitachon* is spared from them.

When a grownup looks at a young *cheder* boy, he sees that the child had childish worries and concerns: He has worries about his friends; worries about who will win the game; worries about who will catch the first place... worries that are appropriate for his age.

The same takes place in the Upper Spheres. The *Malachim* look down at us, and they see our childish concerns of This World. **These have a name:** דאגות העולמיות, *worries of This World*. These problems are not real problems; they exist only on This World: We want to grab material objects... we're afraid of what this one will say... and so forth.

But when a person is a *ba'al bitachon*, his heart experiences complete serenity regarding these worries of This World.

### Surrounded by Serenity

Continues the *Chovos HaLevavos*: The *ba'al bitachon* experiences **serenity from the upheaval of the soul and the pain of feeling a lack of fulfillment of his physical desires.** The *ba'al bitachon* is surrounded by a pleasant atmosphere, with great serenity and calmness. His *nefesh* doesn't waver from place to place.

Sometimes, a person feels that his soul is experiencing drastic ups

and downs (mood swings). One moment he's very happy, and the next moment he's deeply downcast. This occurs because his *nefesh* is wavering... it's unstable. But **the *ba'al bitachon* has a calm and serene *nefesh*. His inner calm isn't shaken**, because he has great serenity in his soul.

### The Pain of Lack

Upheaval, nagging, and pain of the soul usually come from a לחסרון "הגופניות" תאוותיה, *a feeling of lack of fulfillment of the bodily needs*. The body pulls the person in many directions, to all different "needs," and the person is preoccupied with figuring out how to fulfill those needs. Most of the day is allocated to considering how to attain the things we want. But **the *ba'al bitachon* feels 100 percent serene. He simply has no pain due to the lack of material possessions.**

"He is calm, secure, and serene in *Olam HaZeh*," the *Chovos HaLevavos* says, "as it says, והיה ה' מבטחו, אשר יבטח בה' והיה ה' מבטחו, *blessed in the man who trusts in Hashem, then Hashem will be his security (Yirmiyahu 17:7)*. The *pasuk* says further: והיה כעץ שתול על־מים ועל יובל ישלח שרשיו ולא ירא יראה כי יבא חם והיה עלהו רענן ובשנת בצרת לא ידאג ולא ימיש מעשות פרי, *he will be like a tree planted near water, which spreads its roots along a brook, and does not see when heat comes, whose foliage is ever fresh. It will not worry in a year of drought and will not stop producing fruit.*

### Serenity and Security

This is the blessing of the *ba'al bitachon*. He is always blessed with good; **he never feels that he's lacking**. Even when pain and suffering come onto the world, he feels no worry.

One who *doesn't* have *bitachon* is likened to a tree that is distant from the water; sometimes he is watered, and sometimes he isn't. **But the *ba'al bitachon* is right at the banks of the source of water**. He feels no fear that he will ever lack anything. He has no worry that a problem will come his way. He lives with security and serenity.

## Bitachon Enables the Soul to Experience Pleasure

### The Greatest Pain Is Caused by “Worldly Worries”

In the coming lines, the *Chovos HaLevavos* enumerates further material benefits for the *ba'al bitachon*. But we see that the first item on his list is the serenity and lack of worry. This tells us that this benefit is the secret to having a good and pleasant life *b'gashmiyus*.

Let us elaborate on this:

The reality is that the vast majority of pain that people experience on This World is rooted in *דאגות העולמיות ונדנוד הנפש*, *worldly worries and upheaval of the soul*. And when these are driven away through *bitachon*, the person is automatically rid of most of the sources of pain and suffering that exist on This World.

### All Tzaros Have a Common Denominator: Nagging of the Soul

People tend to divide their *tzaros* into categories. One *tzarah* is that he doesn't have money; the next *tzarah* is that someone is mistreating him; another *tzarah* is that he didn't “make it” socially; a fourth source of pain is that he struggles with a son who's learning disabled. And so, he makes a list of 25-30 *tzaros* that he has, and he wonders: **Does bitachon really help for all these?!** After all, there's nothing explicit in the *Chovos HaLevavos* that addresses this!

