BITACHON LESSON FROM THE PARSHA

פרשת וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב תשפ"ז – No Hishtadlus? No Problem!

The Midrash (Bereishis 68:2) tells us *Yaakov Avinu's* thought process as he headed to Charan, empty-handed, to find his Zivug, where he used the words of Tehilim Perek 121 to express his feelings during that time of vulnerability.

שיר למעלות אשא עיני אל ההרים - אשא עיני אל ההורים - למלפני ולמעבדני
I lift my eyes to my parents [ההורים] and to my teachers [to learn from them how to act in this situation]
מאין יבוא עזרי - אליעזר בשעה שהלך להביא את רבקה מה כתיב ביה "ויקח העבד עשרה גמלים וגו'" ואני לא נזם אחד ולא צמיד אחד
"From where will my help come?" – Eliezer, when he went to bring Rivka as a wife for Yitzchok, it is written that "The slave took ten camels filled with gifts", but I do not have even one nose ring or one bracelet.
חזר ואמר מה אנא מובד סברי מן בריי חס ושלום לית אנא מובד סברי מן בריי אלא עֶזְרִי מֵעִם ה'
He then said: 'What, will I lose my confidence in my Creator?! Chas V'shalom! I will not lose my confidence in my Creator; rather, "My help is from Hashem.
אל ינום שמרך - הנה לא ינום ולא יישן וגו' - ה' ישמרך מכל רע - מעשו ומלבן. ישמר את נפשך - ממלאך המות. ה' ישמר צאתך ובואך - ויצא יעקב
He who watches over you will not slumber" "Behold, the Guardian of Yisroel [Yaakov] neither slumbers nor sleeps" Hashem will guard you from all evil" – from Eisav and from Lavan; "He will guard your life" – from the angel of death. "Hashem will guard your goings and your comings"– [With this assurance] "Yaakov departed."

A cursory reading of this Midrash may make one assume that, for a moment, Yaakov Avinu had a lapse in his Bitachon and then "caught himself" and got back on track.

This may be how many of us may be, at times, but we cannot attribute such a lapse, even momentarily, to a giant such as Yaakov Avinu, the **בחיר שבאבות**, the **איש תם**, the quintessential Ba'al Bitachon, the one whose likeness is etched into the **כסא הכבוד**. It simply cannot be the case; and it's not.

The Mir Mashgiach, Rav Yeruchom Levovitz Zatzal (Da'as Torah, Ha'azinu page 147 and Da'as Chochma U'Mussar Vol. 2 page 88) explains that Yaakov Avinu conducted himself in the manner he learnt from, and observed by his righteous grandfather and father, Avraham and Yitzchok. They lived their lives with 100% Bitachon in Hashem, while at the same time employing "natural" Hishtadlus in every challenging situation they faced.

When Yaakov found himself in a situation where he had no Hishtadlus options – *he was all alone in a deserted area, without any possessions* – he wondered to himself **מאין יבוא עזרי,** does Bitachon work without any Hishtadlus at all? He then concluded that just as when one does do Hishtadlus the results are 100% from Hashem, so too when one finds himself unable to do any Hishtadlus, the results will still come from Hashem.- **עֶזְרִי מֵעִם ה' עֹשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ**

Yaakov crystalized this truth that Hishtadlus is totally independent of Bitachon; it's not a part of Bitachon. Hishtadlus is a separate obligation, a curse forced upon mankind, a tax levied on the human race, a penalty mandated by Hashem, but that's all it is. It is not a part and parcel of Bitachon, and it is totally unrelated to any results we do or don't experience.

As the *Mesilas Yesharim* (Perek 21) so clearly reminds us:

וכבר היה אדם יכול להיות יושב ובטל והגזירה היתה מתקיימת, אם לא שקדם הקנס לכל בני אדם בזעת אפך תאכל לחם, אשר על כן חייב אדם להשתדל איזה השתדלות לצורך פרנסתו, שכן גזר המלך העליון, והרי זה כמס שפורע כל המין האנושי אשר אין להמלט ממנו
על כן אמרו (ילקוט שמעוני דברים) יכול אפילו יושב ובטל תלמוד לומר בכל משלח ידך אשר תעשה, אך לא שההשתדלות הוא המועיל, אלא שהשתדלות מוכרח, וכיון שהשתדל הרי יצא ידי חובתו, וכבר יש מקום לברכת שמים שתשרה עליו ואינו צריך לבלות ימיו בחריצות והשתדלותו
…It's not the Hishtadlus that produces results; Hishtadlus is compelled by Hashem. It's just something that we have to do.

However, what is one to do if he finds himself in a situation where he has no Hishtadlus to do? That was Yaakov's question - *"From where will my help come?"* It wasn't a lapse in his Bitachon; it was him determining if Hishtadlus was a part of Bitachon or an independent obligation. He took a moment to contemplate, and concluded that where Hishtadlus is not an option, there was no obligation to do it, and he can move forward full force with the knowledge that **עֶזְרִי מֵעִם ה' עֹשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ** – our help is from Hashem, Creator of Heaven and earth.

Wouldn't it have been enough to say **עֶזְרִי מֵעִם ה',** why is it necessary to add **עֹשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ**?

What does Hashem's creating Heaven and earth have to do with the issue at hand?

עֶזְרִי מֵעִם ה'
עֹשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם
וָאָרֶץ

The powerful explanation of these words being here is bedrock of Bitachon. Do you know where Heaven and earth came from? They came from NOTHING. From **תוהו ובוהו**. There was total NOTHINGNESS.

There was no avenue for any Hishtadlus on the part of anyone or anything. To us, that's catastrophic. When we are out of options the game is over.

Fortunately, Hashem is not bound by the same rules as we are. Hashem can - and does - create **יש מאין**.

He can create a solution from nothingness. He is not bound to any rules. He makes the rules. Hashem doesn't find a solution. Hashem creates a solution. Hashem IS the solution, and our Hishtadlus plays absolutely no role in that solution.

Yes, when we are able to, we have to do some Hishtadlus, but our Emunah and Bitachon must be 100% rooted in Hashem, and we must not lose sight – even for a second – that when our "natural" Hishtadlus seems to work, that is also Hashem!

עֶזְרִי מֵעִם ה' עֹשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ – our Bitachon is not in **שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ** or anything related to it, our Bitachon is firmly in the One who is **עֹשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ**

Yaakov Avinu taught us that no matter how bleak a situation may seem, and no matter if we are out of options, with no Hishtadlus to do, Hashem ALWAYS has options, even if it means He has to create them specifically for you!

Yaakov had nothing – and thus he has everything! We, descendants of Yaakov are in the exact same boat as him. We must remember that regardless of what we have or don't have – we have Hashem and that is all we ever need! **עֶזְרִי מֵעִם ה'**

Good Shabbos!

This week's lesson is dedicated in honor of my dear children, the Choson and Kallah, Yosef Chaim & Yaffa Lamm.
May they be zoche to build a home with strong foundations of Emunah and Bitachon; a home worthy of השראת השכינה always!