

# BITACHON LESSON FROM THE PARSHA

פרשת וינשב ויעקב תשפ"ו – *Don't Jam The Lock!*

וַיֵּרָא אֲדֹנָיו כִּי ה' אִתּוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר הוּא עֹשֶׂה ה' מַצְלִיחַ בְּיָדוֹ  
 [Yosef's] master saw that Hashem was with him, that Hashem granted him success in everything he did (Bereishis 39:3)

From the words וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר הוּא עֹשֶׂה it would seem that it was Yosef's Hishtadlus that led to his success. Yet, from the words ה' מַצְלִיחַ בְּיָדוֹ it seems that it was Hashem Who led him to success.

Which one was it?

The Gaon of Vilna explains that for a person to merit Heavenly assistance in his endeavors, he must do some sort of Hishtadlus. Once that Hishtadlus is employed it opens up the floodgates of Heaven, and Hashem pours success on him.

We see this as well, a little later in the Parsha, when Yosef was in prison, it states אֵין שָׂר בֵּית הַשְּׂהִיר רָאָה אֶת כָּל מַאֲוָמָה בְּיָדוֹ בְּאֲשֶׁר ה' אִתּוֹ וְאֲשֶׁר הוּא עֹשֶׂה ה' מַצְלִיחַ

What is the purpose of this Hishtadlus? Why do any effort at all toward our success, if ultimately our effort is futile, as the actual success is sent down from Heaven?

We have to realize that this is the main test of human beings on this earth, and why we were placed into this chess game called life, in the first place.

On the one hand, we must do Hishtadlus. On the other hand, we must have firm Bitachon and know that our Hishtadlus is useless, and doesn't produce any results whatsoever. Whatever we get – or don't get – is 100% based on the decree of Hashem, and Hashem doesn't need our help or input. We are just pawns in this game.

Think of Hishtadlus like the code to access Hashem's treasure house. All the goodies are in Hashem's hands, but he keeps them locked up. When we do some Hishtadlus, it unlocks the door to the treasure house, and now, with the door open, the *Shefa* flows.

The combination on its own is useless; you can't feed your family with 12-43-16. You can't marry off a child or heal the sick with a sequence of numbers. However, once you punch in the correct code, the *Yeshuos* and *Refuos* are released and begin being showered upon us.

Commensurate to each individual's level of Bitachon is how much Hishtadlus he needs to punch in to get the bounty flowing. One who is on a higher level needs to push just one number on the *Shefa* keypad. One whose level of Bitachon is less firm may need to turn a larger, more difficult lever to open the *Shefa* door, while someone who lacks Bitachon may be faced with a door armed with a double or triple deadbolt, which makes accessing the Heavenly *Shefa* seem extremely difficult.

This is the Bitachon vs. Hishtadlus mechanism.

יהי חסדך ה' עלינו כְּאֲשֶׁר יִחְלְנוּ לָךְ – *May Your kindness, Hashem, be upon us, as we hoped for You* (Tehilim 33:22). As we hope to Hashem, so is His flow of kindness to us. The more Bitachon we put in, the less Hishtadlus we have to do. We reap what we sow.

Furthermore, if we do too much Hishtadlus, not only does the Heavenly vault not open any quicker, it actually causes the vault to jam! Too much twisting and turning of the combination dial causes it to malfunction!

We have to remember that at the end of the day we will all get exactly what Hashem decreed for us to get on Rosh Hashana - *כל מיוזכותיו של אדם קצובים לו מראש השנה* (Beitzta 16a) – not an iota more or an iota less. However, sometimes the Heavenly flow of how we receive what has already been allocated for us comes via smooth pipes and sometimes it trickles down via clogged pipes. That mode of flow is based on how much tinkering we did with the combination on the door. If we tap the keypad gently – doing basic, required Hishtadlus, the door will spring open and the goodies will flow out effortlessly. If, however, we put too much pressure on the keypad – doing too much, unnecessary Hishtadlus, it will cause the door to get stuck and the flow will be stymied.



Too much Hishtadlus, especially if it inhibits our *Avodas Hashem* (e.g. Leaving Shul early to go work, being dishonest in business, staying late at the office and missing our Chavrusa, badmouthing our competitor, not paying enough attention to our spouse and children as we are glued to our phones all in the name of "Hishtadlus") is not the key that opens the *Shefa* door; doing that essentially adds additional locks to the door!

Yosef *Hatzadik*, the quintessential Ba'al Bitachon, understood this well, and as he did his small amount of required Hishtadlus – וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר הוּא עֹשֶׂה –

he never lost sight of what really opens the doors of success – ה' מַצְלִיחַ בְּיָדוֹ. That's why the Torah tells us (Bereishis 39:2) that he was an *אִישׁ מַצְלִיחַ*. Despite his situation – *which would have brought anyone else a fair amount of sadness, stress, anxiety and fear* – he stayed tethered to Hashem, no matter what, and that is the ultimate and true measure of success.

In fact, when Yosef told the *Sar Hamashkim* כִּי אִם זָכַרְתִּי אֶתְךָ כְּאֲשֶׁר יֵיטֵב לָךְ...וְהִזְכַּרְתִּי אֵל פְּרַעַה וְהוֹצֵאתִנִי מִן הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה, his Hishtadlus of saying כִּי אִם זָכַרְתִּי אֶתְךָ would have been enough to open the door of salvation and get him out of prison. However, since Yosef, on his exalted level, did excessive Hishtadlus by reiterating וְהִזְכַּרְתִּי אֵל פְּרַעַה, he added a bolt to the prison door and needed to remain incarcerated for an additional two years.

We may not be on Yosef's level where an extra word is deemed excessive Hishtadlus, but whatever level we are on, if we do excessive Hishtadlus (Consult a Rav for to define what is deemed excessive), it will clog the pipes of salvation, and keep us in our metaphorical prisons for longer than we otherwise need to be.

The keys are in our hands. We need to use them wisely.

**Good Shabbos!**