This is, however, a mistake, because, at their root, all these problems have one source: *agmas nefesh*, aggravation. All these problems rob a person of *מנוחה הנפש*. If we make a *cheshbon* going back thirty years—how much aggravation we suffered from various things—we will see that the majority of our worries come under the umbrella of *דאגות העולמיות*, *worries that pertain to life on this earth*.

And, the *Chovos HaLevavos* assures us, *bitachon* is the antidote to all these worries! The precise event or reason that brought you the aggravation is irrelevant. The fact is that every type of *tzarah* that breaks a person



is the opposite of serenity—and **the *Chovos HaLevavos* guarantees us that if we have *bitachon*, we will not suffer from lack of serenity.**

### Putting Pain in Perspective

We must clarify that the *Chovos HaLevavos* is not here to, *chas v'shalom*, pour salt on the wounds of people who suffer, and say: You're fools for suffering like this. What's the problem? If you'd have *bitachon*, all your problems would be gone...!

No, that's not what the *Chovos HaLevavos* is saying here. **Of course, it's a long way to arrive at perfect *bitachon***, and we don't fault people who are going through suffering... as though it's because they didn't have enough *bitachon*, which is truly a great *avodah*.

The *Chovos HaLevavos* is here to help us. To put things into perspective...to know in which category to place our various sources of aggravation.

### Knowing the Problem Is Half the Salvation

It is very important to recognize this, so we can later work on the proper path—because if we know the true name of the *tzarah*, it is far easier to rectify and resolve it. This is the rule regarding every problem: The most important thing is to know and grasp where the problem is. Afterward, once we know the precise root of the problem, it is much easier to fix it.

An example of this is when water is leaking into a home. The greatest problem is when we don't know the source of the leak. It may be coming from a neighbor two or three floors higher. Any repairman will tell you: The most important priority is getting to the source of the leak. Once we have found the leak, it takes very little to fix it. We must simply find the source of the problem, and then it will be easy to address it.

### Assured Pleasure for the *Ba'al Bitachon*

Therefore, the *Chovos HaLevavos* explains to us that the vast majority of aggravation that people endure in this world is all part of the category

of *agmas nefesh*—and if we were to have *bitachon*, we would no longer have *agmas nefesh*.

Furthermore: In addition to not having *agmas nefesh*, **the *ba'al bitachon* will feel pleasure from life on This World**. Not every person who doesn't feel aggravation necessarily has pleasure. But the *ba'al bitachon*, who has incredible serenity of the heart, also has enjoyment and pleasure from life. In everything that he does, he experiences pleasure one hundred times more than one who does not have *bitachon*.

### Worry Robs Us of Pleasure

Why doesn't someone take pleasure in the things he does? Because, as he is engaged in doing the very thing that is meant to bring him pleasure, his soul is scattered in a million directions—which **robs him of enjoying what he is doing right now!** He has so many other worries on his mind that it's impossible for him to be present.

For example: When a person finally takes a vacation, his mind is filled with a million thoughts and worries. He sits down to eat a pleasant meal... and although he may not have anything specific on his mind, he himself doesn't realize how much scatteredness of the soul he is consumed with, which doesn't allow him to take pleasure from his meal. The *דאגות העולמיות* are endless, and they don't allow us to enjoy life on This World.

### *Bitachon* Enables Us to Experience Pleasure

Says the *Chovos HaLevavos*: You think you know what worldly pleasure is... **when you eliminate your *agmas nefesh* through *emunah* and *bitachon*, you will begin to understand what pleasure is, even *b'gashmiyus*.**

One who has serenity of the soul can experience complete pleasure. We're not discussing lowly pleasure here... but even **when it comes to *oneg Shabbos*, the *ba'al bitachon* will experience true *oneg Shabbos***. Now, his heart is cleansed and cleared of all worries and problems, and he can experience complete pleasure.

