



## DON'T LET YOUR HISHTADLUS MESS YOU UP



## WHY DIDN'T YEHOOSHUA LIVE TEN MORE YEARS

The Midyanim were a nation that got involved in a war with Klal Yisrael for no reason. They weren't threatened; they weren't challenged. Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu to take care of them, and "Achar," afterwards, "tei'aseif el amecha"—you shall leave this world.

So there's an interesting Midrash on this week's parsha about the passuk in Yehoshua (1:5): "כאשר הייתי עם משה - Like I was with Moshe, I will be with you," so said Hashem to Yehoshua.

Now, when Hashem told him that "I will be with you like I was with Moshe," it means, "I will be with you for as long as I was with Moshe." But we know it's not like that. Yehoshua lived 110 years. Moshe Rabbeinu lived 120 years. So Chazal tell us Yehoshua should also have lived 120 years (Bamidbar Rabbah 22:5).

*V'lama*, why was his life shortened by 10 years? Now listen to this interesting Midrash (Ibid.). The Midrash says on the passuk, בשעה שאמר הקדוש ברוך הוא למשה, נקום נקמת בני ישראל מאת המדינים: When Hakadosh Baruch Hu told Moshe, "Take *nekama* from the Midyanim, and afterwards you will die," Chazal tell us, "*af al pi*," even though Moshe Rabbeinu was told clearly that by doing battle with the Midyanim, his life as he knew it till that day would be terminated and he would have to move on, still and all, "*lo i'cher davar*"; he didn't delay at all. "*Ela nizdareiz*"—rather, he went with alacrity, with *zerizus*—and "*vayishlach osam Moshe*"; Moshe sent them to battle.

But Yehoshua, the talmid, did not emulate his rebbi when it came to this behavior. What happened to Yehoshua? When it came to doing battle with the thirty-one kings in Eretz Canaan, "*Amar*," Yehoshua said, "If I rush into battle and I kill them immediately, 'miyad ani meis,' my mission is going to be complete, and I will die immediately, '*k'sheim*,' just like Moshe Rabbeinu did. As soon as Moshe finished his mission in the battle with the Midyanim, it was over."

"*Mah asah*," so what did Yehoshua do? "*Hischil m'akeiv b'milchamto*." He started delaying the battle, "*shene'emar*," like the passuk says, "עשה יהושע את כל המלכים האלה מלחמה - ימים רבים - many days -" Yehoshua battled these kings for a long time.

Instead of waging the war as fast as possible, *bizrizus*, he spent many days, *yamim rabim*, by choice. Yamim rabim.

"אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא - Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to him: *V'kach asisa*?" That's what you did to lengthen your days? "הרי אני מקצר שנותיך עשר שנים - I'm going to shorten your life by ten years."

Could you imagine that? There's nothing more that a person wants than to prolong his life. To prolong one's life, a person will pay any amount of money—anything. The most valuable thing to a person is his own life.

Yet with Yehoshua, Hashem held it against him that he tried to manipulate the situation. He was an *eved ne'eman*, a *talmid masur* to Moshe Rabbeinu. But he tried to take the war a little slowly so he could live a little longer. Would we have ever thought that was a *tayna*? No. I wouldn't have thought it was a *tayna*. I would have thought that was a wise move. And Hashem says, "Because of that move, I'm going to shorten your life by ten years." Isn't that frightening?

What do we learn from here? This is teaching us something. A person makes his hishtadlus; he puts in his effort. There's nothing more a person would be mishtadel for than to prolong his life. Moshe Rabbeinu knew—Hashem told him clearly—that his life was going to be terminated when the milchemes Midyan would end. Hashem said clearly, "אחר תאסף אל עמך"; you're going back home, you're coming back upstairs. And still and all, he hurried; he didn't walk, he ran to be *mekayem* the *tzivui* of Hashem Yisbarach. You know what happened? He didn't lose a thing. He was destined to live a hundred and twenty years, and that's what he lived.

Yehoshua, on the other hand, tried to make his own personal hishtadlus to lengthen his days. He tried to lengthen his life. Who wouldn't do that? But he had a rebbi, and his rebbi showed him that you don't lose by following the dictates of Hashem, even *b'zrizus*—even if you know your life is dependent on that. You won't be short-changed by even one moment from what's coming to you. But he tried to make the extra hishtadlus to orchestrate that he should live a little longer. And what was the end? His life was shortened by ten years.

