

לע"נ
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' אברהם יעקב
ב"ר חיים מרדכי ע"ה
נלב"ע כ"ה תשרי ה'תשנ"ו
ולע"נ זוגתו האשה החשובה
מרת פריידא ראצא
בת הרב יחיאל אפרים פישל ע"ה
נלב"ע ט"ז אדר-שני ה'תשע"ו
תנ"צ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י בנם
הרה"ת ר' משה מאיר שמואל
וזוגתו מרת רבקה לאה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גלוקאווסקי

Safe and Secure

*Having
Bitachon
in Hashem*



THE SNAKE WAS ONCE ASKED:

“Why are you so depressed? Of all creatures on earth you are the last one that needs to worry about anything; your food is the dust of the earth, you will never go hungry.” The snake responded: “I worry what will happen after I eat up the entire earth...”¹

When one lacks *bitachon*, absolute trust in Hashem that all will be good, they are bound to find something to worry about, even when it is utterly irrational.²

Based on What?

Strong belief in *hashgacha pratis* is the bedrock of *bitachon*; knowing that Hashem is totally informed of your situation should give you peace of mind that He will make sure it all works out in the best way possible.³

Hashgacha pratis also means that Hashem is with you at every moment. With Hashem at your side, nothing is too difficult to accomplish and no situation is too terrible or too complicated to turn into good. “Even when I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for You are with me,” these are the words of Dovid Hamelech in Tehillim.

[In several letters, the Rebbe points to this *kapitel* as a source of *bitachon*, and in some instances⁴ the Rebbe even recommends learning it.]

The question now arises: Granted that Hashem is with me and sees everything I do and knows everything I need, but who says He wants to help me? Maybe I am unworthy; maybe I am deserving of punishment!

In *kapitel* 23, we read about Dovid Hamelech’s most difficult moments—“in the shadow of death”—and yet he is confident that Hashem is with him, which leads him to the conclusion that “only goodness and kindness pursue me all the days of my life.”

True, we are not nearly as great as Dovid Hamelech. But the fact that this *avoda* was included as part of Torah implies that we can and should have the same confidence, that Hashem is with us at all times and we have nothing to worry about.

If we awaken within ourselves Dovid Hamelech’s confidence that Hashem is with us and we have no worry, then we can be certain that “only goodness and kindness pursue me all the days of my life.”⁵

But if Hashem is truly so good and so informed of my situation and so trustworthy and powerful, shouldn’t we accept everything that Hashem sends our way? He obviously knows what He is doing, while we on the other hand will not and cannot know the full picture. If we are in a tough situation why do we hope it will change for the better? It is not for us to concern ourselves with what seems to us as good or bad, we should simply strengthen our belief in Hashem

POSTSCRIPT IN THE REBBE'S HOLY HANDWRITING TO RABBI MENDEL SHEMTOV, DATED 15 MENACHEM-AV 5711.

שלום וברכה!

זה עתה שלחתי לו מברק: "אתפלא במאד על נפילת רוחו. יעשה כהוראת שני רופאים מומחים ויתחזק בבטחון בהשי"ת אשר בודאי יחזירו לאיתנו. ואחכה לבשורות טובות. בברכת רפואה קרובה. חתימתי."

מ'לערנט, מ'לערנט - און אז עס קומט לפועל, וואו איז דער בטחון?

ילמוד ג' או ד' פעמים שער הבטחון ב"חובת הלבבות". כמובן, שאין כוונתי שילמוד זה בפעם אחת, אלא במשך איזה שבועות..

בברכת רפואה קרובה, המחכה לבשורות טובות בבריאותו בגשמיות ובבריאותו ברוחניות,

מ. שניאורסאהן

Greetings and Blessings!

Just now I dispatched a telegram to you: "I am most surprised at your low spirits. You should follow the directive of two medical specialists, and muster strength in your trust in G-d, Who will definitely restore you to your former health. With blessings for a speedy recovery. My signature."

People study, and study — but when it comes to practical application, where's the *bitachon*?

You should study Shaar HaBitachon in Chovos HaLevavos three or four times. It goes without saying that I do not mean that you should study it all at once, but in the course of a few weeks.

With blessings for a speedy recovery, and awaiting good news of your physical and spiritual health,

[...]



that everything he does is the ultimate good!

