

HASHGACHA PRATIS

Inspirational messages and contemporary stories of hashgacha
From the Hashgacha Pratis Hotline



Parshiyos Vayishlach - Vayeishev 5782 ■ Issue 77

HEART TO HEART

Based on shiurim in
Duties of the Heart, Shaar Bitachon, given on the Hotline

Non-disposable Emunah

What's going to be? There's something new to be anxious about – disposable dishes will be expensive! Instead of paying five shekels for dishes, we'll now have to pay ten. The prices will go up! What should we do? Some people took it really hard. A person came up to me and asked – "What should I do? I have, Baruch Hashem, a large family, and it's impossible to spend the day washing dishes." I told him that if he could, he should buy an apartment with a storage area, and fill it with all the paper goods he'll need for the rest of his life. How much is the rest of his life? Something like eighty years. But, don't forget – in the old age home you get the dishes for free, so those years don't have to be counted. For a large family you need to think of all the simchas you'll likely be making – engagements, sheva brachos, brissim, pidyon haben, milchigs, fleishigs, parave. Don't forget anything and you'll be set for life!

He looked at me incredulously. "You're not serious, are you?"

"Why not?" I wondered, "What about hishtadlus? You have to at least try! Why, what did you think to do?"

"I thought to buy enough disposables for a few months."

Some people have more room. They can buy disposables for the next year, year and a half max – till Pesach 5783. And the rest of their life is also all set up and organized -- they have nachas, tuition, health, shidduchim, living arrangements, food, neighbors, transportation... and everything in between. Disposable dishes is their only problem... so here comes the big question, what's going to happen after Pesach 5783?

And the answer? Hashem will help!

We can now see clearly who learns

about bitachon and who doesn't. Rabbenu Yonah lists the second advantage of a person with bitachon: **"For one who trusts G-d, his soul is in peace, and his heart is not upset from decrees as he sees, because the Creator will lead them for his benefit -- in this world and in the future."** Strange as it may seem, when we cry out during Ne'ila, "And save us from all evil decrees" we are also referring to the price of disposable dishes, because it is also a decree that requires our prayers. One who learns about bitachon is not fazed by these decrees – he knows all decrees are for his benefit – both in this World, and in the future – the next World. Hashem leads every soul to its own unique destination and mission.

So how do we handle the decrees? Let's learn from Dovid Hamelech who said in Tehilim (62:6): "Only to G-d should you hope, my soul, for my hope is from Him." Radak explains: "My hope is from Hashem and nobody else, and He will save me from them and their evil plans."

In Sefer Bereishis we read how Hashem created the world with precise, deliberate planning – that Yaakov would receive the blessings and be saved from Eisav and Lavan, go down to Egypt and come up a nation. Every figure has his own mission, road, and story. Every person has his own Hashgacha Pratis and we only have to hope to Hashem and pray for His salvation. We pray for the final Redemption, which will come, as the Medrash Tanchuma writes (Beshalahch): "The exiles will be redeemed only in merit of emunah." May it be speedily in our times, amen.

[An excerpt from shiur 227 on Sha'ar Habitachon]

FROM THE EDITOR

Why Prices Go Up

We were sitting together talking, a few friends and I. And what was the topic of our conversation? Obviously, the recent price hikes in Israel. Baruch Hashem, all of us listen to the Hashgacha Pratis hotline, so there was no talk of blaming anyone. Everyone used terms like, "Hashem does and did everything." Clearly Hashem is the One raising the prices in Israel.

We sat and tried to figure out what could be the goodness of Hashem that is revealed through the price hikes.

My friend mentioned the Brisker Rav's comment about parnassah: The Gemara uses the terms "one's food" not "one's money" in reference to Hashem's decree on Rosh Hashanah, because on Rosh Hashanah Hashem decides how much one will eat during the year, not spend or earn. In other words on Rosh Hashanah, Hashem writes how many disposable cups a person will use, how many loaves of bread he will eat. He does not inscribe, however, how much these things will cost. The cost does not matter.

