



Self Confidence

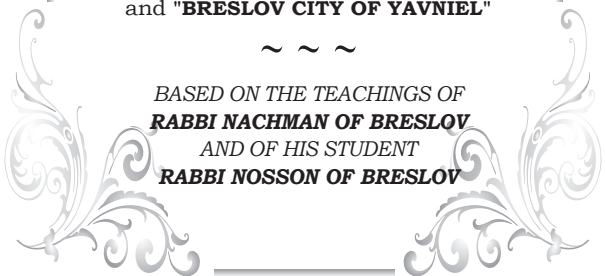
**GOOD ADVICE ON HOW TO BUILD
YOUR
SELF-ESTEEM AND REALLY GAIN
SELF CONFIDENCE!**

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~ ~ ~

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Self Confidence

Do you often feel ill at ease socially? Do you decline invitations to social affairs and avoid people because of the anxiety these situations provoke? How many times a day do you catch yourself comparing yourself to the other person, wishing that you had either their skill or talent, wealth or good looks? How long are you going to allow yourself to be intimidated by life, living in the shadow of everyone else's successes? Stop being neurotically impressed by "the other guy", and start believing in yourself, by working on your belief in G-d. Once you are thoroughly convinced that your fate, as well as the fate of others, is decided solely by G-d – and not by others, you will heal yourself from the ego-crippling effects of

social comparing. Indeed, the answer to man's enigmatic lifetime search for himself lies in his search for G-d; for only when we penetrate the mystery of G-d behind all of sublime creation, do we discover our latent talent and uncover our hidden potential. And just like belief in G-d, Whose presence is obscured from the naked eye, requires faith, belief in yourself that leads to the disclosure of your inner potential requires that form of faith called **"self confidence"**. You see it's all a matter of perception! The mere belief alone in one's abilities and power to achieve is sufficient to unlock his inner potential and reveal hidden talents. Believing in yourself gives you the **self confidence** you need to succeed and achieve your endeavors. But in order to feel secure with yourself, you must be secure in your relationship with G-d; the two go hand-in-hand; your very self-image is a reflection of your concept of G-d. When you are thoroughly convinced and trust that every event and outcome is solely determined by G-d – and by no other, you become secure enough with yourself to take the risks necessary to achieve all that you were meant to accomplish in life. Poor self-image, on the other hand, is

symptomatic of a weak faith in G-d; the hesitation, the indecisiveness, fear of taking risks and making commitments that characterizes our conflicted generation, mirrors our collective lack of trust in G-d's providence. Plagued by doubts and questions we lose all meaning in life, to which faith in G-d is the only answer. Robbed of meaning, our lives no longer make sense, so we lose faith in ourselves until we wallow in stagnation and despair. The impression of just being born unlucky becomes further reinforced in our minds as we leave behind a trail of poor choices, bad decisions, regrets and failed attempts born out of fear and desperation. Unhappy with our botched lives, our **self confidence** becomes so completely shaken that we lose hope that we will ever succeed in the future. Banish those dark, pessimistic thoughts from your mind now and conquer your fears, by reminding yourself again and again who is in charge of your destiny anyway. Remember, there is absolutely no reality other than G-d, and that every event, occurrence, action, cause, and condition is determined solely by Him! So, why all the social apprehension? What possible

harm can another person inflict on you without G-d's consent? Even if it feels as if the whole world is pursuing you, and you think that all hope is lost, – if G-d wills, you will escape any and all situations, from right under their noses. That is clear! Don't let other people's opinions rule you, and stop being intimidated by their success. Learn to trust in yourself by trusting in G-d. When you stop letting others control you, by recognizing that only G-d is in control, you will grow more self confident and trusting in your own abilities, rather than relying on others. The very act of finding G-d, is an exercise in self-discovery, because by learning to value your own opinion, you feel free to express your own desires and aspirations. But finding ourselves, through sensitive awareness of G-d, demands that we be honest about our motives. Because everything depends on the will, make sure that what you want is what G-d wants. Paradoxically speaking, discovering the "real you", requires moving from the realm of selfishness to that of selflessness. For there is no greater moment of truth, then when we are prepared to relinquish the control that we allowed external factors and selfish needs to

