

# HASHGACHA PRATIS

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



Parshiyos Lech Lecha - Vayeira 5781 ■ Issue 48

## HEART TO HEART

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

### Half for You, Half for Me

Hashem is the King of the world and sustains every living creature, including all animals. It follows that He will provide for every one of us as well. If so, why do we need to have *bitachon*? Why is our faith in Him necessary?

This question was addressed by the *Maspik L'Ovdei Hashem*, R' Avraham the son of the Rambam. He explains that our actions affect the way we receive our livelihood. Hashem told Adam *Harishon* that because of his sin the earth would no longer give forth its power. While previously Hashem had sustained him without any effort on his part, following his sin, he would have to work and sweat for his livelihood. On the other hand, the Torah promises those who follow the ways of Hashem that Hashem "will bless the fruits of your land."

The possuk says "*V'dorshei Hashem lo yachseru kol tov*"- those who seek Hashem will not lack any good. Rabbenu Bechaye assures us that one who trusts in Hashem will have peace of mind and tranquility. Isn't this what everyone wants? What good is money and possessions if we are always nervous and stressed out? *Bitachon* will give you the life of tranquility you want!

When we face difficulties, whom do we turn to for help? Is it wiser to beg for mercy from others, or to go straight to the Source?

In the time of the Apter Rav *zt"l*, there was a Jewish tavern owner renowned for his blessings, which always came true. On a quest to discover whether the man's power stemmed from holy sources or not, the Rav spent a day observing him in his shop. When he saw nothing extraordinary, the Rav demanded that the tavern owner reveal his secret.

The man told his tale.

"A few years ago, the situation in my

home was terrible. We had nothing to eat. My wife begged me to open a tavern with a partner who had the means to make an investment. I went to the city to seek a partner, but I really had no idea how to find a reliable person. I started davening to Hashem to help me find the right man. Suddenly, I was struck by a thought – Why ask Hashem to find a partner, when I can just ask Hashem to *be* the partner?! So I asked Him to be my partner, and promised to split any earnings 50-50. I would keep half for my family, and the other half would go to tzedakah."

"I went home and started the business, and baruch Hashem it has been doing very well. I keep careful track of all the money coming in, and separate it into two piles, one for me and one for Hashem."

When the Apter Rav heard this, he kissed the man on his head and said, "Now I understand why your blessings have power – you're a partner with Hashem!"

The Rebbe pointed out how *emunah peshutah* can grant wondrous powers to a person.

In his pamphlet entitled 'Simcha and Bitachon,' Rav Avraham Chersky *shlit"l* of London advises that when one faces adversity he should accept it with joy, as this reaction brings joy to Hashem as well. How does one react to adversity with joy? One should think the following thoughts:

- 1) Baruch Hashem for all the time until now that I didn't have this problem.
- 2) Baruch Hashem it's not worse than it is.
- 3) Baruch Hashem for my overall health and all the other blessings in my life.
- 4) *Gam zu l'tovah* – this, too, is for the best and I thank Hashem for it.

When someone gets used to thinking these kinds of thoughts, things will actually improve for him as well. May we be *zoche* to a healthy winter and *gishmei bracha*, amen!

(from shiur 108)

## FROM THE EDITOR

### They Arrived at the Right Moment

"I'm in the corona ward in Mayanei Hayeshua Hospital," a relative told me one day over the phone, his voice laden with emotion. "Near me is an elderly Yid who had a heart attack, besides corona. He was being very careful and didn't let anybody into his house since Purim. Only now, during *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*, his children begged him to let them come visit and receive his brachos for the New Year. He finally gave in, and when they were by him they saw he didn't look so good. They called Hatzalah – it was a heart attack!"

I was amazed at the hashgachah pratis, but my relative explained that the man himself didn't see it that way. Instead he complained, "See! I was right! For half a year I was safe, and as soon as people came I caught the virus, and a heart attack too!"