"Therefore," said my friend, "it must be that Hashem is giving us a chance to strengthen our emunah and receive more of His blessings. This concept is not new – Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk mentions it in his famous letter to his followers. (Pri Ha'aretz, 22) He writes that one who wants to enjoy bountiful blessing should not calculate everything meticulously. Rather, he should think of what Hashem wants from him, and live normally, and believe that Hashem will support him, and thus he will see blessing and success in all his endeavors."

Now that the prices of everything have gone up, Hashem is offering us a golden opportunity to grow in emunah and bitachon. Hashem is telling us, "Until now, I gave you 3 shekels to buy a package of disposable cups; now I will give you as much as it costs, as much as you need, which is really how it has always been."

Living with emunah results in bountiful blessing from Above. Someone else mentioned that the Ba'al HaTanya explains why in Eretz Yisrael there is only one day of Yom Tov in Eretz Yisroel. In the Holy Land, one can receive in one day what it takes two days to receive outside of Eretz Yisroel. The Ba'al HaTanya explains that this is why things are more expensive in Eretz Yisroel than they are outside of it – because things are twice more important in Eretz Yisroel than they are in *chutz la'aretz*. (mentioned in Meah She'arim, Imrei Kodesh, 40)

Through the price hike we merit feeling the holiness of Eretz Yisroel.

Good Shabbos, Pinchas Shafer

The shiur is aired on Mon. and Thurs. - menu 4 (Yiddish and Hebrew)

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THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

Bread From Heaven

I live in Bnei Brak.

One Thursday afternoon, my wife called and asked me to buy bread for Sunday's sandwiches. I agreed – after all, the kids will need sandwiches for school on Sunday. But today was Thursday -- why did we have to worry about bread for Sunday? What about emunah? Hashem would provide.

I was convinced Hashem would send bread when we needed it, and said as much to my wife. She agreed, and I continued going about my affairs as usual. I didn't buy the bread.

On Motzaei Shabbos, my wife was walking home after eating Shalosh Seudos with her mother, when she saw a lady getting off a bus. The lady was carrying four loaves of bread in her hands. "Here," she walked over to my wife and handed her a loaf. "This is for you." Hashem had sent us the bread.

Donuts for Chanukah

My name is Yosef, I live in London. My friend, who owns a large bakery, told me the following story:

My bakery is known all over for its baked goods. Jews rely on me for my baked goods' great flavor and kashrus. Every morning, the mashgiach comes in early and turns on my industrial-size ovens, so all the baked goods are *pas Yisroel*, and the ovens remain on for the rest of the day.

This story took place on Chanukah. Early in the morning, one of my non-Jewish workers turned on the oven by himself. Nobody noticed, and the bakery ran smoothly as usual, when, after fifteen hours (!), the mashgiach suddenly recalled that he had forgotten to turn on the ovens that day.

I couldn't get angry at the mashgiach – he was so upset at himself that all I could do was try to calm him down and tell him it was all from Hashem and everything would be OK. I stopped the production and turned off the ovens. However, we still had a problem -- the ovens had already baked thousands of donuts. Jews from all over would soon be coming to buy them, and they trusted my bakery was selling them *pas Yisroel*. I called the rabbanim of the kashrus agency to see if there was any halachic solution to salvage the baked goods because, hey, we were talking about thousands of donuts! They ruled that it was permissible for me to sell the donuts.

While halachically, I could have gone on and sold the donuts, I knew my clients trusted me to provide the highest standards of glatt kosher, and if they'd find out about the problem, they wouldn't buy the donuts despite the ruling of the kashrus agency. I felt I couldn't do this to my clients. I closed the bakery and made phone calls to try and reach those people who had already bought donuts to tell them about the problem. Chanukah is a time of light -- I couldn't let anyone suffer from darkness! I told people they could come and return the donuts and get their money back.

Every donut sells for about one pound. You can imagine that recalling doughnuts on Chanukah is quite a loss...