exert over our lives, and totally submit to G-d's control, so that His will becomes our will. It is precisely at that moment that ironically, we find the courage to start believing in ourselves, so that the true "us " emerges, and thus we regain control over our lives. However, in our pleasure seeking society that's so image conscious, there's zero tolerance for the non-conforming seeker of truth. Ask yourself however, how long can you continue living constantly worried about whether you are pleasing this one or satisfying that one? To be sure, when you start being true to yourself – by promoting the truth about G-d – your popularity will plunge and your friends and neighbors will smirk. It's not easy resisting the tide of popular thinking and not following the trend; initially, you will feel jittery and fainthearted, without the nods of approval from the crowd, that you previously relied-on. Nonetheless, if you don't give up you will ultimately grow stronger as you grow more self-reliant. And, as you become more self confident, your eyes will open to the truth that now, and all along, you never needed the approval of others – only G-d's approval. With the shackles of other people's opinions now

thrown off, the secret to success rests in your hands. Armed with **self confidence**, you are now free to turn what was heretofore, seemingly impossible dreams into reality.

2.

What did inventors of great inventions, explorers of the New World, authors of famous literary masterpieces, and just about any other historical personality who made remarkable accomplishments and contributions to mankind, have in common? The answer is that when the rest of the world said, "It can't be done", they didn't stop trying and they did it anyway. For there is nothing more invincible on earth than man's will, as the Sages wrote (*Zohar, Terumah, 162b*), "Nothing stands in the way of the will". Those tractates of Talmud you always meant to finish, the number of the prospective marriage partner that you were supposed to call, but never did, the resumes or school applications that are still lying for months on your desk incomplete, those pounds that you promised yourself you would shed through diet and exercise that have not only not vanished, but

have doubled in size, are all part of the “unfinished symphonies” in our lives that lay fallow when we make the fatal mistake of believing that it can’t be done, so we stop trying. Stop blaming the world for your failures in life, when you simply have given up. No wizard in Oz is going to provide you with the magical solution to all your problems nor offer you success on a silver platter. You see, all the ingredients for success and personal fulfillment in life are really in your hands, if only you would have the courage to believe in yourself and not give-up. Nothing that you want to be or have or accomplish in life is impossible, if you really want it badly enough. Objectively speaking, there is nothing really holding you back in life except yourself – your imagined fears, inhibitions, insecurities and all the invented excuses that outline the jail cell that has your spirit imprisoned. The only way to set yourself free and release your caged potential is to start believing in yourself and arousing the power of the will. For if we yearn enough, we can pierce through our distorted perceptions and achieve greatness. To be sure, the road to genuine self-fulfillment is lined with many roadblocks and hurdles.

But if you don't give up on yourself and you remain stubbornly steadfast, ultimately you will achieve your goal. Yes, you too are destined for greatness, but it all depends on how much **self confidence** you have in your ability to pull it off. But, it's the fourth job rejection letter I've received, or it's the eighteenth date I've had without any luck, or I've taken the bar exam three times and still did not pass! Nonetheless, don't give-up on yourself. Hold on firmly to the belief that G-d equips everyone including yourself with unique potential and hidden talents. Ultimately, if you don't surrender to disappointment, you will uncover those latent abilities and your star will shine. The problem is most of us cannot sustain belief in ourselves long enough to witness results, so we succumb to failure, because we just stop trying and give-up. Using our past failures as the yardstick of our self-worth, we suffer a loss of our self esteem and, becoming so pessimistic about the future, we act self-destructively further sabotaging our chance for success. Recognize this insidious psychological pattern in yourself, and nip the process in the bud, by countering the negative