In other words, in a world of *emuna* there seems to be no room for *bitachon*. If we truly believe that Hashem knows what is truly good for us and the world at large, why would we hope for our own version of good over Hashem's?

Why We Always Need Bitachon

True, we commonly think of *bitachon* as something that comes up only when one is going through a hard time. At times like that, when our regular sources of confidence seem not to be delivering, we feel the need for reassurance and want something to fall back on. However, *bitachon* is also a way of life, even when times are good. We should always ask ourselves: Do we really feel and sense Hashem's presence in our lives or are we just reading and learning about it in the books?⁹

When breaking into a home, a thief davens to Hashem that he not be caught. He believes that Hashem could help him, but does he really feel Hashem's presence? Would he be stealing if he knew Hashem was paying close attention to him?

Similarly, *bitachon* tells us that it is not enough to believe in Hashem only technically, in a removed way, without allowing the feeling to have any bearing on how we do our *avoda* and how we actually feel physically.

An example of this is the generation that left Mitzrayim and journeyed in the desert. These people witnessed with their own eyes the greatest miracles ever seen in history—the ten *makkos*, the splitting of the sea, they saw and ate the *man* from heaven—and yet

Bitachon Defined

The idea of *bitachon* as explained in the sources is that one feels reassured and convinced that Hashem will help overcome all difficulties in life, both material and spiritual, since “G-d is my light and my help.”⁶

The first work in Jewish history to elaborate on *bitachon* is Dovid Hamelech's *Sefer Tehillim*, the most popular work on the Jewish bookshelf. Throughout its chapters, we are introduced to a new approach in serving Hashem: Dovid not only davens and begs Hashem to provide for him and save him from his enemies, but he consistently follows it up by expressing utmost confidence that Hashem will surely fulfill his prayers.⁷

More than 2000 years later, Rabbeinu Bachya Ibn Pekuda authored the seminal work called the *Chovos Halelvavos*, (Duties of the Heart). For the first time, a comprehensive compilation on how a Yid should think and feel was introduced. He devoted a full chapter in his book (the 4th) to the subject of *bitachon* and since then, for close to a thousand years, it remains the most exhaustive work on the subject.

The core of the chapter comes to explain that if we would only know how much Hashem loves us and cares about us and every other creature, we would not doubt that He will be there for us and we would confidently turn to Him for everything we need.

Also discussed is Hashem's supernatural ability to come through for us no matter the situation and no matter who stands in the way.

At the same time, Hashem is also completely aware of all our needs.

Rabbeinu Bachya goes into great detail to truly bring all these points home.

He also discusses how to reconcile going to work and putting in our own effort while trusting that Hashem will ultimately take care of everything. [The Rebbe deals with this at length in *Igros Kodesh* vol. 2 p. 179 and on. See also *Likkutei Sichos* on Purim, vol. 31 p. 170.]

At the end of the chapter he goes through 10 levels of *bitachon*, the first being similar to the trust an infant has that his mother will nurse him and take care of him, and the highest level being a full-grown mature adult who fears and worries about nothing because of his trust in Hashem and his appreciation for G-dliness as well as his lack of interest in material matters.

On countless occasions, the Rebbe urges people who are struggling with *bitachon* to properly study the Shaar Habitachon of *Chovos Halelvavos*.⁸

[For further reading on *Bitachon* see *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 26, p. 95 and vol. 36, p. 1.]



Bitachon is meant to change the way you live, by not carrying all the worry and anxiety in your heart.

they tested Hashem ten times(!) to see if He was really looking out for them, and whether He really paid attention to them.

Of all people, shouldn't they have had the strongest sense of *bitachon* simply because it was so obvious?

The problem was they did not internalize these miracles and translate them to mean that Hashem is actually paying attention to every detail of their lives.

We can glean from here that having strong *bitachon* is not necessarily easier when you see open miracles, and it's not necessarily any harder for those who feel they don't see open miracles.

In truth, the Rebbe points out on several occasions, if one will stop for a moment and observe even just a few recent events in his or her life, they will easily see many examples of Hashem's incredible *hashgacha pratit* on him or her specifically, making *bitachon* an easy and obvious conclusion.¹⁰

Bitachon is not just the best way to get what you want; it is also the most truly empowering mindset you can have. And it is not just a mindset, it actually takes Hashem with you on the ride to help you accomplish your goals.