But still, I told myself this was a test.

My fellow Jews trust me to provide them with the best donut – the best not only in taste, but also in kashrus- and I was

Tzedakah Saves From Death

It is definitely the first time that something like this occurred on our telephone line – three different people called in with the same story, on the same day! The first was Rabbi Moshe Leib Kletzkin (son of our friend, R' Dovid Kletzkin). In the afternoon we got a call from R' Moshe Aharon Lifshitz from Beit Shemesh, and a short time later, R' Nota Slonim, also from Beit Shemesh called in telling the same story. And this was their amazing story: R' Mendel (not his real name) has a business cooking and selling Shabbos food. He cooks in his industrial kitchen and distributes the food to groceries around the country. He works 5-6 hours every day. After rising at 6 am, he learns and davens, then goes to work at around 9. This is his story:

On Sunday morning, I was on my way to the babysitter with my toddler, when I met a person I know from shul. He is an older man who has already married off several children, and I hadn't seen him for a while. After greeting him, I noticed he was dragging his leg. "What happened to you?" I asked.

"I have an infection in my foot, and it's hard for me to walk," he told me. "Today is the first day I'm stepping outside, but I still need a *refuah shleima*. I feel bad -- I usually collect tzedakah in shuls after davening, but I haven't been able to do so in the past few days. Do you think you could go around collecting in my place?"

I told him I was in a hurry -- I needed to go to work and didn't have an extra hour for collecting. I pulled out a fifty-shekel bill and handed it to him, feeling really good about myself. I could only do what I could do, and I was even giving him a nice donation.

I went back to work. Just as I was about to begin, I turned on my MP3 player to listen to a shiur. I recommend listening to shiurim to all my friends, if possible. What could be a better way to spend your day? I especially love listening to Rav Shimon Shpitzer's shiur on the Or Hachaim.

He was talking about the Or Hachaim on Parasha Vayeira: After Avimelech abducted Sarah, he and his household suffered from closed orifices. Avimelech asked Avraham Avinu to pray for him, and Hashem heard his prayers, and they were cured. The next parashah speaks about how Sarah Imenu merited bearing Yitzchak. Why does this parashah follow the story of Avimelech? Rashi explains that it is to teach us that, "whoever begs for mercy for his friend, when he needs the same thing, he is answered first."

Seemingly, says the Or Hachaim, had Sarah not been abducted by Avimelech, she would not have merited bearing Yitzchak. However, Hashem had already promised Avraham a child, long before this story took place. How do we reconcile these two facts?

The Or Hachaim explains there is no contradiction here: Yitzchak Avinu was born because Hashem had promised he would be born. Hashem, though, wanted to present

Avraham Avinu with a mitzvah worthy of the reward of children, so Sarah was abducted by Avimelech, in order to cause Avraham to pray for him. And in the Or Hachaim's words: "Because when Hashem wants to do good, He presents one with the opportunity to do a mitzvah in the merit of which he will receive that blessing which Hashem wishes to bestow upon him."

This is the reason that after this abduction, Hashem closed the Philistines' orifices and not the Egyptians' when they abducted Sarah – here Hashem wanted Avraham to pray for them and merit a child; not so with Pharaoh.

R' Shimon Spitzer continued on this topic, telling his listeners how when Hashem wants to give people blessings, He presents them with an opportunity to perform a mitzvah to merit it. We must be aware that every mitzvah is a golden opportunity to be grabbed with two hands.

I was listening to the shiur and suddenly the realization hit me – I had been offered an opportunity to collect tzedakah and I had refused. I must be hearing this shiur because I just pushed off a golden opportunity. Tomorrow, I decided, I would take an hour off from work to go collecting tzedakah in place of that man, and I would come home one hour later than usual.