thoughts with positive ones that affirm your G-d given uniqueness and talents. Remind yourself that as a Jew you are literally a Divine part of G-d Who resides above (*Zohar Vayechi*, 245b; *Mishpatim*, 96b); meaning that there is an inner dimension to our beings, derived from the spiritual realm, that because it is bound to G-d, is also boundless. That the soul, which is the seat of all of our emotions, yearnings, and aspirations, is housed in the narrowly crude confines of our physical bodies, is what constrains our perceptions of what we can possibly achieve. In reality however, the human spirit, when emboldened by **self confidence**, can transcend all the confines of limited beliefs and distorted perceptions and triumph. You think it's easy? No matter how much homework we do, and insight we gain into our strengths and personalities, we can never be fully prepared for what life has in store for us. Just when you think you've gotten a modicum of control over your life, another crisis arises, and the scenery is always changing. G-d is constantly trying our wills and testing the strength of our convictions to determine if, despite it all, we can withstand the pressure and hold onto to

our basic faith. The secret is not to give-up by giving in. When the knocks of life hit you hard, don't lose faith in yourself by taking them so personally. Realizing that all of life's circumstances are deliberately contrived by G-d as a test, will help you confidently stand your ground, until the storm passes, so that you can enjoy the fruits of your labor. "But why is it me that has to struggle so much to achieve?" you protest. Know, that the greatest of men – the *tzaddikim* – and even the famous personalities from amongst the secular nations – only achieved greatness through sheer struggle and resolve. By virtue of their indomitable wills they brandished a form of **self confidence**, that never gives-up or gives-in, even in the face of adversity and fierce opposition. Remember this rule for life: without that fundamental belief in yourself called "**self confidence**" you will never get ahead or achieve anything in life. So, take a long, hard look at yourself in the mirror and tell yourself that "I am a somebody – I am worth it. I am a child of G-d and with the talents He has given me, I too, have something valuable to contribute to the world!" Repeat these affirmations over and over until they

penetrate the self-indoctrinated layers of self-loathing, low-self esteem, poor self-image, and worthlessness that have accumulated over time, and that were instrumental in sabotaging all your chances for achievement and success. As the “real you” begins to emerge from behind its timid shell, continue to practice this exercise until you release hidden talents and potentials, which you never knew you had. Freed from your self-imposed prison, you probably won’t recognize the “new” confident and assertive you. In fact, watch how people around you notice the change and finally give you the respect you rightfully deserve.

3.

You draw the curtains to darken the room. It’s the third day that you barely ate a morsel. You try to read a book or the paper but you can’t focus or concentrate. As you lay in bed in the middle of the day, you grow restless and bored, thinking about your wasted life. You feel so, so sad, and you begin to cry because you are depressed. With your head slung between your knees your thoughts swings like a pendulum back and forth between two

unsavory choices: should you check yourself into the nearest psychiatric ward or, should you end your life right here and now. Sounds extreme? Do you know how many people today are afflicted with depression to some degree or another? It could be your neighbor, your child, your best friend – even you! And do you know why? The reason most people fall into depression is because they are suffering a fall-out in their own self-belief. Lacking **self confidence**, they steadily grow more unsure of themselves and insecure with their ability to cope with the stress and pressures of life. What most of us fail to perceive, however, is that by giving-up on ourselves not only are we guilty of self-abandonment, but in a deeper sense, we are abandoning G-d. Oblivious to G-d's utter control over the universe that He created and continuously sustains and maintains, you commit the perceptual flaw of seeing reality as divorced from Him. As a part of G-d, the absolute reality of Him must become integrated into your own concept of reality. By sensing His invisible hand behind all the seemingly limiting factors in life, you penetrate the mystery of G-d's concealed involvement in your life. With the veil of