Obviously, when health issues or financial difficulties arise, *chas veshalom*, that is no doubt a stronger test of one's *bitachon* (see the letter of the Frieddiker Rebbe at the end of this article). However, *bitachon* plays a major role all day every day; it enhances the quality of everyday life, not just the moment of escaping disaster (due to one's *bitachon*), rather, it is meant to change the way you live, by not carrying all the worry and anxiety in your heart.¹¹

More than Emuna

To fully appreciate the power of *bitachon* it is important to properly understand the meaning of *emuna*.

We believe that Hashem created the world and continues to recreate it every second. Whatever happened to you one second ago was directly orchestrated by Hashem, and whatever will happen to you in the following second is also specifically planned out by Hashem.

Hashem is much smarter and has far more foresight than us. Whatever He does is right. We don't worry about what happened or what will happen because we know it is all in the hands of Hashem and He will arrange things in the way He sees best. If things go sour for us, we might not enjoy it, but we are not worried that we have been abandoned by Hashem; we know with



Think Better

P.S. You write that there is reason to argue that you should be at home during the upcoming Rosh Hashanah, even though a number of [your fellow] students will remain in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim during those auspicious days. And the reason given is that your father's health is not as it should be.

I was amazed and shocked by such a lack of trust in Hashem—so late in the month of Menachem-Av, one states as a fact, and regards as certain (G-d forbid), that in a month his father's health will not be as it ought to be, and that one therefore accepts the argument that he should invest less time in the *avoda* of davening, and so on. It would have been preferable—and more in the spirit of the teaching of our holy Rabbeim, “Think positively, and things will be positive”—to be certain that your father's health will improve, and that you will certainly be able to increase your Divine service, “the service of the heart,” as fully as required.

(Igras Kodesh, vol. 9, p. 281)



POSTSCRIPT IN THE REBBE'S
HOLY HANDWRITING,
DATED 21 ADAR 5732

אזכיר עה"צ לכ"ז. והוספה בבטחון
ושמחה (אמיתית) מלמטה - מוסיפה
בכ"ז מלמעלה כהוראת הזוה"ק (תצוה
קפד, ב): **תא חזי** אי איהו קיימא בנהירו
דאנפין מתתא כדין הכי נהרין לי'
מעילא כו' חדוה דב"נ **משיך לגבי** חדוה
אחרא עילאה.

I will mention all this [that you wrote in the letter] at the Ohel. Increasing your trust in Hashem and (true) joy on your own part from below—will bring about a similar increase [in positive energy] emanating from Above. As the Zohar instructs: “**Come and see**, if a person is in a state of illumination down here, so, too, will an illumination shine upon him from above... The joy of a person **draws down upon him** an additional higher sense of joy.

Igros kodesh vol. 27 p. 360

utmost confidence that He is behind it. And we are obviously deserving of some punishment or in need of some *kapara*.

On a higher level,¹² *emuna* is not just accepting whatever Hashem throws our way and believing that it is the *right* thing, rather that it is really a *good* thing.

Because Hashem is the ultimate good, and naturally does good, we must conclude that anything that happens to us is truly good. It is only that sometimes we cannot see *how* it is good; but it most definitely is good. And since our very existence every second is from Hashem, it must be that everything in our life is absolutely good, even if it is not always revealed as such.

But we don't have to just *believe* that it is good. We have the power to *make* it good. By truly believing that it is all good, we have the power to bring about the *revelation* of the good.

Before introducing *bitachon*, it's important to point out that the idea of not just accepting what Hashem gives us actually comes from Hashem Himself.

He clearly tells us in His Torah that even when we find ourselves in the most dire situations, when bad seems inevitable, we must beg Him for mercy that He should change the course of events. In fact, every day we are commanded to daven to Hashem for all our needs which incidentally Hashem has not yet given us...¹³

So what is the *bitachon* approach?

Bitachon is all about looking forward, it does not seek to address the past, it is not concerned with revealing the good in the current or past situation, nor does it seek to explain it.

Bitachon exercises like this:

Person: Hashem made it bad for me yesterday, an hour ago, a minute ago, wasn't it for a reason, a good reason?

Bitachon responds:

Step 1: Stop thinking about that, look forward not back.

Step 2: Stop worrying about the future or even the next minute. Hashem is with you and taking care of you.