The following day was Monday, the day I cook a huge vat of lima beans. They are the large size beans, called *bobes*. I cook them in an industrial-size pressure cooker – 20 kilos of beans and seventy-five liters of water. For a regular pot to cook this amount it would take about six hours, but with my pressure cooker, I can do it in an hour and a half. After filling the pot and setting it up, I had an hour and a half to go, so I set out to collect the tzedakah as I had promised myself.

At 9:30 am I entered the first shteibel and collected tzedakah from one minyan. Then I went to a shul, then another shteibel. I asked a friend to come along and say a few words about tzedakah, and we were very successful, Baruch Hashem. I merited collecting tzedakah as well as bringing joy to that elderly Jew, who was deeply disappointed about not being able to collect the tzedakah himself.

At ten-thirty, I opened the door to my kitchen, and stopped dead in my tracks. The room was flooded with water and beans, and shards of my pressure cooker were everywhere. The huge vat had exploded and its sorry remains were strewn across the room.

I stepped out to calm myself. Had I been in the kitchen at the time of the explosion... I don't want to think what could have happened. Nobody could have survived that. Monday mornings usually find me frying onions on a small flame near my pressure cooker. Knowing that standing close proximity to a pressure cooker can be dangerous, I usually keep about a meter's distance. Seeing the results of the explosion, I understood that the meter's distance would not have saved me. The only thing that had saved me was the tzedakah I had been out collecting.

Hashem had sent that elderly man the day before, the lesson on the Or Hachaim, and a special opportunity. I had gone out to collect tzedakah and received my own life in return.

I ran out to give the elderly man the tzedakah I had collected. He thanked me, but I told him not to thank me – "You saved my life!"

determined to live up to their trust.

Hatzalah London heard about the donut fiasco and came up with a great idea – they collected all the problematic donuts and distributed them among the non-Jewish teams of doctors and nurses throughout the London hospitals in honor of Chanukah, as an expression of gratitude for treating Jewish patients. The doctors enjoyed the gesture, and I'm sure the sick Jews enjoyed better treatment as a result.

A few days later, I got a phone call from St. George's hospital, the largest in London. "We tasted your donuts, and it's the best doughnut we've ever tasted! We'd like to order 10,000 doughnuts for an event next week."

Such a large order is obviously very good for business, and at the end of the month the loss of that day when we recalled all our donuts was all but erased. That month I made much more than I had anticipated, and I learned how nobody loses out from doing Hashem's will.

The Right Place at The Right Time

I live in London.

I had a friend who liked to come and talk to me. He would recount his experiences, trials, and tribulations, and I offered him a listening ear and heart. At one point his father was offered a job in the US, and he moved there with his family. Our relationship sort of ended there, and we were both left with nice memories of the times we spent together.

Many years past. We both married and started families. This past Nissan my brother made a wedding in the US, and since it was quite close to Pesach, I planned to fly in on the day of the wedding and leave the next evening, landing back in London early Friday morning. I would be arriving in Newark and departing back to London from Kennedy International Airport.

When I landed in the US, I called my former friend. He was overjoyed to hear my voice and wanted to get together and talk, but I told him my trip was too short for such things and we'd have to leave that for another time. He offered to take me to the airport on my way back so we could spend time together on the way, and I agreed. Why not? He had a car, and we could talk the whole way.

The night after the wedding he showed up right on time. We got on the road and started reminiscing about old times. He told me about his life, which was interesting and eventful as usual. I listened to him attentively without glancing outside even once. Only when he announced we had arrived did I notice where we were – in Newark! And my flight was leaving from Kennedy! How would I get home before Shabbos? There was no way I could make my flight from Kennedy, so I went up to the desk to see if they might have a flight to London. The clerk at the desk was dumbstruck. "What, you came here only because you made a mistake? Well, today's your day! There was a technical problem in the Kennedy airport and a lot of flights were diverted here, to Newark. Lots of people are trying to get on these flights, so it's first come first serve!"

I was amazed. The last-minute change had moved my flight here, to Newark. I was in just the right place.

My friend and I stood there, amazed at the Hashgacha Pratis. "Had I not stood here and heard it, I wouldn't have believed it," said my friend.

