

In G-d We Trust

Dear Parents,

In a remarkably prescient *Dvar Torah* on this week's *Parsha*, *HaRav Avrohom Yaakov HaKohein Pam zt'l*, asks the well-known question of why *Yosef Hatzaddik* was punished for his effort of enlisting the chief butler to help him get out of jail. To answer, he brings the *Medrash* which quotes the very first words of the first *Pasuk*; *And it was at the end of two years...* (*Bereishis 41:1*). The *Medrash (Bereishis Rabba 89:3)* quotes a *pasuk* in *Tehillim (40:5)* that first identifies *Yosef HaTzaddik* as one who places his trust in *Hashem*. Then, at second glance, the same *pasuk* in *Tehillim* continues *"and does not place his trust in arrogant ones - דההב"ם"* and here too states it is a reference to *Yosef*, but in this case, as an example of not living up to that ideal. The *Medrash* says that *Yosef* was therefore punished to two additional years in jail due to his telling the chief butler to remember him to *Pharoah*.

This is seemingly contradictory. Was *Yosef* a *Baal Bitachon* (master of trust in *Hashem*) or not? Additionally, what is the definition of a *Baal Bitachon*? Does one make no effort and leave everything up to *Hashem*? **Clearly there are different levels and everyone needs to make some degree of *hishtadlus* (effort).**

Rav Pam quotes the *Chazon Ish (Emunah U'Bitachon 2:6)* who says that while some level of *hishtadlus* is required even by a *Baal Bitachon*, there are some types of *hishtadlus* that are worthless and display a lack of *Bitachon*. This was *Yosef's* shortcoming, as delineated by the *Medrash*. *Yoseph* asked the butler to "remember him to *Pharoah*." *Yoseph* surely had total faith that his freedom would come from *Hashem*, but nevertheless some level of *Hishtadlus* was required. If so, what did he do wrong?

The answer, according to the *Chazon Ish* is that the butler was a "דהב" an arrogant, egotistical, selfish person from whom no good could be expected. *Rahav* is precisely the type of person the *Pasuk* in *Tehillim* warned against entrusting with anything. **A *Baal Bitachon* of *Yosef's* stature should not have made such a worthless gesture of *hishtadlus*.**

Rav Pam, speaking nearly forty years ago applied this idea to the contemporary challenges of his day and specifically to the State of Israel and its foreign policy dealings and decisions. He felt that so many difficulties that the Jewish State was enduring was because of the Israeli leaders' misplaced trust in 'friends' such as politicians and bureaucrats in the government of the United States. These people have their own agendas,

stated *Rav Pam*, and would do nothing to help the Jewish State unless it fits their political purposes and offers them some concrete advantage.

This insight of *Rav Pam* has been proven time and time again and once again we are reliving it. If we remove our trust from *Hashem* and place it on the shoulders of self-serving, agenda-driven government officials of other nations, we cannot expect *Hashem's* miraculous salvation. This is a very important lesson for us and provides us with an opportunity to educate our children according to their understanding, of how *Bitachon* operates on a practical level.

We teach our children to trust in *Hashem*, to daven to Him for the things we need and want. Our children can be taught from the unfolding current events, that trusting in *Hashem* means we make normative responsible efforts but we minimize our trust in those people and forces that can't or won't really be helpful. Even when they seem to be agents to help, it is only because *Hashem* is the real force at work. **It is so important as children grow up that they have the proper perspective on events and people in the world.**

In our current dangerous time of war, we do need to make *Hishtadlus* in many areas (under the guidance of our *Gedolim*). The question is - how much time, effort and resources do we expend investing in relationships with people who ultimately don't really care about us or our nation, versus how much of those efforts do we expend in our relationship with *Hashem* through *Torah*, *Tefilla*, *Chesed* and *Maasim Tovim*.

We and our children would do well to heed the words of *Rav Pam* and understand just how much we need to prioritize strengthening our relationship with and trust in the *Ribono Shel Olam*. In the merit of our efforts, May *Hashem* grant us special *Siyata D'Shmaya* to succeed in our efforts to draw ever closer to Him, and through our trust, to merit complete salvation and the coming of *Moshiach Tzidkeinu Bimhaira B'Yomeinu, Amein*.

Best wishes for a Shabbos of true closeness to *Hashem*,



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