The same occurs when a person socializes with friends, an experience that brings pleasure. **If he is a *ba'al bitachon*, he can derive so much more pleasure from it**, because he isn't tied to peripheral thoughts that rob him of his completeness of the soul; instead, he is present to enjoy what he is doing. **He is 100 percent present**, not just a little, and he can experience pleasure with completeness.

### *Bitachon Gives Us a Healthy Nefesh*

The worries and *agmas nefesh* that we experience destroy our worldly pleasures, and **the Ribbono shel Olam does want us to enjoy life**. A person was created, לַהֲתַעֲנֵג אֶל ה', in keeping with Torah morals and values, of course.

Later in his *sefer*, the *Chovos HaLevavos* discusses that there are also physical benefits to the *ba'al bitachon*. He won't have to work as hard for his *parnassah*, and so forth. But now, we're discussing something much more fundamental: because the source of all pain and pleasure, the root of all joy and suffering, is in the *nefesh*.

***Bitachon* returns a person's *nefesh* to him.** And if we merit to have *bitachon*, we win on two fronts: We don't have the pain of aggravation, and we will be able to experience pleasure with completeness and presence. For what is the vessel for pleasure? The *nefesh*! When the *nefesh* is scattered, it can't experience pleasure. But when he has *menuchas hanefesh*, serenity of the soul, he has access to his entire *nefesh*, the source of pleasure and joy.

### ***Bitachon Accompanies Us Through Challenge and Difficulty***

#### **All Emotions Are Rooted in *Emunah* and *Bitachon***

The Rebbe Rav Mendele of Rimanov (*Divrei Menachem, Parashas Beshalach*) elaborates on how all a person's difficulties are closely bound with his level of *emunah* and *bitachon*. He cites a *Sefer HaYashar* from *Rabbeinu Tam*, in which he says that the foundation of all *middos tovos* is *emunah* and *bitachon*.

When we speak about “*middos*,” we are including many emotional problems, including anger and hatred, depression and sadness... they’re all part of the *middos* of a person. We can call it *middos*, we can call it feelings, we can call it emotional challenges... but they’re all the same. **The way to attain all *middos tovos* is through *emunah* and *bitachon*,** says *Rabbeinu Tam*.

### *Ahavas Yisrael* Is the Essence of the Entire Torah

Rebbe Mendele explains that **the mitzvah of ואהבת לרעך כמוך**, which is the essence of the entire Torah, **is attainable through *emunah* and *bitachon***. We see this with our own eyes, he says: When a person loves his fellow like himself, he tends to refrain from stealing, *nekamah*, and so many other *aveiros* that pertain to interpersonal relationships.

A person who has *ahavas Yisrael* has no issues and no problems with other people, and he doesn’t have complaints against anyone. It is therefore much easier for him to fulfill many mitzvos in the Torah. And even mitzvos למקום בן אדם are much easier for him... for he isn’t weighed down. He is healthy in his *nefesh*.

### Loving a Fellow Yid Through *Emunah* and *Bitachon*

Continues the Rebbe: **“But it is impossible to properly fulfill the mitzvah of *ahavas Yisrael* with a complete heart without having the *middos* of *emunah* and *bitachon b’emes*. All the mitzvos of the Torah are built upon the foundation of ואהבת לרעך כמוך. And on what is this mitzvah built?! *Emunah* and *bitachon*!”**

Why is this? Because if you are a person who believes with complete belief that the Ribbono shel Olam runs the world and everything in it, at every single moment, and that the *Aibishter* will give you everything you need; a person who believes that *no one in the world* can touch anything that is *bashert* for you...this will bring you tremendous serenity, and **automatically you won’t waste your days and years with worries and efforts to pursue money and wealth**, because you believes that nothing will come to you that isn’t ordained from Above. Nothing more, nothing less.

## No One Can Cause Me Harm

After a person has absorbed the *middah* of *bitachon*, it's very easy to fulfill the mitzvah of *ואהבת לרעך כמוך*. He won't covet or envy anything he sees that another person has; he knows, "**Clearly, it doesn't belong to me!**"

Even if another person opens the same business as he has, the *ba'al bitachon* will not become worried or depressed; he knows that no one can harm him or take anything away from him. He is confident and secure that no one can touch or take away anything that is *bashert* for him.