We still had time to talk, and my friend stayed with me to wait. He told me that his father was looking to buy an apartment and I told him that my brother was looking to sell. A short time later the deal was closed, and we saw how Hashem helps people who want to do good.

Q's & A's

Q's & A's about emunah and bitachon

I am a lucky man. I make a living doing a mitzvah that most people never have a chance to perform. My question is - should I put more effort into it, since it is a very rare and precious mitzvah, one which I thoroughly enjoy and with which I earn completion of my soul? Or is the extra effort going towards parnassah, from which one should usually refrain, in which case I should make the same effort I would normally put into any other mitzvah? **Q #29** M.M., Elad

Disclaimer: All opinions mentioned here are presented for discussion only. For practical ruling, please consult with your Rav.

Biased Approach

Rabbi Yaakov Hillel from Yerushalayim: The litmus test is how you react when your efforts don't bear fruit. If you feel like you would after spending hours in an unsuccessful attempt to find an esrog, i.e. - your time was not wasted despite having nothing to show for it - then that is a sign you are really doing this for the mitzvah. But if you feel wasted, and slightly frustrated, it is a sign that you are invested in it for the income, not only for the mitzvah. We see this often with *mohalim* - it seems that any effort in the field of *brissim* to "bring in more business" is useless, and even counterproductive. Only learning more and becoming more proficient in the field, as well as prayer to Hashem to merit doing this mitzvah, can help.

Rabbi Dovid Liefer from Yerushalayim: Since you didn't mention your line of work, it's a little hard to offer a pointed answer, but in general, we can say that if there is nobody but you who can do the mitzvah, you are certainly obligated to try to perform it. The Gemara (Moed Katan 9a) says this explicitly regarding the mitzvah of Talmud Torah, which takes precedence over all other mitzvos - but on condition that the other mitzvah cannot be performed by others. If others can do the mitzvah and you want it for yourself, you would do well by asking a rabbinic authority on the matter, since many times our judgement is biased by extraneous reasons.

Calling For Prudence

Rabbi Menashe Bichler from Beitar Illit; Rabbi Yosef Dushinsky from Haifa; Rabbi Menachem Mendel Strauss from Bnei Brak; Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schick from Ashdod; Rabbi Yair Abramson from Yerushalayim: The test here is if you are willing to perform the mitzvah for free (where you could make a living elsewhere), or if this mitzvah presents itself along with another one - are you willing to forgo this mitzvah for the other with the same enthusiasm? If you can answer in the affirmative, it seems you are doing the mitzvah for its own sake, and any effort you put into it is for the sake of the mitzvah.

Rabbi Aharon Beifuss from Rechasim: We must invest time and effort in making a living due to Adam Harishon's curse. Here you must ask yourself - am I obligated to take upon myself a curse in order to merit a mitzvah?! Looking at it that way may affect your judgement on the matter.

Rabbi Dov Koifman from Modiin Illit: Sefer *Madreigas Ha'adam* gives a golden standard - if you charge money for it, it is a business, even if it is a mitzvah. And for something you do for free, every effort is praiseworthy.

Follow Your Heart

Rabbi Tzvi Dolinger from Bnei Brak: The Shulchan Aruch rules (chapter 38:8) that dealers in items of *kedushah* are not obligated to perform mitzvos under the rule of "one who is engaged in mitzvos is exempted from mitzvos." The Mishnah Berurah (ibid, footnote 24) notes that this is true even if they earn money from their dealership, provided their main intention is to ensure people have everything they need to perform mitzvos. If, however, a dealer's main intention is making a living, he is not considered "engaged in a mitzvah." If the main reason for your engaging in this mitzvah is for the sake of the mitzvah, then even if you do make a living from it, performing it and investing effort in it is praiseworthy.

