

The Ten Major Benefits of Bitachon

As explained in the introduction to Chovos Halvavos Shaar Habitachon

Having bitachon in Hashem has many major and priceless benefits, both in spiritual and material matters. Chovos Halevavos highlights 10 benefits. The first 5 are spiritually focused, while the last 5 are material focused.

Knowing them is not enough; internalizing them is a must.

Realize, Recognize, Internalize.

1) You will feel calm and secure

You will feel completely calm and secure like a servant who relies only on his master. Therefore, You will be a true servant of Hashem. You will experience personal Divine providence (*Hashgacha Pratis*) throughout your life, and you will feel attached to Hashem. When a person doesn't rely on Hashem in all areas of his life, he will automatically be relying on someone or something else and will get stuck in it, and will be blinded from Divine providence.

2) No need to flatter or fear anyone

Because you are a servant only of Hashem, you will not need to serve anyone else. You therefore won't flatter or be scared of anyone, even if they are very powerful. You won't wait for their aid or assistance because you rely on Hashem and understand that only Hashem can help you, through many messengers.

3) Free from money worries: Better off than the richest man, in 10 ways

You will be better off than a modern-time alchemist who can turn metal into gold (essentially print money) in 10 ways:

1) An alchemist needs metal or won't have money. 2) An alchemist is worried about health problems caused by his occupation. 3) An alchemist is lonely because he fears exposure to his secrets. 4) An alchemist is constantly anxious that people will steal his money, or he will lose it. 5) An alchemist fears all people because anyone can expose him. 6) An alchemist is not protected from random illness unrelated to his occupation. 7) An alchemist is not assured of having food to eat even with all his money. 8) An alchemist is always on the run. 9) An alchemist lives without purpose because he has no afterlife. 10) An alchemist doesn't contribute to society and will get killed when caught.

4) Grateful when rich, poor, or middle class

You will be grateful, no matter how much money you have. You will recognize the opportunities of each financial status.

5) No arrogance, envy, or jealousy

You won't be affected negatively by becoming wealthy, or, from losing your wealth.

6) No stress from worldly desires

While doing your *Hishtadlis*, you will be free from stress caused by not attaining your desired results. Because you will realize that your efforts cannot bring any result, only Hashem 'can and will' bring the results that are best for you. Success won't get to your head, and failure won't get to your heart.

7) No need to travel far to earn your livelihood

You won't need to go on business trips that are harmful to your body or soul.

8) No need to seek employment that is corrupt, dangerous, or draining

You won't need to accept business offers that are dangerous, illegal, corrupt, or emotionally draining. Even if they come with a handsome salary. Because you will recognize that engaging in such work cannot earn you an extra penny.

9) Always relaxed about business matters, even when suffering setbacks

You will always be relaxed and sleep well at night, even when suffering a major loss or setback in your business.

10) Happy and content in every situation

You will always be content, because you will recognize that Hashem who is in complete control of all happenings only does what is best for you, at the exact time and exact place that it's best for you.

The Seven Qualities of Trust

As explained in Chovos Halvavos Shaar Habitachon, Chapters 2 and 3

Logically, there are 7 qualities needed in order to completely trust 'anyone or anything' to the level where you can have complete peace of mind in all areas of your life, knowing that all your needs will be fully taken care of.

These 7 qualities are not found in any human being but all of them are found in Hashem
G-d's Glorifying Greatness

1) Hashem is all-loving, compassionate and caring towards you

When we witness compassion, care, and love in a human being, we are witnessing Hashem's love, manifested through a human being, which means it's merely a tiny reflection of Hashem's compassion towards us. Ultimately, we can't even fathom the extreme level of love Hashem has for us. We get to taste it here and there, and when we rely on him.

2) Hashem is all-knowing of what your real problems are and how to help you with them

Imagine having a major problem, who would you call? Obviously, only someone who loves you and cares about you, but that isn't enough, because if they don't know your real underlying problem, they will be helping you solve the wrong problem. And if they don't know how to fix the problem then there is little they can do to help you. But only Hashem is all-knowing and knows what's truly best for you and knows HOW to fix your problem.

3) Hashem is all-powerful and nothing can stand in his way to help you

Let's say you can find someone who loves you, knows your underlying problems, and knows how to fix them for you. But what if he doesn't have the power to do what it takes to help you, you'll again stay stuck with the problem. Therefore, we obviously need someone who is all-powerful and can do whatever it takes to help us.