Rebbe Mendele concludes: "**And for this reason, HaKadosh Baruch Hu gave the *mahn* to the Jewish People in such a way that it came down every day for that day, and not for the next day**, to get them used to having *bitachon*, **not to worry about the next day.**"

### Infusing *Emunah* into All Facets of Our *Nefesh*

We learn an incredible *yesod* from these words:

When we say *Krias Shemah*, we say, שמע ישראל ה' אלוהינו ה' אחד, accepting upon ourselves the yoke of Heavenly sovereignty, to believe that the Ribbono shel Olam ordains every detail in the entire world. But, at that point, it remains theoretical: it remains in the mind.

The next step is to ensure that this knowledge permeates every aspect of our heart and soul. Therefore, we immediately say *ואהבת את ה' אלוהיך*, to love Hashem with all our heart and soul. To ingrain this belief into all aspects of our hearts.

*Ahavas Hashem* means that every part of our hearts feels the *emunah*; all aspects of our hearts love the Ribbono shel Olam. This sort of *ahavah* is indeed the essence of the entire Torah. For as long as a person has complaints or resentments in his heart toward others, even if he is justified and he has good reason, it is a deficit in the *ואהבת את ה'*; not all of his heart can feel the love for the *Aibishter*.

## Giving Our *Feelings* to the Ribbono shel Olam

The *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* says the same *yesod* on the *pasuk* of בכל לבבך: When a *Yid* experiences a challenge that pains his heart—for example, if he is childless (here, the *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* is referring to himself, as he did not merit children)—he should take all this weight and all the pained parts of his heart, and with them fulfill the mitzvah of ואהבת את ה' אלוקיך.

He explains the *pasuk* of בכל לבבך in this way: **a *Yid* must nullify all of his desires and wants, and say, “Nothing matters to me... I accept all these challenges, because I love the Ribbono shel Olam more than anything.** I take the most pained parts of my heart, my deepest emotions, and with them I fulfill the mitzvah to love the Ribbono shel Olam.”

### Permeating the Heart with Love

Rebbe Mendele is teaching us how we can follow this path. All of these *madreigos* are much easier said than done... it's a great *avodah*. For example, if someone hurt a person, it's natural that he will feel resentment. Says the Rebbe Reb Mendele: **Yes, it's very difficult not to feel this—but with *emunah* and *bitachon*, this, too, can be chased away.**

When a *Yid* reiterates his *emunah* and *bitachon* again and again, he takes another problem that lies ensconced deep in his heart, and he permeates that place, too, with *emunah* and *bitachon*. **He toils so that this place in his heart as well should grasp the שמע ישראל!** Now he has mastered yet another level in ואהבת את ה' אלוקיך, another part of his heart came closer to the Ribbono shel Olam. Then he sets to work on *another* area of his heart, and then another... until he has given all his heart to Hashem.

### *Emunah* and *Bitachon* Have the Answer to Everything

When a person is extremely hurt—someone borrowed 100,000 from him, knowing that he won't be able to pay it back. He told the borrower ten times that he needs the money back soon, and now he won't even take his calls... he doesn't even apologize—it's clear, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that this person was terribly mistreated. But *emunah*

**and bitachon have the answer to this as well!** They will enable him not to be aggravated by this... for his heart to remain whole *despite* the mistreatment.

### *Bitachon* Protects the Heart from Pain

The *Sfas Emes* of Ger received an enormous dowry at the time of his wedding, and he gave it to an investor so he could sit and learn while being supported by the dividends. The investor, however, proceeded to lose the entire sum of money. Nothing was left. When he was told about this, the *Sfas Emes* smiled and said: **“I knew that there won’t be blessing in money that came to me so easily; for must be earned by the toil of his hands....”**

This is what it means for *emunah* and *bitachon* to calm the person in every situation; there should be no event in the world that can shake him out of his serenity. One may have mistreated you terribly, but if you will study and toil in your *emunah* and *bitachon*, your heart won’t be moved an iota. It’s not easy—but even before achieving perfection, the effort makes life so much better for the person.