obscurity lifted, your spirit merges with His, as you begin to see your life in terms of Him. As it dawns on you that life's ordeals were deliberately designed by Him to prompt you into this greater awareness, you let go of all the pain and hurt that they formerly generated. No longer intimidated by life – because of your sturdy trust in G-d – your confidence level steadily rises, as you start believing in yourself and all that you can achieve. Life is so short, yet there is so much you can accomplish, if only you let yourself. Stop sending your dreams and aspirations into a self-imposed exile, by withdrawing from the world because you feel so wholly inadequate. You haven't achieved, because you think you can't achieve; you haven't succeeded, because you don't believe that success is rightfully yours. Come out of your shell already, by letting G-d back into your life, so that you can start making something out of it! Ironically, despite the fact that in our heads we know that we need change in our lives, in our hearts we are terrified of its prospect. After years spent bemoaning your fate and cursing your luck – convinced that G-d has unfairly dealt you a raw deal – you've

weakened your resolve and lost your will. By giving G-d a vote of "no confidence" that he will improve your situation, you lose total **self confidence** in yourself as a person, to the point that you question your sanity or at worst, wish to commit suicide; because belief in G-d goes hand-in-hand with self-belief. Granted there are many things in life that with normal human intelligence, you will and can never understand; but if you firmly believe that G-d is fair and only He alone controls everything – including your fate, then automatically your despair is transformed into optimism. Then, it doesn't seem to matter anymore that it's taking so long for your life to improve. You're no longer hurt and resentful by all the frustration and obstacles that all your efforts to succeed have met. Peoples' opinions, insults, or even outright rejection lose their power to influence your behavior – or even break you. By trusting in G-d and His timing, you learn to trust in yourself and let go of all the neurotic fears that prevented you from moving forward in life. Like a muscle, however, faith needs to be developed and strengthened. Deepen your faith daily, by speaking to G-d on a regular basis, in your

native language, in a simple manner, as if you were chatting with a friend, or as a child before his father. The very act of conversing with G-d will reinforce your faith in G-d, because in order to talk to G-d, you have to believe in Him, and vice versa. Like any ongoing relationship, the more you put into it over time, the more intimate it grows, and the deeper your faith in G-d will become. There is simply no other method to peel away at the external layers of physical matter concealing G-d's presence – to go beyond just what the naked eye sees – and to experience awareness of Him, than by ongoing dialogue, discussion, prayer, and supplication. Don't be in a rush; relationship-building needs time for trust to develop. Typically, in the beginning it will seem as if G-d is not responding or listening to you. Although it may appear as if you're not getting anywhere you should know that, with each word you utter to G-d, you're gaining more insight and deepening your perspective. As G-d begins to become revealed from behind His earthly veneer, you will begin to sense all of reality and every event as being related to G-d. Suddenly a brilliantly constructed ballad emerges from the seemingly random stream of

life's subtle ironies and twists of fate, which become thematically connected through the recurring refrain of G-d's hidden control. Noting the underlying intrinsic logic behind even the painful events in your life, redeems the hurt and powerfully inspires you with **self confidence**, as it evocatively alludes to your own hidden potential. The time has come to stop living in fear by being so afraid of life! Reaching the pinnacle of your potential requires the courage to believe in your innate abilities, which is a function of the strength of your belief in G-d; the two mirror each other. To cross the finish line and reach your goal requires stamina and an unflagging will to keep-up pace along the winding path of faith (*see Likutei Halachos, Arev, Halacha 3*). As any achiever will attest – “perseverance” is the secret behind any successful endeavor – spiritual or otherwise. Furthermore, the attainment of genuine satisfaction and fulfillment in life can only be realized once you fully grasp that self-belief and belief in G-d are really two sides of the same coin. There is no greater secure feeling than the reassuring knowledge that G-d is in full control, determining every outcome and everyone's