4) Hashem is fully focused on your needs 24/7/365

Let's say you found someone who loves you, knows everything, and is extremely powerful, but what happens if they are too busy for you because they are dealing with their own problems? You'll again be stuck! Therefore, they need to be fully focused on you all the time, and we only find that in Hashem, as it says *Hineh Lo Yanim V'lo Yishion Shomer Yisroel*. You can rely on him for everything, even the tiny things like finding your shoes. Because He is ALWAYS focused on you and your needs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year.

5) Hashem is all-in-control over you, no one can help or harm you without his approval

In order to fully 'let go' and be able to rely on someone, they need to actually be in full control of you because if not, someone else can hurt you. But Hashem and only Hashem is ALL in control of us, to the level where NO ONE (including ourselves) can help or harm us without his permission.

6) Hashem is all-kind and good-hearted even to the undeserving

Even if you miraculously find someone with all of the above traits, you still cannot have complete peace of mind because if at any point you become undeserving of their help, they will drop you like a hot potato. But Hashem and ONLY HASHEM is unfailingly kind and good-hearted to all his creations, EVEN the undeserving. Therefore, we can ask him for anything at any time, even for something HUGE that we feel we don't deserve.

7) Hashem is completely credible

Even if you miraculously find someone with all the above traits, they need to be credible in order to be fully trusted that they will actually take care of you and not drop you, out of the blue! But Hashem has complete credibility, because he managed all your affairs from the beginning of your existence up until now. He fed you in your mother's womb even though no one was able to get to you. He gave you everything, including eyesight to read this paper. And remember, Hashem runs the world with a 'cause and effect system' in which his master plan is concealed. But knowing all of the above allows us to logically 'let go', surrender to him, and completely rely on him!

The Five Foundations of Bitachon

As explained in Chovos Halvavos Shaar Habitachon Chapter 3

To have complete bitachon in Hashem and thereby experience complete peace of mind and true inner happiness in all areas of our lives, Chovos Halvavos tells us that we need to internalize 5 foundational principles.

Knowing them is not enough; internalizing them is a must.

Realize, Recognize, Internalize.

1) Hashem alone possesses the 7 qualities of trust

Hashem and only Hashem cares for you, is compassionate towards you, and loves you, completely. He knows all your problems and knows how to solve them. He is all-powerful, and no one and nothing can stand in his way to help you. He is fully focused on your needs 24/7/365. He is all in control over you and everything that happens to you. He is all kind to you and He is completely credible because he always did and always will manage all your affairs. Only a fraction of some of these qualities can be found in human beings, but human beings receive their qualities from Hashem.

2) Hashem knows your innermost thoughts

Hashem and only Hashem observes your innermost thoughts and therefore knows if your reliance on him is genuine or not. You may be able to fool yourself but you can never fool Him.

3) Bitachon must be exclusive on Hashem

Relying on Hashem and another entity like a doctor, a philanthropist, or even your own talents or wisdom, undermines bitachon and is a reason to be met with failure. We must view someone who helps us as a messenger from Hashem.

4) Make a big effort to do Hashem's will

Bitachon is for everyone, even for sinners. But one must make a big effort to do the will of Hashem in order to have complete bitachon. Because Hashem clearly said that those who go against him, will be punished.

5) Make an effort to obtain your needs (*hishtadlis*) while keeping the correct attitude

Hashem carries out his will on this world in a concealed manner, through a cause-and-effect system, that is extremely blurry and vague to human beings. Sometimes parts of it become clear when one witnesses *Hashgacha Pratis*. Hashem wants us to make use of the cause and effect system by engaging in *hishtadlis*, in order to obtain our needs. When we engage in *hishtadlis* we should have the correct attitude and mindset which is that our efforts can not achieve any result. It only looks like it can but in essence it is Hashem that runs nature and achieves the necessary results for us. The only thing we can do is 'decide' and 'choose' to do something, known as *bechirah*. But actually accomplishing something can only happen if Hashem allows it to happen. Sometimes we make an effort in a certain area and we receive results miraculously from a totally different area that we haven't even invested effort in. Other times we invest effort in a specific area and get the result from that same area, and when this happens we must thank Hashem extra for the feeling of fulfillment because people feel good when they work for something. We should also constantly seek to make efforts that are best suited to our unique capabilities and remember we are fulfilling the will of Hashem by exerting ourselves and doing *hishtadlis* with this correct attitude and mindset.