Many times, people take steps to manipulate a situation. They try to control the situation so that, to their minds, if they'll do this and they'll do that, it will hurry something up. I see this in shidduchim very much. I see there are many people who are waiting for a shidduch, or I see many people waiting for a child.

### COMPLAINING MAKES IT WORSE

The waiting game, for both of those people, is a very unpleasant game. It's not a fun game. But the question a person has to ask himself is: Do you really think that you can control when your shidduch is going to come? Do you think for one second that if you complain, it will make things happen your way? And a lot of people are mis'oninim; they complain: "It's got to come already. It's got to come. I can't wait anymore. I just can't wait anymore. I can't wait anymore."

Not only does that not help even the tiniest bit—not a *ki-hu-ze*—but you know what? They have to think that every time they say that, Hashem just pushed the marker a little further down the road. Okay, one more day. Complained twice today? Another two days.

Complained again? Another three days. What if you call your mommy? People do that: call their mother. You're better off talking to a wall. You know why? Because if you talk to a wall, you know you're talking to Hashem. If you talk to your mother...do you think your mother can help you? "Mother, I can't; I just can't handle it anymore." So what does your mother say? "I'll try my best, my *ziese kind*. I'll make some more phone calls for you. I'll put a sign up in Evergreen: my son's looking for a shidduch. Maybe I'll put a sign in the back of my car: seeking a shidduch for my son who's desperate, or my daughter who's desperate." That is not going to help you. The only thing that's going to help you is if you train yourself to be *mevateil* your *ratzon* to Hashem.

Now everybody who's in that situation asks the same question: Isn't it normal? Yeah, it's normal. People dig a bigger hole for themselves. If there's a little hole in the ground, the stupidest thing you can do is to dig it and make it deeper. You should try to get some dirt to put in the hole and shorten the hole, not to make the hole bigger.

### ALIGN YOUR HISHTADLUS WITH HASHEM

We understand—everybody understands—that somebody waiting for a child is in a very, very tough challenge. And there's nothing in the world that you can do to make that child come beforehand unless you connect with Hashem.

I once met a person. I was in another state, and I gave a class. The next day, I was taking a walk in that city, and I saw this huge monster truck coming down the street, making a lot of noise, and I heard those squeaky brakes braking.

I looked up, and the driver went like this to me—waved. I looked; I kept on walking. He beeped his horn. He said, "Yeah, I want to talk to you."

I said, "What would you like?" I had to climb up in that truck. He said, "Could you come for a minute?" I didn't know if he was Jewish or not. He didn't look Jewish to me. And he said to me, "I was at your speech last night. You think maybe you could help me?" I said, "What do you need help for?" He said, "We have no kids." "I feel bad for you," I said. He didn't look like an old man. And I said, "Well, what are you doing to make yourself have kids?"

He said, "We already made interventions. We're going to spend our two hundred thousand dollars on an attempt to have a kid." I said, "Wow, that's a lot of money. That's a lot of treatments. That's a lot of tries." He said, "Yes, we're getting ready for our next one." I told him, "My dear friend, don't waste your money anymore. It's not going to help you. You've got to first align yourself with Hashem. Do something to make Hashem want to give you a child." The person said, "What's that?" I said, "I would suggest that you keep the laws of family purity very strong." "Oh, we do keep those laws."

I said, "If you do, you don't keep them very strong. You don't look like a very knowledgeable person, and I'm going to assume your wife doesn't have much more knowledge than you." I said, "How old are you?" He told me he was like 37. I said, "Tell your wife to go to a Rebbetzin—a good Rebbetzin—immediately, and have her teach

her the laws about family purity, and she should accept it upon herself to do it. That'll be the biggest *zechus* from the Torah, from Hashem's perspective, for you to have a kid."

He said, "Okay, I hear you." I got out of the truck, and before I closed the door, I looked up at the guy. "By the way, how old's your wife?" He said, "Forty-three." I said, "Oh no, forty-three is a little old; most people don't have kids at forty-three anymore."

I said, "But do you know what? The Torah doesn't say an age. So you do the halachos." I stayed in that city for about two weeks. The day before I left, there was a knock on the door of the house where I was staying. My host went to open the door, and the host said, "Somebody's here to see you."

He came in, and it was that guy. He came into the house and said, "I would like you to be my Rabbi." "Okay. Okay, I'm your Rabbi. Now what do you want?" I said, "You're going to listen to me? You've got to follow the Rabbi's directives."

He said, "We did. And my wife is pregnant."

"Without any doctors?" I said.

"Without any doctors." And they had a son.