"I tried telling him," my relative continued, "that he has to change his glasses and see the kindness of Hashem manifest in his circumstance. 'Right before your heart attack,' I told him, 'Hashem gave your children a strong desire to visit you, so they would be there to call for help. Hashem caused you to agree to their visit. All of this was for your benefit. That's how you should look at this!'"

The person who heard this anecdote was inspired, and sent it in to the Hashgacha Pratis hotline.

This reminds me of the story in Chovos Halevavos (*Shaar Hakniyah* Ch.6) about the Chassid who was walking with his talmidim and came upon a dog's carcass. The students said, "It smells so bad!" But he corrected them, "How white are its teeth!"

Although it was true that the carcass smelled, the Chassid was teaching them an important lesson for life. Look at the good in everything! There are always two ways to look at things. Do you focus on the smell, or do you admire the white teeth?

The Chovos Halevavos promises that if you accustom yourself to speaking about the positive side of things, this will become your nature. Moreover, the positive perspective is the true one. Everything that happens in the world is from Hashem, and it truly is good!

Listening regularly to Kav Hashgacha Pratis will bring a person to see the good in everything.

Chag Samei'ach!

Pinchas Shefer

# THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

## Lease on Life

Many years ago, some Yidden went to a big *mekubal* to ask for a bracha for a man from their shul who was very ill. The tzaddik agreed to bless him and added, surprisingly, that he wanted to visit the patient. They arrived at the hospital to find the man hooked up to all kinds of tubes and machines, obviously at the end of his life. The *mekubal* sat down and began speaking to the patient.

“Are you prepared to accept upon yourself not to talk in the middle of davening, even one word? If you accept this, you will recover completely!”

The patient’s father repeated the tzaddik’s words, and saw the patient move his head slightly in assent. He told the *mekubal* that his son agreed to the condition.

Then the tzaddik took out an ancient sefer, read from it, and placed it at the head of the patient. “In the merit of your resolution to refrain from talking during davening, you will get better.” Everyone there answered “Amen” intently.

Within a few weeks – the man was back in shul, as if nothing had happened to him!

The tzaddik dismissed the assertion that he had wrought a miracle. “This is not a miracle,” he insisted, “just a halachah in Shulchan Aruch.”

“It says in *Siman* 124:7 that one may not talk during davening. The Mechaber uncharacteristically adds, ‘If someone talks, he is a sinner and his sin is too great for him to bear. We protest against him!’ The Eliyah Rabba quotes the Kol Bo, ‘Woe to those people who talk during davening; we have seen many shuls destroyed because of this.’”

“Now,” continued the *Mekubal*, “Chazal say that positive forces are 500 times stronger than negative ones. So if talking during davening has the power to cause such terrible decrees, then surely being careful about it can bring *yeshuos*! Any Jew can eradicate evil decrees with this resolution!”

The young man was very careful to keep his end of the deal, and he enjoyed perfect health. But then, after about ten months, one Shabbos morning he slipped up. The tzaddik saw him speaking in the middle of davening. He went over to him and asked him what he was doing. “I thought you made a decision,” he said.

Unfortunately, the man took it personally, and responded angrily, “What, you’re threatening me?”

“It has nothing to do with me. It’s the power of the Shulchan Aruch.”

The man jumped up and ran out of the shul. “This is the last time I’m davening here!”

Indeed, by the next Shabbos he was no longer in the world...

At the *levayah*, someone requested that the tzaddik say that he forgives the man, so he shouldn’t be punished in the Next World. The tzaddik brushed off the idea, “I have nothing to forgive. I wasn’t insulted at all. It was between him and the Shulchan Aruch, and he decided not to take it seriously enough.”

Thirty years have passed since this incident, and the children of the *niftar* have grown up, with families of their own. One grandson bears

## Your Request has been Accepted... Please Wait

The following story was told over by Rav Chaim Yehuda Katz *shlit"l* of Lakewood. He is the son of Rav Shlomo Zalman *zt"l*, who was Rav of Toldos Aharon in Williamsburg and son-in-law of the Toldos Aharon Rebbe *zt"l*, the “Divrei Emunah.”

