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# המאור

Light reading  
**HaMaor**

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Parshas Vayigash, Teves 5785

## Perceived Reality and the True Reality - Bitachon is the Key

### Tiferes Shlomo on the Parsha

ויגש אליו יהודה ויאמר בי אדני  
*And Yehudah approached him (Yosef) and said "please my master"*

This verse is a continuation to the conclusion of last week's Parsha.

After Yosef finds his silver goblet in Binyomin's sack, Yehudah cries out "what can we say to my master? What can we say and what can we do to justify ourselves. G-d has found the sin of your servants."

The word Vayigash is used to describe approaching Hashem in prayer. Yehudah refers to Yosef as Adoni "my master". This word has the same letters as the Divine Name **אדני**.

But as we approach Hashem, we begin to question ourselves and our worthiness to stand before Him. "What can we say?" i.e. how can we speak in prayer? "How can we justify ourselves?". We reflect on our sins, our baggage, our guilt and shame as "Hashem has found our sins" and knows very well who we are.

These thoughts of inferiority, lowliness and being unworthy, are the voice of the Yetzer Hora, seeking to prevent us from drawing close and connecting to Hashem.

Our response to these inner voices can be found in Yehudah's words **בי אדני**. Literally meaning "please my master", it can also be read as "in me is Adon-ai". Yehudah is not addressing Yosef, but is talking to himself.

When plagued with feelings of unworthiness, we must remind ourselves that inside of us is a pure soul which is a part of Hashem, which cannot be taken away from us or blemished.

With this realisation, Yehudah concludes "let me speak in the ears of Adon-ai". Because I am a pure soul, I am worthy to speak to Hashem. No matter what has happened, my prayers are meaningful and precious and Hashem wants to hear them.

This past week, an incredible video was posted on one of the community Whatsapp chats. The video was of a concert being held in Israel.

In the middle of the concert, a warning siren for an incoming missile attack went off. The musician began to sing a song that has become incredibly popular in Israel in the course of the current war, embraced by religious and secular Jews alike. The lyrics are "Hashem Yisbarach always loves me and everything will always only be good for me... more good and even more good." In the midst of the threat, instead of panic and fear, thousands of voices joined joyously in the singing, turning their thoughts to Hashem.

Attributed to a noted Breslev leader and teacher, these words encapsulate the theme of Bitachon. Based on the Shaar Habitachon of Rabbeinu Bachye Ibn Pakuda and as expounded in Chassidic teaching, Bitachon differs significantly from Emunah.

Emunah is faith, Bitachon is trust. Emunah is a belief or level of awareness that Hashem is involved in everything that happens and that ultimately everything is for the good, even when we are currently experiencing struggles and darkness.

Bitachon is trust and absolute reliance that Hashem controls everything and will certainly provide for us in the best possible way, and in a way that we can perceive its goodness.

What underlies Bitachon is love. Since Hashem loves us infinitely and no matter what, like a parent loves their child, we are sure that He has our best interests at heart and will only give us good.

In the beginning of the Parsha, Yehudah and the brothers find themselves in a very difficult situation. Not knowing that he was really Yosef, in his mind, Yehuda was coming before the viceroy of Egypt, the second-most powerful man in the world, a man who had absolute power of life and death over Yehudah and his brothers. This situation would instinctively cause fear and trepidation.

The true reality was that this man was his brother Yosef and that there was no reason for fear. Yosef would never seek to cause his brothers harm. In fact, everything that was occurring was part of Hashem's plan to provide for and look after Yaakov's family in the best possible way.

Yehuda did not know that the viceroy was Yosef. He did not tangibly see how everything would be good. But he believed that it would and this gave him

strength and confidence. When he acted with confidence and trust, without fear, the veil of the perceived reality was pierced and the true reality of goodness was revealed to him, as Yosef revealed his true self to them.