Rabbi Yehuda Gweitzman from Beit Shemesh: Seemingly, you present here a conflict between making a living and performing a mitzvah, because every effort you invest in getting more of that kind of mitzvah will incur additional income to you. But it actually depends upon your intention - if the mitzvah is important to you and your only focus is the mitzvah, the income that comes along with it is a side issue.

Make An Effort

Rabbi Yitzchok Sternfeld from Elad: One should certainly invest effort in a mitzvah, even if he is being paid for doing it. And on the contrary - paying serves to encourage people (as we see today, *avreichim* are offered monetary incentives to learn more Torah). However, if you are concerned of extraneous effort, you may give the additional money to tzedakah.

Question for Issue 79

Israel is currently facing a drastic price hike of common items. People bought large amounts of disposable dishes, stocked up on soda and grape juice, soap, shampoo, and who knows what else. Is this the way to go? Should one stock up on grocery items out of fear of skyrocketing prices, or should we shop normally and leave it up to Hashem? **B.C., Rechasim**

To send in questions or answers: Leave a message on the Hotline at 02-301-1300 menu 3 ext. 5 (Yiddish or Hebrew)
Email: s023011300@gmail.com | Fax: 02-659-9189 - Until Sunday Parashat Mikeitz

Replies must include your full name and city Names of questioners are printed with initials and city

A Thought on Bitachon

From the shiurim on Kav Hashgacha Pratis

Last week I met a man who told me, "I've been listening to your classes for a while. I've heard your stories about people finding envelopes of money and other miraculous ways Hashem helps them with money and I used to ask myself - when will such things happen to me?"

"Two months ago, I started working on trusting Hashem - I cut up my credit card, stopped taking loans, and started placing my trust in Hashem to give me what I need on time, and in cash. I started learning Sha'ar Habitachon, prayed to Hashem, and said Tehilim -- but nothing was happening.

"To tell you the truth, the first steps were excruciating for me. I had two month's rent due and a large electric bill, and where would I get the money?"

"I recently moved to another city and opened another bank account. My previous bank account had a large overdraft, and I was glad to just let it be, but now, after learning about bitachon, I decided to try and erase my debt. I went to find out how large my overdraft was in that account and lo and behold, I had no overdraft at all! Instead, there was fifteen thousand shekels in that account! It turned out that money from the Bituach Leumi (Israeli Nation Insurance) had been coming in all the

Excerpts from the popular shiur by Harav Hatzaddik R' Beirish Shneebalg shlit" a

Hashem's Blessings Rain Upon those who Trust in Him Alone

time and it was enough to pay the rent, the electric bill, and then some."

Another story:

Someone came to me to help him get rid of his debt. Baruch Hashem we were able to erase his debt, but now, he was about to marry off his daughter, and he was afraid: "I have nothing, no savings, no accounts. How will I marry her off? Will I fall into debt again?"

A few years ago, this person had invested his money with someone, but he seemed to have run off with the money and my friend had all but given up on the investment. On the night my friend's daughter got engaged, the investor called him up. "Your investment bore fruit. Come over tonight, I have ninety-five thousand shekels for you." This was exactly enough for the wedding and first few months.

I tell you these stories so you know the good life that awaits people once they take upon themselves to use only cash -- no credit cards, no checks. First of all, they don't have any debts. And the second thing - they owe money to no one. Hashem sends them what they need, at exactly the right moment, and in cash.

The shiurim of Harav Shneebalg are delivered weekly in Yiddish and Hebrew alternatively. Dial 2 then 3 (after language preference)

Effects on Two Ends

On the receiving end

I'd like to thank you with a few short words - you changed my life, how I see things in my life. Thank you!

My brother lost consciousness right before Shabbos, and we were unable to wake him. He was taken to the hospital in critical condition, and I promised that if he woke up before Shabbos I would donate newsletters for ten shuls. Baruch Hashem, a miracle happened, and a half hour before Shabbos, he awoke!

On the giving end

You, too, can be a partner in spreading emunah throughout the world, and merit the Zohar's promise of "children and grandchildren who are G-d-fearing and upright!"

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