### Everything Is *Chessed* and Goodness

In every sort of challenge and difficulty, a person can ask: **What does *emunah* and *bitachon* have to say about this situation?** And the answer is that *bitachon* says that if this aggravation wouldn’t be *bashert*, no one would have been able to cause it to happen.

*Bitachon* says that the person indeed has free choice, but if it wouldn’t be *bashert*, there is no way that it could happen. And if it happened, **it is surely good for me.**

Even if the other person has free choice, **it is impossible for me to suffer aggravation if it is not *bashert* for me. The Ribbono shel Olam does only good**—and therefore, nothing can upset me.

### The Serenity of *Bitachon* Is a Gift from Above

When we enter the *avodah*, it is not always easy—for at the end of the

day, we're living in the material world. But if a *Yid* strengthens himself, and he tries to be *mechazek* his *bitachon*, then the Ribbono shel Olam will give him the gift of serenity—because the Ribbono shel Olam repays *bitachon* with *bitachon*.

We need the Ribbono shel Olam to instill in us true serenity, because a person who lives on This World cannot master this feeling on his own. The *Aibishter* gives this feeling as a gift to *Yidden* who toil to try to live with *emunah* and *bitachon*.





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## The Gift We Bequeath to Our Grandchildren

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### Life in Retrospect

Yaakov Avinu is at the end of his life, and he is *bentching* his grandsons, Menashe and Ephraim, saying, “The angel who redeemed me from all evil should bless the youths.”

The question arises, why does he invoke the angel... why not the Ribbono shel Olam? Rashi says, “The angel who frequented me during my times of suffering.” But why this angel? **Why should the angel of rescue be the one to bless the grandchildren?**

Perhaps we can say: Yaakov Avinu is at a point in his life at which he has seen and experienced so much. He looks back, and he sees that everything—even the negative events—was for his ultimate good. Chazal (*Kiddushin* 33a) tell us that Rabbi Yochanan would accord honor even to an elderly gentile—**because he has been through life, and he has come to appreciate that everything was for the good... he has a certain level of *emunah* that others do not.**

Now, Yaakov Avinu is about to *bentch* his grandchildren. What is the ideal *berachah* that he can bequeath to them?

### Been There

And so, a grandfather has something that a father doesn't have—and it is this that he can gift to his grandchildren: the gift of having been through life. He's been on this earth for long enough to have seen many circles close. He was probably confident that he wouldn't have the money to marry off his children... but somehow, he did. He was assured that this child will never find a *shidduch*, but the Ribbono shel Olam

sent a wonderful match. He saw the difficult beginning, and he saw that Hashem sent him an angel of rescue. **This is how it always was; something frightening happened, and in the end, Hashem helped him in wonderful ways.**

Only such a person is in a position to say, “Listen well! You’re still young. But you will need to deal with life’s challenges. You will likely be certain that you’re the first to encounter these challenges... you will feel as if your entire future is in danger. I am telling you now: You’re not the first nor the last... this is how it goes. Everyone deals with difficulties.”

### The Gift of *Emunah*

The Ribbono shel Olam arranged the world in such a way that the grandchildren will encounter their grandfather and learn from his life’s wisdom and experience. In truth, **a grandparent has the ability to prepare his grandchildren for life by instilling *emunah* in them—in a way that a parent cannot—and he is obligated to do so**, as the *pasuk* says, *והודעתם לבניך ולבני בניך*, and you will make them known to your children and your children’s children.

There’s a special *emunah* that is infused into grandchildren just by observing their grandparents. It’s not that they see that in the end they have lots of money.... The idea is that they look at their grandparents, and through them they see that everything works out for the best. They see a person who—through his life experiences—has turned into a purer person, a more *temimus’dig* person... a person with a stronger *emunah*.