destinies. If my fate lies in His hand, what need is there for me to be jealous that my friend is getting more or getting ahead? Now that I ascribe to the liberating philosophy that believes in G-d's total dominion – independent of any outside force or influence – I'm free to aspire to whatever I want, as long as I believe I can do it, by believing in G-d, and never giving-up. The blissfully satisfying state of independence and self-determination, which characterizes the existence of those in the World-to-Come, was actually attained by the righteous "*tzaddikim*" throughout the ages, in this world, because of their complete surrender to G-d's sovereignty. But how many of us today fail to make this leap of faith by bridging the gap between faith in ourselves, and faith in G-d? Instead of lowering your pride and admitting that you can't do it without G-d, you insist on going at it alone, only to widen the chasm between yourself and Him. Now, that you've abandoned your self-respect on the long trail of failures and disappointments that you've left behind you – and the chasm separating you from G-d has now become a pit of despair – are you ready to climb out of your depression, admit you were

wrong, and reconcile with G-d? Globally speaking, for our liberation-obsessed society to truly cure itself from its chronic unhappiness, it must realize that genuine freedom is paradoxically acquired when we admit to how much we need G-d, instead of trying to escape His authority. So go ahead, make today your Independence Day by learning to depend on G-d for everything. Then you will stride through life confidently bearing the trophy of success in hand.

4.

Today we live in a society that's fanatical about "working-out"! We work-out day in and day out in the gym to build our bodies. We zealously work on our health and waistline through diet management and nutrition-mindedness. We work-out our mental health issues on the therapist's couch. And, of course each of us is conscientiously working towards the sacred goal of "self-actualization" so that we can be admired for being super successful in both the office and at home. So why, despite all the go-getting, are we plagued by incessant feelings of low self-esteem; and, as hard as it is to admit, why with all the striving

for excellence does happiness continue to elude us? To cure yourself from the ravages of poor-self esteem, and to move ahead in life, it's not enough to pack your life with well-meaning activity; rather, you must ultimately feel that your life efforts means something to G-d. Despite the "control freaks" we've become, never before have so many people complained of feeling out of control and that their lives are unmanageable. Face it, no amount of therapy, support groups, or assertiveness training seminars will relieve you of the primal fear of your mortality. We all live in the shadow of death, afraid that tragedy or crisis can intrude on our serenity at any moment. The only strategy guaranteed for gaining control over your emotions is to surrender control to G-d by completely accepting His authority over your life, both mentally and emotionally. Remember, "A person does not stub his finger down here, without it being decreed [first] above [in Heaven]" (*Chullin*, 7b.) Furthermore it states that, "A person cannot touch that which is reserved for his friend, and one kingdom does not overlap the other, by even a hairsbreadth" (*Yoma*, 38a). "And, even the chief of sanitation

is appointed [to his lowly position] by Heaven” (*Berachos 58a*). Admit it, despite all the societal emphasis on freedom of self-expression, individuality and its celebration of all varieties of nonconformity – even weird lifestyles, are you secure with yourself? Don’t you spend your days envious of this one’s wealth, that one’s physique, his dazzling career or his gorgeous house etc...? How long can you allow yourself to be consumed by jealousy, wasting your time fantasizing about ways you wish you could outdo your friends. Hasn’t the pressure of trying to keep up with the neighbors – but failing miserably, broken your weary spirit? With so much disappointment, it’s no wonder that you’ve arrived at the conclusion that you are a complete and utter failure? Why not taste the true taste of freedom, by discarding the opinions of others and start having an opinion of your own. Wrest control from the tyranny of “image-consciousness” that had you formerly enslaved, by giving back control to G-d, Who has the power to restore your sense of self-control. Once the coast becomes clear of the fear of rejection by others, the “real” you will come out of hiding, free to test the waters of

life, uninhibitedly, on your own terms. Relishing in newfound freedom, be confident and take risks; pull the stopper on all the bottled-up talents and hidden potential that lie within, and ride on the crest of success. Granted, after years of narrow-minded thinking, living in the shadow of other people's expectations, your disappointment with life runs so deep – and you're thoroughly convinced that you're a hopeless failure and, that your birth was a mistake. And, of course the years of shame of having to bear the reputation of being a born loser and klutz, with your name serving as the butt of everyone's jokes, is hard to shake-off over night. Nonetheless, work on reversing your negative self-image with positive affirmations such as "Yes, I can succeed, I can do it, because I have G-d on my side and that's all I need". Once the warm and comforting message of faith starts to seep into the crevices of your wounded soul, then the barometer of your confidence level will begin to rise. At the same time, the firm grip of public opinion will ease, as the need for approval from others diminishes. You will cut a confident line of achievement and