Step 3: Think only about the *next* moment and hope and pray and be confident that it will surely be 100% good.¹⁴

But what happens when we do not merit to see the results? The next moment comes and the revealed good is not yet manifest. How do we reconcile this with this that Hashem is only good?

Here we fall back on *emuna*. We need to reveal Hashem's good so that we can see it and feel it as well. By having strong *emuna* that only good comes from Hashem, we reveal the concealed good.¹⁵

We Sit At the Controls!

While it is true that Hashem is with us, and He knows everything we need, and He naturally does good, the “natural” conclusion is that He will provide all the good that we need from Him.

We must keep in mind that Hashem's natural goodness is sometimes not apparent and requires our display of confidence to “bring it down” into our physical life. Based on how solid your *bitachon* is, that is how solidly Hashem will come through for you.

This was experienced first hand in the *Midbar* with the *man*: There were those Jews who lacked in their *bitachon* that Hashem would provide for them, and for them, Hashem in turn did not adequately provide. Instead they had to go out to the field and collect the *man*, which they would then grind up and prepare for consumption.

Then there were those who had stronger *bitachon* but not complete. They had to go out and collect but they did not need to prepare it. Lastly, those who had absolute *bitachon* that the *man* would fall the next day, received their *man* right on their doorstep, ready to eat.

The same is true today with our *parnassa*—the stronger our *bitachon* the more of the work Hashem will do.

This is illustrated by a story the Rebbe repeated many times:¹⁶

The Baal Shem Tov once was in need of money so he went over to the home of one of his Chassidim and knocked on the door, announcing how much money he needs, and walked away without even waiting for the homeowner to answer. Soon after, the Chossid came chasing the Baal Shem Tov with the money in hand.

The Baal Shem Tov later explained that his *bitachon* was so strong, he was sure that just knocking on the door alone was already enough effort on his part and Hashem would do the rest.

The lesson for us is not that we should decrease the work we do. The Rebbe points out that those who are not on the level of the Baal Shem Tov need to do more than just announce how much money they need. Rather we learn from here that the stronger the mindset of *bitachon*, the greater the results.

What about someone who continuously and repeatedly gets in their own way? Can one just count on having *bitachon* that everything will be great? Isn't it expected that one will suffer at least some of the consequences of their actions?

The Alter Rebbe addresses a similar sentiment in *Igeres Hateshuva*: There are those who wonder if Hashem will really forgive them for a sin they commit repeatedly every day and every year.

The Alter Rebbe explains that Hashem's mercy and forgiveness are unlimited, hence the question of repetitious sins is not relevant when it comes to the Creator of the world.

[However, we do need to express remorse and ask for forgiveness.

In G-d we Trust

Bitachon is very important for non-Jews to adopt as well, as is evidenced from the story of Yonah: Hashem told him to go to Nineveh, a city of non-Jews, and rebuke them. The intended result was that they do *teshuva* and then daven that they not be destroyed. This form of prayer, asking Hashem to change His mind and spare us, is only possible with *bitachon* as explained above.²⁰

But how do I know I am truly and sincerely asking for forgiveness? Maybe I just don't want to suffer the consequences of my actions and wrongdoings?

In Igeres Hateshuva (*Mahadurah Kama*) the Alter Rebbe dismisses this concern, pinning it as an evil plot of the *yetzer hara* to make the person feel depressed and despondent.]

In the same vein: If we find ourselves in a tough situation spiritually or physically and it is already after the fact, we need to understand and appreciate that this was ultimately Hashem's doing. He personally oversaw our descent.

Why would Hashem be interested in the descent of a Yid?

The same question could be asked about why Hashem would create such a lowly world when there are so many more spiritual ones. The reason is that it is a "רידה צורך עליה"—a descent for the purpose of an elevation.

So when you realize how dire your situation is, by exercising the proper faith, you can dictate that there is a great ascent to follow. There are only two options: Either Hashem was not with you on your descent—which is blatant heresy, or Hashem was indeed with you on your descent in which case it is part of a plan for a much greater ascent.¹⁷

Spiritual or Medical?

