

A matter OF TRUST

When it comes to some things, if you have to ask, then you already know the answer | BY ROBERT SUSSMAN



RABBI SHIMSHON DOVID PINCUS, ZTZ"l, TELLS (*Tiferes Shimshon al HaTorah – Parshas Eikev*) of a letter that he once received, in which the letter writer asked him a series of questions related to the topic of *bitachon* (trust) in Hashem and whether the following actions, among others, would be seen as a defect in a person's measure of *bitachon*:

1. Installing a *Pladelet* door (the brand name of an Israeli-made steel security door)?
2. If you advise not to install the *Pladelet* door, but a robbery has already occurred in our house, would it be the same?
3. A wife going out to work?
4. A person working extra hours?

In his discussion of the letter, Rabbi Pincus notes that the letter writer was a good Jew and that, if he answered this

man that the man should not buy a *Pladelet* door, the man would accept this decision without any hesitation. But, Rabbi Pincus explains, the problem would be that the reason that the man would not buy the *Pladelet* door is not because he trusts in Hashem that thieves will not enter his home, but because he's relying on the fact that Rabbi Pincus said that he shouldn't buy a *Pladelet* door! This man will think that doing so will be some kind of *segulah* (charm or protection) – that if he will not buy a *Pladelet* door, then thieves will not enter his home.

Rabbi Pincus explains that this man is not someone who trusts in Hashem. In fact, for this man, Hashem is actually not in the picture at all. "If Hashem was in the picture, this man wouldn't be turning to me with his questions, and would instead increase his trust in Hashem and

ask from Hashem that He will protect him from thieves."

In terms of *hishtadlus* (ie. the minimum effort that a person must put forth from his side), certainly, if experts decide that not having a *Pladelet* door is a situation where damage or loss can be expected to result, then a person would need to install such a door. And, if a person failed to do so, then it would be comparable to him leaving his door open all night and hanging a big sign outside that says, "Welcome to all thieves who have travelled from outside the city." In other words, he is simply declaring his property to be ownerless and free for the taking. On such a situation, the *Mesilas Yesharim* (The Path of the Just) says, "There is trust (in Hashem), and then there is foolishness." In other words, behaving recklessly does not demonstrate trust in Hashem, nor will a person who behaves in such a way merit protection from Hashem.

In a normal situation, however, regarding a regular door, not a *Pladelet* door, a person closes it and locks it – and, with those two actions, closing and locking, he has fulfilled his obligation of putting forth effort from his side, and that's enough (ie. Hashem will do the rest).

Rabbi Pincus explains that the letter writer is afraid of thieves and, therefore, he asks if it's permissible for him to buy a *Pladelet* door. "If I wrote to him that it was forbidden for him to buy a *Pladelet* door because this would be a defect in his trust in Hashem – he would not buy it." But, this conduct will not connect this man at all to Hashem and to trusting in Him because, in fact, he would not be relying on Hashem; he would be relying on the fact that he had not bought the door...

So also, with the other matters of trust that he asked about, for example: his wife going out to work, or his working extra hours, etc. "If I would answer him on these questions, I would simply be deceiving him. If I said to him: Don't let your wife go out to work or don't work extra hours, he will simply rely on this 'system', but it will not connect him at all to Hashem."

"I would have to answer someone like this: 'If you ask me, and I give you an answer, it will have missed the entire

“IF YOU ASK – THIS IS A SIGN THAT YOU DON'T TRUST IN HASHEM; YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO ASK ME...BECAUSE *BITACHON* IS SOMETHING BETWEEN A MAN AND HIS CREATOR.”

point. You don't need to ask me. You should decide for yourself how much to rely on Hashem and then behave accordingly.”

A lack of *bitachon* means that when a person has a problem, he goes in search of advice. Why is he going in search of advice? He has a compassionate father (ie. Hashem) who has sufficient money, so trust Him to bring you the money. You don't even need to ask Him, because he knows that you need money, and, if it's a worthy cause, He will give it to you immediately.

“True *bitachon* is not asking the rabbi what to do. It's seeing all the neighbours buying *Pladelet* doors, seeing that every day in my building there are 20 thefts, and, nevertheless, deciding there is no problem because I have someone who guards my house. Hashem watches over me! If you will ask me, why doesn't He protect them too? I don't know, and it's

none of my business! Do I know everything in the world? Just as I don't understand why Hashem made me with two ears and one nose and didn't create me instead with two noses and one ear – so too I don't know why Hashem doesn't protect them...I know that I rely on Hashem and that's it. I didn't buy a *Pladelet* door! This is *bitachon*!”

“For years, I have been asked questions in the area of *bitachon*. People need to know that there is not another matter like this! If you ask – this is a sign that you don't trust in Hashem; you don't have any-

thing to ask me...because *bitachon* is something between a man and his Creator.”

“No one would come to ask me a question like this: ‘My father said that he will give me 100 shekels a month. Can I rely on him?’ Could I know if such a person can count on his father?! Do I know this father and his relationship with his son?! And, so also for our case: I know Hashem, but I don't know the relationship between you and Hashem – your connection to Him – so how can I judge for you? This is a matter that depends on your heart, on the connection that you have with G-d.”

Rabbi Pincus concludes his discussion of the letter by saying, “It must be noted that, in practical terms, this requires a lot of fortitude, and this is one of the most difficult *avodos* (tasks) that there is in Judaism.”

What does it mean to have bitachon (trust) in Hashem? The Chovos HaLevovos (Duties of the Heart) written by Rabbi Bachya ibn Paquda defines bitachon as “menuchas nefesh” (tranquillity of spirit) of the one who trusts, relying on the one in whom he trusts to do what is good and right for him regarding the matter for which he trusts. The one who trusts believes that the one in whom he trusts will keep his word and do as he promised. (See Sha'ar HaBitachon, Perek Aleph)



Shanah Tovah

Happy Rosh Hashanna
Wishing you a Sweet New Year



Chocolate Almond Twist

Makes: 1 Chocolate almond twist

Oven: 180°C / 350°F

Preparation Time: 1 hour and 40 minutes

Baking Time: 25 - 30 minutes

Ingredients:

240g	Cake flour (2 x 250 ml / 2 cups)
5ml	Salt (1 tsp)
5ml	Sugar (1 tsp)
30g	Margarine (2 tbsps)
10g	Anchor Instant Yeast (1 packet)
80ml	Lukewarm water (1/3 cup)
1	Large egg (beaten)
	Egg, to brush

Filling

Soft margarine to spread

100g	Baking chocolate (1/2 bar), grated
50g	Flaked almonds (1/2 packet)