In our generation, we were still able to observe the Holocaust survivors who endured the most difficult experiences imaginable—and yet rebuilt generations. They’re a true example of how—despite everything having seemed lost... that life is finished—it wasn’t finished after all.

A young person who isn’t interested in hearing from his elders doesn’t know what he’s missing. He doesn’t understand how much depth and experience he is missing out on. When a young person says, “Such-and-such says in this *sefer*...,” it is theoretical. It’s something he has *heard*. But when an older person says, “**This is my experience...**” and we ob-

**serve how he is today...** that is like *seeing* – and seeing is always more powerful than hearing. It is an extremely powerful tool to instill *emunah*.

This is the *berachah* with which Yaakov Avinu blessed his grandchildren: “The angel who rescued me should bless the youths.” That is, he should accompany them in *their* lives when they experience *their* challenges—so they should be able to connect to this knowledge, and see clearly that everything has a good ending.

### The Crushed Kernel

Let’s take as a metaphor the process of baking bread. The wheat kernels lie peacefully inside their shells, growing day by day, joyful and happy, and warmed by the sun. What can be better? One day, a man comes and chops them off from their source of sustenance. It’s terrible! Even worse is when he threshes the stalks and grinds the kernels into flour. And if this isn’t enough, he throws the flour into a bowl along with water, and batters the mixture with his fists from all sides. Broken and battered, the dough is finally placed into the piping-hot oven.

“Why do we deserve all this?” they complain in pain. “What was our sin?” they cry.

But then, they emerge from the oven as hot, fresh, delicious challah—to be eaten at a *seudas mitzvah* with *berachos* beforehand and afterward. This brings them to their *tachlis*, and they come to appreciate that everything they endured was for the good. Now, the kernels that are already in a *challah* form tell the flour sitting in bags on the shelf: “Don’t worry, good times are on the way.”

An older person tells his grandchildren: “There’s a purpose to everything that happens... to blows and suffering... it all leads somewhere. It doesn’t happen for nothing. There’s a process, and you’re in the middle of it.” The senior stage of life is a time when circles begin to close. This is the time when the person can tell his stories with their positive ending... and **when the young people imbibe these stories, they inhale a unique *emunah* that cannot be accessed in any other place, an *emunah* that is tangible and real and experienced.**

## The Namesake

A *Yid* made a *bris for* his son, naming the baby for his grandfather, who had survived the Holocaust—and one of the relatives asked a family member to tell him a bit about the namesake whom he didn't know. The family member thought for a moment, and said: "Yes, I can think of a story that aptly describes my *zeide*."

"My *zeide* was a *Yid* who lived his life with utter and complete *emunah*... it flowed in his blood. One day, I went to see him. I had been blessed with a number of girls, but I very much wanted a boy. And so, I asked my *zeide* for a *berachah* to have a boy. Hearing my request, he recoiled. 'Absolutely not! Why are you getting involved in the *Ribbono shel Olam's* affairs?! Why are you telling Him what to do?!' This was who my *zeide* was!" he concluded.

## The Essence of a *Zeide*

Indeed, this is the essence of a grandparent, *any* grandparent. They're in a unique position to tell their grandchildren, "Why would you want to change the *Ribbono shel Olam's* program? You're going to tell Him what to do? I have been through life, and I have come to learn and understand that everything has a clear plan."

This doesn't mean that one may not *daven* for boys. Sure, it's permitted. There are even *tefillos* especially composed for this (see *Berachos* 60a). But **our approach must be such that whatever the *Ribbono shel Olam* does is good.**

Understanding the ending is something that we cannot learn from a *sefer*. But HaKadosh Baruch Hu says, "I arranged the world in a way that you can gain this understanding by osmosis—when it is transmitted to you by your elders who have gone through life. When the Torah said *והודעתם לבניך ולבני בניך*, the idea isn't just to learn *avos u'banim* with your grandchildren; it goes much deeper than this.

Torah is what is *behind* the letters. Torah is the light... *emunah*... *Elokus*. And *Elokus* is transmitted uniquely by a person who has been humbled by life's experiences.