Everything in our lives plays out on these two levels; the perceived reality and the true reality. In our perceived reality, we may face and experience negative events, threats and situations. Despite our faith, these hardships and tribulations rock our world, leaving us feeling weak, vulnerable and threatened. We experience fear and worry about what will happen and what the outcome will be.

With Bitachon, even though we don't see it manifest, in our mind's eye we perceive that there is a true reality, that Hashem is in control of everything and therefore we have nothing to fear. Hashem loves us always and will take care of us, providing us with only good.

Bitachon gives us optimism and confidence in every situation. With Bitachon, a person will always be calm and tranquil and feel completely secure.

So how do we attain Bitachon? On the words **ויגש אליו יהודה**, our sages teach that **ויגש** refers to prayer. In this context, **אליו** - "to Him", refers to Hashem. The root of the word Tefillah (prayer) means to connect. Through Davening, we strengthen our connection to Hashem; our awareness that He is always with us and that He is in control of everything. Davening is the experience of love, where we declare our love to Hashem and we meditate on His great and eternal love for us.

Our connection to Hashem is the key to attaining Bitachon.

When the missiles of war threaten our people, instead of falling into fear and despair by focusing on the perceived reality that we are experiencing, let us advance with confidence and positivity that comes from our assuredness that Hashem Yisbarach always loves us, His children, and therefore He will take care of us and do good for us.

May our Bitachon in these challenging times be rewarded that, like Yosef revealing himself to his brothers, we will be able to tangibly see and experience the true reality of Hashem's goodness. Starting with immediate victory over our enemies and the safe return of our captives and **עוד יותר טוב**, growing ever more good.

## When the 10th of Teves falls on Friday - Part 1

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In an extremely rare calendar event, this year, the fast of Asarah B'Teves will fall out on Erev Shabbos. It is the only public fast that can fall out on Erev Shabbos based on our fixed calendar. The Rishonim and Poskim discuss the question of when one concludes the fast in such a Kvius and what happens when one davens Maariv and brings in Shabbos early.

### Background

The Gemara<sup>1</sup> raises the following question: if Torah students are fasting on Erev Shabbos, what is the law about completing the fast?

In the discussion, the Gemara quotes a Braisa that one year, Tisha B'av fell on Erev Shabbos<sup>2</sup> and Rabbi Akiva ate a boiled egg in the afternoon. He did so, not because he needed to eat, but in order to show the Halacha that we do not complete the fast on Erev Shabbos<sup>3</sup>. The reason is so as not to enter Shabbos in a state of affliction.

Rabbi Yossi argues with Rabbi Akiva, teaching that on Erev Shabbos we do complete the fast – מתענה ומשלים. Ulla concludes that the Halacha follows the view of Rabbi Yossi. The Gemara is discussing personal fasts and communal fasts, as evidenced from the Braisa citing an example of Tisha B'av.

It would seem clear from this that when a fast falls on Erev Shabbos, we have to conclude the fast which means fasting until nightfall. But we will see that even according to the conclusion of the Gemara, this is not necessarily so.

### Do we have to conclude the fast

Tosfos explain that the ruling of Ulla is only (אם ירצה) "if a person wishes to conclude their fast", but not that it is not necessary to do so. They understand this based on the initial question of the Gemara which asked whether one is allowed to complete the fast (not whether one *must* complete the fast)<sup>4</sup>.

The Mordechai<sup>5</sup> and other Rishonim relate that once when Asarah B'Teves fell on Erev Shabbos, the great Baal HaTosfos Rabbeinu Yitzchak (Ri) tasted from the Shabbos food before going to Shule (while it was still light). He did this so that he would not enter Shabbos in a state of affliction.

This supports the interpretation of Tosfos that the conclusion of the Gemara that one "fasts and completes" is optional and that it is actually preferable not to complete the fast at all.

The view of Rabbeinu Yitzchak is not brought in the Halachic codes at all.