accomplishment right through the crowd, neither looking to the right nor the left, as you head single-mindedly towards your goal. Once you master the art of self-reliance, you can achieve as far as your will, will take you, and as deep as your belief in your own G-d-given powers will allow. So, wave goodbye to your former wimpy, people-pleasing meek self, and burst forth confidently as an assertive winner with healthy ego-strength. You're now equipped to climb every mountain and ford every stream 'till you accomplish remarkable achievements that you never would have dreamed. Be warned, however, that recovery is a learning process that takes time and effort. Along with the breakthroughs, it's normal to expect relapse and even regression to earlier negative forms of behavior. Change is scary and you need to allow yourself emotional leeway to adjust to the new scenery. Just keep focused on your goals and work the program of repeating positive affirmations, and dialoging with G-d, narrating to Him all your reservations and apprehensions about change. Don't be afraid or ashamed to ask Him for help and guidance. Ironically, you will discover that the most powerful weapon to

untangle the complex web of your negative thought processes and combat toxic thinking is a simple faith in G-d. The hearty human spirit is not easily vanquished so long as the eyes are forever directed Heavenward, and the will never gives-up. Remember these words: If you believe in yourself, by believing in G-d, there is nothing that can stop you from getting what you want!

5.

Did you ever meet a true survivor? Remember that guy who opened one business after another because each time the venture failed. Recall, how once after finally managing to draw the customers to his store and getting his hand on some profit, his competitors drove him into bankruptcy by driving the prices down. And who can forget the pain and shocked expression on his face as he watched his department store, which he struggled day and night to build, burn to the ground at the hand of a vengeful arsonist. But, did that stop him? No – in fact, he went on to open what became one of the most famous and successful multi-million dollar franchises in the nation. What unsinkable quality do these

survivors possess that allows them to be nearly drowned over and over again, yet keeps them always coming back-up for air? The answer is that when challenged by adversity and tragedy most people abandon hope and automatically fall into depression; these heroes, on the other hand, have **self confidence** so they don't allow themselves to give-up on their dreams, because they never give-up believing in themselves. Contrary to the popular scientific theory of the "survival of the fittest", a Jew's will to survive and make it against all odds, stems not only from a belief in himself, but more importantly, from his belief in G-d. Outfitted from G-d with all that he needs to make it in life, he doesn't allow himself to be intimidated by others. They may tear his house down ten times, but each time he will start over and build a new one from scratch; but to give-up – never! Because of their tenacious faith in G-d, these people display a bold brand of **self confidence** that makes them gutsy; rest assured they will march on to glorious victory in life. It's easy to dismiss the other guy's success as just pure luck; don't be fooled! Behind every successful enterprise is a saga of the uphill battles, trials,

despair and disappointment from all the betrayal, backstabbing, and revenge from yes, even supposedly good friends – until finally their iron will triumphs over all the hardships. But like us, these heroic survivors are also human, so what makes them so thick-skinned so as not be hurt and discouraged by all the suffering? The answer is that, when we don the spectacles of faith, our visual field shifts so that we behold life's predicaments from the aspect of G-d, rather than from ourselves. We no longer feel so personally assaulted when others are rude or even downright hostile towards us – after all, this too was meant from G-d. The business may fail, the roof may leak, the body begins to ache – yet, Who's behind these, if not G-d. When you feel not only the sting behind a harsh bite, but also the chastening hand of G-d, the pain is easier to accept, because it's not arbitrary. Recognizing that G-d is coming from an angle of “tough love”, you realize that the rough spots in life are deliberately designed to fortify your faith in Him through trial and ordeal. Once it clicks that there is method behind all the seeming madness of your life, then success is yours because, instead of trying to escape from your