My mother devotes her life to encouraging other Jews and helping them strengthen their emunah and bitachon. She always did this, but especially during the last two years, since my father *zt"l* passed away. It runs in her blood to give chizuk to others, as she is the daughter of the author of Divrei Emunah and granddaughter of the Shomrei Emunim. This, combined with her own life experiences, has given her rock-solid *hashkofos*.

My parents and their seven children used to live in Meah Shearim, until my father took ill and was forced to go to America for treatments. The children were farmed out to relatives, and my mother devoted herself fully to caring for my father.

Once, after a particularly long and draining hospital stay, they felt like they needed a break. All the doctors, medicines, checkups, white coats – the hospital walls were closing in on them. They received permission to leave for a few hours and went to a hotel to relax. They were in Manhattan, so they went to the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, world-renowned for its opulence. Every inch conveyed luxury. As they were walking around the lobby, my mother noticed a display case with jewelry. She glanced inside, and a stunning necklace caught her eye. A gleaming string of pearls, outstanding design, gold accents – a perfect piece of jewelry! It was the hotel’s own product. She knew she could never afford it, but still, she enjoyed admiring it through the glass.

My father noticed her attention, and, in his naiveté, told her that he would like to buy it for her. He looked at the price tag, and couldn’t believe his eyes: **\$30,000!!**

Well, that was quite out of his budget. Coming from Meah Shearim, dealing with an illness that put them in debt... He decided that he would give her the next best thing – a gift of his words, expressing his deep feelings of appreciation and admiration toward her.

“Oh, I so much want to buy this necklace for you. You deserve it so! You are so dedicated to me, even leaving Eretz Yisroel to be with me at this difficult

time.” He offered a prayer to Hashem and continued, “Hakadosh Boruch Hu knows how much I really want to buy this for you. If it is His will, then may this necklace be yours!”

My mother appreciated his warm and honest sentiments, and accepted his words with gratitude. She drew new *kochos* to assist him, until *bs”d* he indeed recovered.

Thirty years later, at the age of 68, he passed away, on Erev Shabbos Parshas *Be’halosecha*, 5778.

Two years later, in Elul 5780, a young woman named Zehava called my mother, asking if she could come talk to her. She is one of the many people who has been strengthened by my mother. My mother talks to her several times a week, often for a long while. The family knows not to interrupt them, as Zehava has had a hard life, and needs a lot of *chizuk*.

That day she came and poured out her heart once again to my mother, and my mother listened, empathized, offered *chizuk* and solace. My mother shared with her that she also went through challenges in life, and recounted her lengthy hospital stays with my father. For some reason, she told Zehava about the time they went to the Waldorf Astoria, and about the necklace she saw there.

Suddenly, Zehava jumped up. “I don’t believe it! The pearl necklace – it must be the same one! You’re the one!” My mother had no idea what she was talking about, of course, and waited patiently until her friend calmed down.

“My father was a very wealthy man,” began Zehava, “from Costa Rica. He liked to buy jewelry for my mother. Once he was in New York on business, and stayed in the Waldorf. He saw a beautiful necklace there, and bought it for my mother. I remember when he brought it home. A \$30,000 necklace! My mother never got around to wearing it, and it stayed in its fancy wrapping all the years. When I turned 12, she gave it to me as a gift, but I never wore it, either. It’s amazing – once, we had a break-in, but the necklace wasn’t next to my other jewelry, so it wasn’t stolen. I want to give it to, you, Rebbetzin!” she finished breathlessly.

She left the house and returned a short time later with a small package. She handed it over to my mother. My mother was completely overwhelmed – there was the necklace! Brand new, still in the original packaging, even!

Zehava continued her tale, “This morning, I had a dream. My parents *z”l* appeared to me and said that it’s time to give away the necklace. And then you told me your story about seeing it there! Hashem arranged it so that the necklace would be yours!”