This is what Yaakov Avinu was telling his grandchildren when he said: הגואל: המלאך I can give you this *berachah* even though you're still young—to infuse in you a spirit of *emunah* so you will see tangibly that there is a perfect program for everything.

### “I, Too, Have Been There”

We will add another point. It's common that when people share their pain, others will tell them, “I understand you... I went through the same thing.” And the question always is: Is this a proper or welcome response? On one hand, you're giving the person the feeling that you understand him. On the other hand, no two people are alike, and no two situations are alike. If so, how can you say that you went through the same thing? Perhaps you went through a *similar* thing....

Furthermore, sometimes you will make the person feel worse by telling him that you understand him. In many cases, he would rather hear: I can't imagine the pain you're going through... I don't know what I'd do in your situation!

### We're All Going Through Purification

But *l'maiseh*, the point remains that a person who has already emerged from the pit will tell the person still inside, “I've been there.” There is always a concept that among *Yidden*, people will strengthen one another by assuring them that they've been in their situation, and they have emerged in one piece—thereby infusing in the others a spirit of hope.

At the end of the day, the *form* of suffering, the *exact type* of pain, may differ **between** one person and the next—but this is just the outer wrapping. At the core, we're all going through the same thing: **We're all going through purification by HaKadosh Baruch Hu in order to become true Yidden.** One goes through it with monetary matters. And another one goes through the purification in the area of *shalom bayis*. For both of them, there is endurance and later redemption. There's a beginning and an end... there's darkness that leads to light.

**There's lack of understanding in Torah that leads to understanding**

**Torah... there's a feeling of** כחי ועוצם ידי, *my might and the power of my hands*, which leads to an appreciation that we're powerless and to a real *emunah*...

The outer layers vary between people—and this is intentionally so. For if we'd all have the same *nisayon*, it would be no *nisayon* at all. *Precisely* because the outer trappings are different, everyone thinks that they're the first to have ever endured this saga. But, at the core, we're all going through the same thing.

And so, when you're seeking to give *chizuk* to another person, one option is to speak about the outer layer. "*This happened to you?! It's truly terrible!*" This may work to alleviate some of his pain. But when you get to the real *chizuk*, the idea is to impress upon the person that it's all the same: Everyone goes through trials and tribulations, and every beginning has an end.

### The Root Is the Same

The older person says: When I was young, eighty years ago, the *nisyonos* of life were not oriented around technology. This is true. But there were different *nisyonos*. There was poverty...there was *haskalah*. What's the difference? They're all layers by which HaKadosh Baruch Hu leads a person to the *tachlis*.

When we meditate on the root of all these tribulations, when we speak about the *yesod* of *Yiddishkeit* and about our relationship with the *Ribbono shel Olam*, it's all one. The young *bachur* who struggles with the *nisyonos* of our time looks at his grandfather and asks: "Can you possibly give me *chizuk*? You don't understand me. You never went through what I'm going through!"

And what's the answer? It depends what you're looking at. If you're looking at the outer layer, the boy is correct. But the *yesod* is the same. When we look at the *yesod* that lies beneath the *nisayon*—of course the elders can give *chizuk* to their grandchildren!

## Speaking About the *Yesod*

The *yesod* is the same in all situations—no matter what era: **A person thinks that something from the outside will help him in his challenge, and this causes him to distance himself from the Ribbono shel Olam. But when we build the *yesod* properly, it makes no difference what the outer layer looks like.**

In forty years from now, the *nisyonos* will be so vastly different from what they are now. Thus, why limit and narrow ourselves by speaking about the outer trappings of each *nisayon*? **Talk about the *yesod*, and then he can transmit it to his own grandchildren!**

My angel of rescue will *bentch* the youths. And not only *my* understanding will accompany them, but that of שמי ושם אבותי, *that of my fathers as well*. And so, וידגו לרוב בקרב הארץ, *they will be fruitful and multiply* for many generations—for this *yesod* of understanding that Hashem's salvation is always here, and that He is right there behind every *nisayon*, will accompany them through all their *nisyonos*.