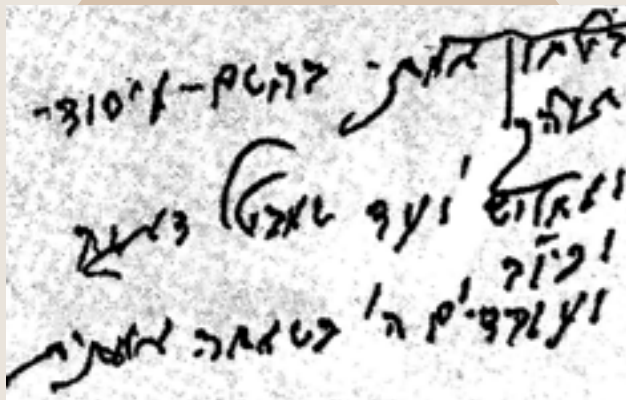
How is someone with *bitachon* different from a regular non-believer who has confidence that he will live long, be strong, and succeed in all his endeavors? Is *bitachon* merely a form of Jewish therapy for those who have anxiety or lack confidence?

The Rebbe teaches us that in most cases, and for most people; these issues could be traced back to a lack of trust in Hashem.

On more than one occasion, when a person wrote to the Rebbe about being diagnosed with anxiety, depression or the like, the Rebbe specifically says, "I prefer to refer to this as a lack of *bitachon* in Hashem."¹⁸

This is well understood based on the Rebbe's stance on many occasions that the health of the body is dependent on the health of the *neshama*. This is true for

What about someone who continuously and repeatedly gets in their own way? Can one just count on having *bitachon* that everything will be great?



בטחון אמתי בהשם - מיסודי תוה"ק,
ומחליש ועד שמבטל דאגה וכיו"ב,
ועובדים ה' בשמחה אמיתית

True *bitachon* in Hashem is one of the foundations of our holy Torah, and it diminishes until it annihilates [any] worry etc. [and allows a person] to serve Hashem with true *simcha*.

all of mankind.¹⁹ In this case, true and healthy confidence is only one that is built on trust in Hashem.

Tips for Bitachon - Mind Control

Naturally when things are good, most people trust that the good times will continue. Specifically when things are tough is when we wonder if it will ever get better or how we can get out of this situation or, better yet, change the situation.

Torah says that when a Yid is fighting as a soldier in battle and he sees the mighty enemy armies, he should not fear them at all. If he does, he is transgressing a *lav*. How could the Torah expect a person not to experience a natural human reaction?

The Rambam and the Tzemach Tzedek both explain that a person has the ability not to think about his fears, but instead to focus on the battle at hand.²¹

When All Else Fails

Here is an excerpt from a letter of the Frieddiker Rebbe, published by the Rebbe in a footnote to Likkutei Sichos (vol. 3 p. 883), describing the truest form of *bitachon*:

“Perfect trust in Hashem [means trusting] even when there is no apparent source from which one’s assistance can come. To refer to a common expression, when a person is sinking in the sea, Heaven forbid, he will grab even a straw to try and save himself.

“As long as there is a straw to grab onto, i.e., there is a shadow of an expectation of salvation within the material world, [this does not call for] perfect faith in Hashem. Instead, when there is a shadow of an expectation, the term hope, *tikvah* in Hebrew, is appropriate, as reflected by the phrase (Yehoshua 2:18): “thread (*tikvas*) of scarlet cord.”

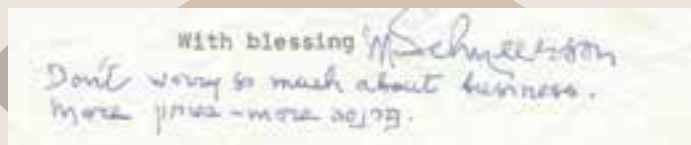
“The scarlet cord was the sign given for Rachav’s home. This sign notified the Jewish soldiers to save the members of this household, and it was called a ‘thread of scarlet cord.’

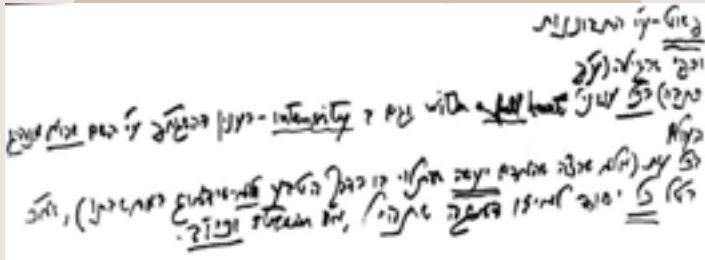
“[Why this name? On one hand,] the sign was visible, but it was subject to different hazards: The thread could snap; it could be blown away, or something else could happen. There was, however, the *tikvah*, hope, that everything would be well, and the scarlet cord would remain in its place.