problems you will always run to G-d. This all may sound good on paper, but the dynamics of faith have a practical relevance that is meant to be applied when faced with crises. Any enterprise, business or otherwise, which you choose to establish – especially if there is other human involvement – is inherently fraught with the potential for conflict and strife that could threaten its dissolution, as the Sages commented regarding the diversity of human personalities, “Just as their facial features differ, so do their opinions” (*Midrash Tanchuma*). As the saying goes, “You can’t please the whole world”; so, when each of the company board members insists that his opinion is right, and everyone else is wrong, what do you do? How do you reconcile the twenty points of view to reach a final major decision with only a half hour remaining to the deadline? You can either let the stress get to you, fall apart and then jeopardize the future of the company through indecision and lack of leadership; or you can rise to the occasion by demonstrating **self confidence**, by trusting in yourself and your decision-making abilities, by trusting in G-d. Similarly, and even more so, the prerequisite for any

spiritual goal program is a fierce sense of **self confidence** derived from a firm belief in G-d. In matters of self development you have to muster enough personal strength to persevere in your spiritual service and studies, because progress and achievement cannot be measured by the naked eye. Almost as if you waging an invisible war with yourself, you must silence the voice of opposition and the accompanying chorus of self-doubts whenever it threatens to sabotage your spiritual initiatives, by contesting your worthiness. In drawing close to G-d, there is no room for timidity and shyness. Whether you feel deserving or not, G-d is available for everyone, but you have to have the **self confidence** to approach Him. And you will, if you're assertive and stubborn enough! A little known fact is that, many of the righteous personalities – *tzaddikim* – showed no special talent or promise at the start of their spiritual careers. What distinguished them from the rest and eventually led to their crowning achievements, was their **self confidence** borne out of single-minded determination and refusal to give-up. Their fundamental belief in G-d's greatness imbued them with a belief in the greatness of

their own human potential. This motivated them to labor and persevere diligently in their religious studies and Divine service until their potential was finally realized and they achieved remarkable insight and lofty levels. Do you feel a little less discouraged now? This can be the happy ending to your life story, too. As a child of G-d, the time has come to stop hating yourself and running away from the world. You're good stuff! Be confident and show us your beautiful colors. When you start believing that you count, then you count on it that G-d will take you down the path of success and personal fulfillment.

6.

Many times life can seem like a huge ice-skating rink. As you nervously glide your skates across the slippery and wet ice and observe your fellow skaters performing balancing acts that oftentimes, ends with a clumsy plop on the floor – you anxiously wonder whether that will also be your fate. Yet, what makes us happily return to this precarious form of amusement and hit the rink again and again? As human beings we are marveled by challenges because they

provide us with a vehicle for satisfying our need to express our unique, G-d-given talents and abilities. But like the skaters, we will only take the dares that life offers if we have the **self confidence** to believe that we have within us the stuff, from G-d, that we need to succeed. Never mind the falls and all the inevitable tumbles we experience in life – if we're confident in our ability, and believe that we can succeed then ultimately we will glide gracefully through life, and achieve. Knowing this, it shouldn't surprise you that certain individuals, whose lives are marred by personal tragedy, or beset by personal problems, or perhaps riddled with deep disappointment from rebellious children or failed careers, managed to produce remarkable achievements and accomplish impressive feats. Their secret is that despite having suffered and lost so much, they never lost themselves. They retained their **self-confidence** throughout their ordeals long enough to self-actualize their potential, by recognizing G-d as the actual reality underneath it all. They called life's bluff, by not shrinking in fear from the pain, but rather boldly facing it by recognizing G-d as its

hidden source. By feeling G-d in all they went threw, they grew closer to Him and more confident with themselves – until they thoroughly succeeded in their endeavors. So you see, there is no shame when you slip-up in life. Everyone does. The challenge is whether you have enough belief in G-d to feel **self-confident** enough to pick yourself up and try again.