The Seven Areas of Bitachon

As explained in Chovos Halvavos Shaar Habitachon Chapter 4

How does hishtadlis and bitachon interplay practically in our everyday lives?

Chovos Halvavos walks us through 7 primary areas of our existence, and how to practice true bitachon there.

Mastering Bitachon Takes Constant Practice

Realize, Recognize, Internalize.

1) Bitachon balance regarding basic needs (earning a living, life, health).

We should invest effort to earn a living, to care for our life, by not putting ourselves in danger, and to take care of our physical, emotional, and mental health while internalizing that our efforts **can't** produce results. We should invest the normal amount of effort because that is the will of Hashem, so we grow in this world. Our basic needs are guaranteed as long as Hashem decides to give us life, but when basic needs seem lacking, we should rely on Hashem, trust Him, and be completely confident that He is giving us exactly what is good for us, at the exact time that it's good for us. When we seemingly earn fruits from our labor, we should thank Hashem extra for the special feeling of fulfillment.

2) Bitachon balance regarding extras (luxuries, desires, amassing wealth).

A person should not invest effort to obtain wealth, because if he has *bitachon* in Hashem and it is ordained for him, it will come to him without lifting a finger. If it isn't ordained for him, it won't come even if he and everyone he knows toils around the clock to get it. Wealth is a test that is very hard to pass due to 3 common mistakes. 1) Assuming that because others depend on us for their income, we can get it unethically. 2) Assuming all our extra money is meant for us to enjoy. 3) Expecting recognition, praise, and fake honor for our philanthropy. When a person suffers from financial difficulties or isn't satisfied with their employment, they should internalize that the same Hashem who took care of me in my mother's womb is taking care now as well, giving me a custom-tailored situation that is best for me right now.

3) Bitachon balance regarding social challenges (marriage, chinuch, family, friends, enemies, feeling alone).

Being alone has benefits of not being burdened by others and therefore being able to connect to Hashem on a higher level, because a Yid is never truly alone. A person who has family should do *hishtadlis* to take care of them generously and graciously without feeling burdened or bearing a grudge toward them. We should trust, rely on, and be completely confident in Hashem that the time, money, and energy spent on them won't make us lose anything, but gain immense goodness in this world and in the next. A person should ask others for help when needed, and help people when suitable, while internalizing that no human can help another, only if Hashem allows them to be a messenger. Appreciation or disappointment should be channeled only to Hashem, and know that while the *hishtadlis* is necessary, the result will only happen if Hashem allows. When confronted with an enemy or adversary, internalize that they are just a messenger and can't actually harm you, so respond to them in kind, understand that your Hashem is doing this for your best, and repent for your sins that may be causing this. Accepting it with love is, in and of itself, a sin cleanser.

The Seven Areas of Bitachon

As explained in Chovos Halvavos Shaar Habitachon Chapter 4

Part 2

4) Bitachon balance regarding *bechirah*, and fulfilling *mitzvahs* - that don't involve others

Hashem gave us the control to choose between good and bad, known as *bechirah*. A person **can't** have *bitachon* to choose. But we can have *bitachon* (which includes davening) that our intent should stay strong and that the result of our choice should be completed successfully. Because a result is completely out of our control. Davening is a function of *bitachon*, and we can daven to keep our choice strong to complete the *mitzvah*, but we must make the choice. *Bitachon* in spiritual matters is different than *bitachon* for material matters because 1) For material matters, we don't usually know which choice is the good one, while for spiritual matters, the Torah tells us the right choice. 2) With material matters, it isn't always clear that what looks good to us is actually good, but with spiritual matters, whatever the Torah tells us is good will always be good.

5) Bitachon balance regarding fulfilling *mitzvahs* - that involve others

We should choose to do the first two steps (just like the previous category) but in this category because it involves other people, we should also choose to make our utmost effort to keep the deeds as private as possible, so we don't end up doing it for the sake of honor, to flatter others, or for personal gain. **Because then you are putting your trust in yourself, to benefit yourself.** When it will inspire others to follow suit, or, when you can't keep it private, you may publicize it, but be extra careful to do it with purity for the sake of heaven, and to remember that no one has the power to help or harm you. Daven and have *bitachon* in Hashem to successfully pull through with the *Mitzvah*. A *mitzvah* is more than a commandment; in essence, it is a tool to connect to Hashem, which provides us with light in the darkness. In Aramaic, the word *Mitzvah* stems from the word *Tzavta*, which means "connection".