It was a major bris in that state. I went to that state for the bris. There were a lot of doctors there. The guy who spent two hundred thousand dollars' worth on treatments was a known entity in the halls of medicine among the doctors and the nurses.

And he had a few more kids also after that. You have to align with Hashem. I tell people all the time: You want a shidduch from Hashem? Do you think Hashem doesn't want to give you a shidduch? Who do you think wants to give you a shidduch more? Do you think Hashem wants you to get a shidduch more, or do you think you want a shidduch more?

A shidduch is not like wealth. It doesn't say Hashem wants to make everybody wealthy. You want to be wealthy, so you have to implore Hashem. The Gemara gives us eitzos on how to implore Hashem. But it doesn't say Hashem wants to give everybody wealth.

## HASHEM WANTS EVERYONE TO GET MARRIED

But Hashem wants to give everybody children. And He wants to give everyone a shidduch.<sup>1</sup> He gave everybody a mitzvah to get married.<sup>2</sup> If He created you with functioning internal organs and plumbing, then that's what Hashem planned.<sup>3</sup>

If that's what Hashem planned, you're good to go. I remember I had a bochur who came many years ago and told me he can't have kids. I said, "How do you know that?" He said, "Because I had surgery; I had this." "Who said you can't have kids? Did the doctor tell you you can't have kids?" He said, "No, but they said it's one of the risks."

I said, "So what? Who cares what they said? Go get the medical records." He got the medical records, and we sent them to Rav Dovid Feinstein, *zichrono livracha*. He got back to us and said he could have children. He could get married.

I told the guy, "You're getting married, and you're gonna have kids. That's what Hashem wants from you." He got married; he was petrified because, before he got married, he had to tell his wife about the surgery he had. He was afraid that was gonna nix it.

I said, "Don't worry; have no fear. I'm telling you this is your shidduch." I could see how it was going; it was the right shidduch. And they told her what he had, what his experiences were.

Know what she said? "I have to tell you something also; I also had surgery." He said, "*Min bemino*—birds of a feather." I said, "*Be'ezrat Hashem*, you're gonna have a lot of kids." They have five—I think five for sure, maybe six.

You can't make yourself get married beforehand. You have to be *mevatel* yourself to the *ratzon* of Hashem. You have to kind of figure out how to align yourself with Hashem's 'specs.' Hashem has the shidduch for you; Hashem wants the shidduch for you.

<sup>1</sup> תלמוד בבלי מסכת סוטה דף ב/א: אמר רב יהודה אמר רב ארבעים יום קודם יצירת הולד בת קול יוצאת ואומרת בת פלוני לפלוני  
<sup>2</sup> דאע"ג דקיימא לן דאתתא לא מיפקדא אפרייה ורבייה, אומר אני דאפילו הכי אית לה מצוה, אף על גב דאינה מצווה ועושה" (שו"ת הר"ן סימן לב בשם "הרב רבי דן)  
<sup>3</sup> תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף לא/ב

I don't care what your issue is. I don't care if you look funny. I don't care if you act funny. I don't care if your screws are loose or your screws fall out.

If you're a human being, you can get married. Hashem has a mate for you and Hashem will send you the appropriate mate. You have to accept it. Accept it.

I once knew a fellow who came here, depressed out of his kishkes. He came from BMG; he was so depressed because he had had surgery. And the guy looked like Mr. Superman. The guy looked amazing.

The guy looked like the picture of health. He mamash looked great. And he had gone out with a number of people, and when he told them about his surgery, they dumped him.

I told him, "First of all, you have to stop being depressed." He said, "Who's going to marry me?" I said, "There's a girl. I promise you there's a girl out there, and you could have kids, so if you could have kids, you're going to get married. There's a girl there. But let me tell you what the problem is: You're a good-looking guy. I know, you're like that nazir from the Gemara (Nedarim 9b) *min hadarom*: you saw yourself in the mirror a few times, and you thought to yourself, 'That's a specimen!' And I'm sure your mother told you, your friends told you, 'Wow, am I jealous of you! You're a gorgeous-looking guy; mah zot tsura you have.' But you know you have a problem. The girl you're going to marry also has a problem, and you would never marry her if you didn't have a problem."

"But because you have a problem, I'm telling you: when you find out her problem, say 'Yes!' Don't say 'No.'" It changed his life; he got out of his deep depression. I told him to get a shtickel job in a yeshiva: he should be a sho'el u'meishiv. He did, and he got out of his doldrums. He was an older guy; he was getting older already.

