



Ruach Chaim Living with Spirit Lifting Up our Lives in Trying Times

Mussar Gathering - January 26, 2025

“In God We Trust” - Grounding Ourselves I בטחון - *Bitachon*/Trust

By Eric Gurvis and Helaine Sheias

Rabbi Yosef Yozel Hurwitz in *Madregat Ha'Adam*

“Internalizing the attribute of *bitachon* [trust in God] leads to two benefits, First, one who trusts in God is freed from all the troubles of the world. They are spared the emotional fragmentation caused by overly intense involvement in too many worldly concerns. They are also saved from wearing themselves out, body and soul ...

Second, they have acquired the habit of trust, a path and a course in life. The direction that one has in this world is even more important than the benefits to which it leads. The advantages gained through *bitachon* are only indicators of its supreme value and by no means its only measure.”

***Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh*¹ – *Bitachon* – Living A Life of The Soul**

We will discuss what is called *Bitachon* – the ability of our soul to place our trust in a higher power than ourselves.

Bitachon is the power in our soul to believe and place one's trust in something. Generally speaking, there are two ways how our soul uses the power of *Bitachon*. One kind of *Bitachon* we have is, simply put, to trust in Hashem (G-d). This needs to be explained well, because we also know that we are required to make effort (*hishtadlut*), so we need to understand how we balance our *Bitachon* with our human efforts.

¹ Rabbi Itamar Schwartz grew up in Har Nof, Yerushalayim. He attended the Talmud Torah haMesora and studied in Yeshivat Pachad Yitzchok under the tutelage of Rav Yonatan David, Shlit"a. After graduating from the Ponevezh Yeshiva in B'nei Brak and studying in *kollel*, the Rav was requested to give classes to students who shared a common and intense desire to come closer to God. These lectures ultimately grew to become the *Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh* series of 9 volumes.



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The second kind of *Bitachon* is to have *Bitachon* in oneself, which in our language is called *bitachon atzmi*, “self-confidence.”

First, we will discuss the way our soul can use its power of *bitachon* to feel reliant on God. What is the root of this power?

***Bitachon* Is Found When We Access Our Inner World**

This world seems like a dangerous place full of challenges; there are constant fights, wars, and battles. But that is only in the physical world we see. We indeed cannot have *Bitachon* when we simply look at this world through the lens of this physical world.

But if we look at life through the lens of our inner world, we will find only peace there. We will be able to find in ourselves a place in which nothing opposes us, and there, we can find our *Bitachon*.

In the inner world within us, we can find there a place of confidence and trust in God. This is the meaning behind what is written, “And you will settle the land, confidently.” The verse is saying that we were able to come into the land of Israel, conquer it, and rest assured that God would help us settle it - and this is what happened . . .

Where is *bitachon* in our soul? In our soul, there are two layers. The outer layer feels opposition from life’s challenges, but in the inner layer of our soul, there is a whole different world that exists: a place in which we do not feel any danger whatsoever, to see that things are the way they are supposed to be. When we know that things are the way they are supposed to be, we have *bitachon*.

In fact, the entire idea of feeling challenged is really all a superficial mentality that come from the external layer of our soul. The inner level of our soul can tell us that in reality, nothing opposes us.

Just like God said “Enough” when as finished creating the universe, so do we in our souls have the power to say, “Enough,” and be relaxed.



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This is an inner solution to how we deal with our challenges, setbacks and failures: that really, nothing opposes us. It is the ability to say, “Things are the way they are supposed to be.”

Even our power of *bechirah*, free will – to choose between good and evil – is only using our outer, superficial layer of our soul. Our free will seems to imply to us that everything is up to us, because we were given the power to choose. But if we access the deep, inner layer of our soul, we will be able to see that there is nothing that truly holds us back.

This is where we find *bitachon* in our soul: a place in which we are living in a whole different world than the one we know of.

Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian²

The problem is that it just doesn’t work to approach God through rational thought: “All philosophical speculations and explanations, even if true, can in no fashion bring man to cling to the living God. And what is the way to (come to) love and be in awe of God? When a person thinks about God’s works and astounding and great creations and sees in them divine wisdom that has no measure and no end, he will immediately love and praise and glorify God and develop a great desire to know the Great Name, as David said: “My soul thirsts for God, the Living God.” And when (a person will) think about these things, he will immediately fall backwards in awe and realize what a tiny and lowly creature he is, existing with poor and weak understanding before the Perfect Knowledge. As David said: “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place. What is humanity that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?” (Psalms 8:3-4).

² Eliyahu Lopian (1876–1970), known as Reb Elyah, was among the most prominent rabbis of the Mussar Movement. As a disciple of the Kelm Talmud Torah method, he was known for his strict keeping of order and strong self-control. His teachings are collected in *Lev Eliyahu (The Heart of Eliyahu)*.