

Perhaps the greatest impediment to true *Bitachon* is the confusion regarding the divergent roles of *hashgachah*, *mazel*, and *hishtadlus* in our success.

One of the earliest *Acharonim*, the *Bal Ha'Akeidah*, sums up the role played by each of the aforementioned rules through which Hashem runs His world as follows:

- 1) One who is born with a good *mazel* A) If he also performs good deeds the *Hashgachah* will definitely strengthen his good *mazel*, and with barely any effort he will succeed. B) If he is wicked his *mazel* as well as any amount of effort he may invest may fail as punishment for his actions. C) If he is a “*beinoni*” (on an intermediate level, neither wicked nor pious) then his good deeds alone will not suffice to grant him success without the addition of proper *hishtadlus* which, combined with his good *mazel*, will grant him success.
- 2) One who is born under a bad or intermediate level of *mazel*: If his actions are exceptionally good, even though his deeds will suffice to negate his bad *mazel* this will only happen in conjunction with proper *hishtadlus*.
- 3) One who is a “*beinoni*” and all the more so if he is on a lower level, must perform a full measure of *hishtadlus* and if he doesn't he will fail.

Based on the above, the *Bal HaAkeidah* advises: Everyone should assume they are a “*beinoni*” with a weak *mazel* in which case they must strengthen themselves to constantly find favor in Hashem's eyes. They should perform all necessary *hishtadlus* but with *Bitachon* that Hashem will grant them success through their *hishtadlus*, and that if Hashem doesn't decree that they will succeed, all the *hishtadlus* in the world will not help them. If they then do all that is within their power, usually they will succeed. However, if they don't do their *hishtadlus* they may fail even without it having originally been decreed, for perhaps Hashem had decreed for them to succeed only through their *hishtadlus*. (*Akeidas Yitzchak, Beraishis 26:1*)

It should be noted, as we have mentioned many times, the *Rishonim* and *Acharonim* tell us that the merit of *Bitachon* alone is so great as to be able to decide one's fate despite one's lack of *mazel* or good deeds. As Rabbeinu Bachayah (*Kad HaKemach, Bitachon*) writes: *One who trusts in Hashem will triumph over his troubles in the merit of his trusting Hashem, even when he deserves the trouble that has befallen him....*

Established By:



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