And then he met somebody, and the person had an issue. They couldn't drive. They couldn't drive because of some medical problem they had. It wasn't a defect. The person had a very, very dream job in a very successful field. I told the guy, "Parnassah you have; you're good to go. She looks normal; she has some kind of problem. Big deal! What does it affect? You can't drive the car? She can afford a chauffeur with her job. Go get her a private driver."

I told the guy, "Grab the shidduch." "No, I can't—I don't know what." I told him, "I told you this is gonna happen, and it happened exactly like I told you it's gonna happen. I did you an *eitza tova*. Hashem put a thought in my mind, and I passed it on to you, and here it is." And finally, after a lot of convincing and his parents calling me up—"Yes, so, Rabbi Brog, you think it's a good idea?"—I said, "No." The father says, "What do you mean?" I said, "It's a great idea. Not a good idea; this is it! You want your son married or not married?" Now he's married with kids, Baruch Hashem. Look, you have to push them sometimes. A person has to know that when he makes his hishtadlus, he has to make sure it's השם של הרצון כפי השתדלות.

## DON'T MAKE HISHTADLUS WORK AGAINST YOU

To make a shidduch come quicker, it's not going to come quicker. To make a child come quicker, it's not going to come quicker. You can go through many treatments...you must align yourself with the ratzon of Hashem. Yehoshua—the great Yehoshua—lost ten years from his life because he tried to slow down his demise. The Beis HaLevi talks about this in his *Kuntres Habitachon*,<sup>4</sup> and he says anybody who studies the field can see be'chush that not only does his hishtadlus never help at all; you have to know hishtadlus doesn't help me'uma. But aderaba, a person can see that his hishtadlus is actually *l'ra*. His hishtadlus

is actually *l'ra lo*; it's bad for him. And it comes out, he says, that if you study it, the guy did himself an evil through his own personal toil, his *yegia*.

He was *miyageia*; he toiled to mess himself up. And he quotes a pasuk that hishtadlus is like a guy who collects eggs and thinks they're chicken eggs. He takes them into his house, and he keeps them under warm lights, and he warms them up, and he's waiting for the chicks to be hatched. And after all his toil and his care, you know what came out? A snake, a poisonous snake. It's a pasuk in Yeshaya. Nu, and what happened? The snake came out, and it bit him. What kind of chickens did he think they were? They're no chickens, my friend; count your chickens. Beis HaLevi says you have to know that's what it's about.

People try with their *chochma* to avoid a certain situation that they think they can avoid; they can't.

<sup>4</sup> לא רק שהשתדלות אינה מועילה, אלא לפעמים תגרם ההפוך, וכל אדם רואה בחוש אשר כמה פעמים לא די שהשתדלותו לא תועיל לו מאומה רק אדרבה עוד היה לו לרעה ונמצא הרע לעצמו ביגיעתו, וכמאמר הכתוב (ישעיה נט, ה), "ביצי צפעוני בקעו וקורי עכביש יארגו; האוכל מביציהם ימות והזרה תבקע אפעה", רצה לומר, השתדלותם לאסוף ביצים למאכלו ומחמם אותן כדי שיציאו מהם תרנגולים למאכלו, ואחר כל יגיעתו נמצאו הביצים שהיו של נחש ואפעה ויצא מהם נחש להזיקו (קונטרס הביטחון - הוצאת "האוצר" תש"פ - 23)

There was a famous story in history, in Melachim Aleph. There was a fellow who had a beautiful vineyard, maybe one of these fancy French or Israeli wines. The man's name was Navos HaYizre'eli. He came from a place called Yizre'el. The problem was that he was a neighbor of King Achav; he was the melech in Shomron. And Achav was not a nice man.

And one day, Achav came to his friend Navos and said to him, "You know, you've got the most beautiful vineyard my eyes have ever seen. I would like to have it. Give it to me." Now, when Achav tells you he wants something of yours, you try to distance yourself from that object as fast as you can. It's like Putin; same thing. But do you know what this man said? "He's my neighbor." So Navos opened his mouth and said, "*Chalila li*. Heaven forbid. I'm not giving you my vineyard for anything. Not for sale. Me'Hashem. Hashem gave me this as a present," he said. "This is nachlas avosai. You want me to give the nachla of my fathers to you? Nothing doing."

Nu, it says Achav came home to his palace, and he was cooking. He was upset; he was ticked. The chutzpah—this little runt, my neighbor, turned me down. He didn't ask me how much I want to pay. Gornisht.