### The Rosh – fast until nightfall

The Rosh writes that since 1) our sages teach that any fast which does not continue to the end of the day is not considered a fast and 2) one is allowed to fast into Shabbos if they wish to, they must continue to fast until nightfall.

Only if they made an express stipulation (prior to accepting the fast upon themselves) that they can eat earlier after the community has davened, may they end the fast before nightfall.

### Maharam – fast until after Maariv

The Maharam (Rabbeinu Meir M'Rottenburg) rules that if the community daven Kabbolas Shabbos and Maariv and return home while it is still light, they may eat immediately as they have accepted Shabbos already<sup>6</sup>.

The Maharam obligates one to complete the fast. His rationale is that after one has davened Kabbolas Shabbos and accepted Shabbos, the day has concluded and it is considered as having concluded the fast. This applies when one davens any time after Plag Hamincha<sup>7</sup>.

The Mishna Berura<sup>8</sup> writes that according to this opinion, if they have davened early, it is not appropriate to continue fasting and to wait until Tzeis Hakochavim to eat.

The Alter Rebbe goes a step further, explaining that according to this opinion, once one has accepted Shabbos through davening, it is forbidden to continue fasting into Shabbos and that they must make Kiddush and eat immediately, since it is forbidden to fast on Shabbos<sup>9</sup>.

### Psak Halacha

The Tur brings both opinions of the Rosh and Maharam but does not issue a ruling.

In Shulchan Aruch<sup>10</sup>, the Mechaber rules that if one accepted on themselves to fast on Erev Shabbos, they must fast until nightfall, unless they made a stipulation. This follows the stricter opinion of the Rosh, that davening Maariv early does not help to be able to end one's fast early.

The Ram"o records the alternative opinion of the Maharam, that one does not need to fast until nightfall and may eat after davening Kabbolas Shabbos early. The Ram"o then issues his ruling, that distinguishes between a personal and communal fast.

On a Taanis Yachid (personal fast) one does not complete the fast and can eat after Maariv, following the Maharam. It is still preferable to specify this at the time of accepting the fast to be Yotzai according to the Rosh as well. However, for a Taanis Tzibbur – a public fast day – we follow the stricter opinion and must fast until nightfall.

The ruling of the Ram"o is based on a Teshuvah of the Mahari"l<sup>11</sup>. The Mahari"l also quotes the opinions of both the Rosh and the Maharam. He concludes that for a personal fast one can be lenient, however he did not want to rule leniently for a public fast.

(The public fast that he was referring to was a local communal fast on the 43rd day of the Omer decreed because of a Gezeira).

The Acharonim, including the Magen Avraham, Alter Rebbe and Mishna Berura, all adopt the distinction of the Ram"o. The Alter Rebbe explains the rationale for this ruling;

The obligation to complete a private fast is based on one's own acceptance of the fast. Therefore, we follow the lenient opinion that one has completed the fast after Maariv.

However, a public fast, it is an obligation to complete the fast and therefore we follow the stricter opinion. Making a stipulation does not work for a communal fast as it is not his 'own fast' to decide<sup>12</sup>.

1. Eiruvim 40b
2. Based on our fixed calendar this cannot occur. That year, the month of Tammuz was a full month of 30 days
3. See Tosfos who quotes Rabbeinu Chananel that we have a tradition that Rabbi Akiva was sick and the doctors instructed him to eat an egg. Rabbi Yehuda was unaware of this and assumed that it was to teach the Halacha.
4. Based on this understanding, Rabbi Yehuda who argues with Rabbi Yossi holds that it is forbidden to conclude the fast.
5. Eiruvim 494
6. This only applies on Erev Shabbos when davening early brings Kedusha of Shabbos. During the week davening Maariv early does not allow one to finish the fast.
7. The Tashbetz writes that even the Maharam was not so lenient and only permitted one to eat close to Shkiya.
8. Biur Halacha
9. Tehillah Ledovid questions where the Alter Rebbe derives this from
10. OC 249:4
11. Siman 33
12. Magen Avraham,