“For the word “hope” refers to a [redeeming] factor within this world, [be it as unlikely a chance as] a straw clutched by a drowning man. *Bitachon*, trust,

POSTSCRIPT IN THE REBBE'S
HOLY HANDWRITING ON A
LETTER TO REB ZALMON JAFFE,
DATED 26 NISSAN 5724

Don't worry so much about business.
More בטחון - more פרונסה.





פשוט - ע"י [=על ידי] התבוננות וכפי שרגילה (ע"פ [=על פי] כתבה) **בכל** עניני' with a full heart וגם **intensity** - בענין השגח"פ [=דהשגחה פרטית] ע"י [=על ידי] השם **שהוא** מנהיג העולם בכל עת (אלא שרצה שהאדם יעשה התלוי בו בדרך הטבע **ולא** - שידאוג במחשבתו), וא"כ [=ואם כן] בטל כל יסוד לאיזו דאגה שתהי', או **strain וכיו"ב** [=וכיוצא בזה].

[The solution is] **simple**: By contemplating, with a full heart and with **intensity**, as you usually do with all your undertakings (according to your letter), into the concept of *hashgacha pratit* by Hashem, who is the leader of the entire world at all times. (Hashem only wants that a person should do what they can within the means of nature [to rectify a troubling situation]. **Not**—that they should have worry in their minds.)

With this, there is no longer any cause for worry at all, or any strain and the like.

Igros kodesh vol. 28 p. 351

by contrast, applies in a situation when there is not even a shadow of hope for a person to be saved, not even a straw to grab onto, and still he trusts in Hashem.

“Moreover, even when a person trusts in Hashem, but his soul is bitter and he is depressed, and his countenance bears witness to unexpressed grief, he is not expressing complete trust in Hashem as taught by our master, the Baal Shem Tov. For when a person trusts in Hashem with complete *bitachon*, even when his situation is not good, or bad, Heaven forbid, it does not affect his heart, nor does it cause him sorrow or gloom. He does everything possible according to the Torah's [guidelines] and [those of] human wisdom, and then he trusts in Hashem, without having a shadow of doubt that Hashem will help him. For Hashem's providence encompasses every single creation.

“All of our affairs, even our slightest movements, are controlled by Divine Providence. [Indeed,] it is His Providence that grants life and power to every living being in the heavens and the earth.” **T**

1. Toras Menachem vol. 22 p. 46.
2. Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 1, p. 386
3. Igros Kodesh vol. 23 p. 38, vol. 18 p. 408
4. Igros Kodesh vol. 22 p. 81, vol. 25 p. 136, 256.
5. Ibid. vol. 10 p. 134
6. Tehillim 27:1.
7. See Biurei Hazohar from the Tzemach Tzedek vol. 1, p. 190.
8. See for example Igros Kodesh vol. 4, p. 319. vol. 11, p. 162. vol. 21, p. 131. vol. 31 p. 275.
9. Igros Kodesh vol. 6, p. 147.
10. Ibid. 5748 vol. 1 p. 490.
11. Likkutei Sichos vol. 9 p. 491-492. Igros Kodesh vol. 4 p. 256. 467.
12. Igeres Hakodesh siman 11.
13. Toras Menachem 5745 vol. 5 p. 2719. Igros Kodesh vol. 9 p. 281.
14. Ibid. vol. 1 p. 619.
15. Tanya Igeres Hakodesh ch. 11. Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, p. 284, vol. 3 p. 883.
16. See for example Sichos Kodesh 5734 vol. 2, p. 336. Likkutei Sichos vol. 5, p. 344. Toras Menachem 5747 Vol. 1 P. 290.
17. Sefer Hamaamarim 5735 p. 292.
18. Igros Kodesh V. 10 P. 133.
19. Likkutei Sichos vol. 6 p. 326.
20. Toras Menachem 5745 vol. 5 p. 2721-2722.
21. Toras Menachem 5742 vol. 1 p. 325. Igros kodesh vol. 11 p. 162.