So what happened? What do people do when they get into angry and bad moods? What do they do? They go to bed, and they turn to the wall, and they get depressed. And they're depressed. So his wife came to him, and his wife was Izevel, another famous rasha—a wicked, evil woman. She said, "My dear sweetie husband, what's making you sad?" And he told her.

She said, "Come out of bed; go have a meal. '*Kum echol lechem*,' eat some fresh bread. Nu, *v'yitav libcha*, you'll feel better about yourself. Put a little cream cheese on, maybe a little something else on—butter on, whatever it is. Nu, *אני אתן לך את כרם נבות היזרעאלי* - Don't worry, I'm going to arrange it. I'm going to get you that kerem." Do you hear that? And she arranged a setup for him. Know what the setup was? She got some false witnesses.

That was just mamash what Putin learned from this guy. And he got some false witnesses to testify about Navos, that he was a criminal. And they took him out, they gave him *skila*, and he died. And they sent a message to Izevel, saying, "Your problem is solved. Your problem has been eliminated." Now Chazal tell us an interesting thing. This Navos had a ma'ala. Know what his ma'ala was? He had a voice to die for. And he would come to Yerushalayim on the regalim and, *pashut*, kol Yisrael—whoever could—would come to hear him sing.

Maybe he made a chol ha'moed extravaganza, jumping around on stage? I don't think so, but he sang; he was *me'orer* the am Yisrael in Yerushalayim. Nu, one yom tov, he didn't come up.

When he didn't come up, that's when the *edim* testified against him. And he died. He was killed by stoning. So Chazal say: What caused him to die? Why did he deserve to die?

"ה' - שלא עלה לירושלים בראיה לכבוד את ה' - He didn't go up to Yerushalayim on Yom Tov to honor Hashem with the beautiful voice that Hashem graced him with."

Yeah? Hashem gave him a tremendous bracha, and it was his minhag to be mechaved Hashem with that bracha—his voice—in Yerushalayim. And he didn't come up, and he diminished the *kavod* of Hashem by not coming up. Now, why didn't he come up? You know why he didn't come up? Because he was afraid that if he went up, this King Achav, his neighbor, would tomorrow put up a big wall around his kerem: no trespassing, and a big sign on the top. Name change: "*Achav's range*," "*Achav's vineyards*," and he would lose it.

But the Torah says that if you go up to Yerushalayim, *ולא יחמד איש את ארצו*, nobody will be jealous of your land. Right? Had he gone up, they would never have had anything negative to say about him. Hashem would have protected his life and his fields. But he thought he was a smart man. He's gonna stay home and protect the field himself. It's called hishtadlus. You hear that? He tried; he saw a threat; he knew this guy was going to take it, that he wouldn't take no for an answer; and he figured if he's going to leave for a couple of days, it's not going to be good for him. And the *metzius* was *punkt farkert*—just the opposite.

### 100% THE RATZON OF HASHEM

*Punkt farkert*. *Aderaba*, the Beis Levi says, if he would have gone up, he wouldn't have lost a thing. He wouldn't have lost his vineyard; he wouldn't have lost his life, because Hashem would have protected him. So every time you make hishtadlus, when you're feeling some kind of threat, understand and make sure that that hishtadlus is 100 percent the *ratzon* of Hashem.

If your hishtadlus is not the *ratzon* of Hashem, you can be jeopardizing yourself and putting yourself in a very bad environment. And that's the *eitza* of the *yetzer hara* for a person: what you want to gain, you're going to gain

the opposite. Rav Shmuel Hominer, in his famous sefer Eved HaMelech, points out this lesson in this perek כ"א מלכים א. Nu, your only hishtadlus that's kosher hishtadlus is hishtadlus that's lefi the *ratzon* of the Torah.

It is the hishtadlus that Hashem wants you to make. Hashem wants you to *daven*; Hashem wants you to *m'chazeik* your bitachon *u'menuchas hanefesh*; Hashem wants you to strengthen your awareness of Hashem. Even though it seems like nothing's happening, nothing's moving, things are moving. Hashem's moving behind the scenes, and the only thing that's going to continue on forever is the *ratzon* of Hashem.

## IN CONCLUSION

Hishtadlus (effort) must align with Hashem's will, not be driven by fear or attempts to control the outcome. People often harm themselves by trying to force results in areas like shidduchim, having children, or parnassah. Moshe fulfilled Hashem's will immediately despite knowing it would lead to his death, while Yehoshua delayed his mission to prolong his life and ultimately lost ten years; Navos HaYizre'eli lost his vineyard and his life by ignoring the Torah's promise of protection. You will never lose what's coming to you by listening to Hashem.