6) Bitachon balance regarding the reward for *mitzvahs*

Part of having *bitachon* in Hashem is trusting, relying, and being completely confident that every *mitzvah* we perform will be rewarded with goodness, and every sin will be accounted for with punishment. We cannot rely on the reward or do the *mitzvah* for the reward. Because the reward we will be getting is not because Hashem owes it to us (because just being able to serve the Creator of the world is a priceless gift on top of so many other priceless gifts that we already don't deserve), but simply because **Hashem said he will give it to us.** And it comes to us as a great undeserved kindness. We should recognize the extreme kindness that Hashem is constantly showering us with, and always thank Hashem for it authentically and mindfully while trying to **feel** the appreciation.

7) Bitachon balance regarding the supreme goodness of the world to come

The supreme goodness of the world to come, an extra reward above all rewards for *mitzvahs*, is reserved for those who 1) Accept pain with steadfast love for Hashem. 2) Teach others how to properly serve Hashem. 3) View the service of Hashem as sweet and easy to perform in their eyes. Having *bitachon* that one will receive such reward without doing the above *hishtadlis* is **fake bitachon**. Proper *bitachon* in this area is to work on ourselves consistently to reach these levels one step at a time with honesty and purity, while trusting and relying with complete confidence in Hashem that every ounce of effort will be noticed and extremely worthwhile.

The Ten Levels of Bitachon Perception

As explained in Chovos Halvavos Shaar Habitachon Chapter 7

Experiencing bitachon in Hashem has levels that are based on a person's perception of understanding and appreciating Hashem's infinite qualities, and how He runs the world.

Knowing them is not enough; internalizing them is a must.

Realize, Recognize, Internalize.

1) Calm like a newborn baby

A newborn baby is completely calm after being fed, because he knows the bottle will be there when he's hungry again. But the baby doesn't realize that someone is behind the bottle, giving it to him and taking care of all his other needs, because his perception is still very low. So too a person can be calm because of believing an 'object' can help him.

2) Calm like a child

As the child's perception grows, he realizes that a loving mother is behind the bottle, who cares for him constantly. So he begins to rely on his Mother. So too, a person can foolishly rely on their caretaker and be calm because of it.

3) Calm like a teenager

As the child grows up and sees his mother relying on his father for support, he starts relying on his father, and therefore feels calm. So too, a person can foolishly rely on whom his caretaker is relying on.

4) Calm like a successful freelancer

At some point, the child realizes that he can go out to work himself and make money, so he no longer needs to rely on his father and starts relying on his own powers. So too, a person can rely on himself and feel calm, foolishly.

5) Calm like an owner of a profitable business, or a well-paid employee

When the young adult realizes that he can't be calm by relying on himself, he may start relying on other people whom he feels can help him, like customers, clients, powerful or rich people, etc. So too, a person can foolishly be calm by relying on public officials, powerful people, philanthropists, or even customers or clients.

6) Calm in crisis, when there is nothing to do

Eventually, the person will realize that even powerful and wealthy people were unreliable and failed to help him when he was in a crisis, so he is now realizing that there is a G-d who is all in control. But he only realizes it when there is no one else to turn to. This is the first and lowest level of bitachon in Hashem.

7) Calm in crisis, even when there is stuff to do

As his perception grows, he will realize that all his efforts can only work if Hashem allows them to. He will therefore realize that his strategies and efforts are a waste of time without Hashem. This is the 2nd level of bitachon in Hashem.

8) Calm and works to serve Hashem

As his perception grows, he will realize that Hashem wants him to work hard and smart, so he can stay away from sin, and make the right choices as challenges come up, while internalizing that it isn't his work that can bring results. So he will go to work and run his life with full motivation as a servant of Hashem to fulfill the mitzvahs of hishtadlis.

9) Calm and happy, accepts Hashem's will as his own "with love and joy".

Doing the same as level 8 but doing it with love and joy, even when suffering immense pain like poverty or illness etc. because he realizes that only Hashem knows and does what is best for him. So if he would know he would choose the same exact thing for himself. So he surrenders his knowledge of what is good for him and fully trusts Hashem.

10) Clings to Hashem, delights in Hashem, and does everything only to draw close to Hashem

This level includes levels 8 and 9, but his joy in this world is only delighting in Hashem. He therefore despises physical pleasures that pull him away from clinging to Hashem. He thinks of Hashem and feels His presence constantly.