How awesome are Hashem’s ways! My father’s *tefilla* was fulfilled, thirty years later, in the most unexpected way!

the name of the deceased – and he has some issues involving speech.

Overall he is a nice boy, but he finds it extremely difficult to look into the *siddur* and daven out loud. Also, he seems unable to obey anything his parents and teachers tell him to do...

His parents have asked Kav Hashgacha Pratis to make a public plea of forgiveness from the *Mekubal*, who has also passed away, in the hope that it will help their son to improve in these areas.

In addition, they want to publicize this story to emphasize the importance of not talking during davening, and of keeping one’s word.

## Fundraising Tips

Rav Eliezer Hershler *shlit”a* was once visiting his father-in-law in London, and observed with admiration the *hachnosas orchim* that went on in his father-in-law’s house. He decided to adopt the mitzvah, and began his career of welcoming guests in his home in Batei Ungarin, near Meah Shearim. They started with a few guests and soon the operation expanded to dozens and even hundreds of weekly guests! For 35 years the Hershlers have maintained an empire of *chessed*. The big question is, how do they afford it? Rav Hershler works hard to finance the family’s *hachnosas orchim*, collecting in shuls around the country and even travelling abroad to raise funds. He brings along a list of names to daven for, and when the inevitable *bizyonos* come, he takes out his list and davens!

In Elul 5780 Rav Hershler was in a certain shul in Monsey that holds *minyanim* from *netz* through *chatzos*. The minhag in the shul is that only one man may solicit money each day. The collector gets to solicit donations during all the *minyanim* that take place on that day.

Rav Hershler paid for the privilege of soliciting funds in the shul on a certain Friday. As he was preparing to make his appeal towards the end of the *netz* minyan, imagine his surprise when he saw another collector go up to the bimah and begin speaking. “I am collecting for such and such *yeshiva*...” the second collector began.

Rav Hershler waited until the end of the *derasha* to ask the man what he thought he was doing. R’ Hershler informed him of the shul rules, and told him that he had already paid for the right to solicit on this day.

“So, should I leave?” asked the man.

“No,” replied R’ Hershler, “if you’re already here I won’t tell you to leave. I hope you have a lot of *hatzlacha*.”

He decided to share the *bimah* with him, and they both made an appeal after each minyan. This certainly raised eyebrows, since it was against the protocol of the shul. The *gabbai* came over to demand payment from the other man, but R’ Hershler stopped him. “It’s on me.”

Between each *derasha*, R’ Hershler davened to Hashem, “Please help me withstand this *nisayon*, and to succeed in my endeavor. I know that You are the same Hashem here and in Yerushalayim, and only You can help me.”

After they finished their rounds, R’ Hershler gave the other fellow a \$20 donation. “Thank you for giving me the opportunity to work on my *middos*.”

They counted their earnings, and R’ Hershler was astounded to discover that he had made \$3500, much more than he usually brought in. He felt bad for the other man, though, who saw that that he had only \$500. “I never had such a bad day,” he lamented.

The message was quite clear: When a person gives in, he will only gain.

# Q's & A's

Readers ask and readers respond

Questions and answers about emunah, bitachon and hashgacha pratis



Q #6

**I have been strengthening my bitachon a lot recently. The downside is that I am not careful enough about spending money, with unpleasant results. How do I balance this?**

B. R., Modiin Illit

## Clear-cut halachah

Many readers responded by quoting the Biur Halachah in *Siman* 529:

Don't be stingy when spending for Yom Tov, but during the week one should be frugal with his spending... This serves as a rebuke to many people in our days who transgress this. They do not pay attention to controlling their spending and avoiding luxuries. Many have fallen because of this evil practice, which leads a person ultimately to thievery and extortion – and disgrace and shame... Praiseworthy is the one who strengthens his heart and doesn't give in to the temptations, and conducts his household expenses according to his income and no more!

## Hashem can send the cash

**Reb Moshe Borenstein of Bnei Brak:** I have to admit that I had the same problem. For many years I ignored my lack of means, and used credit cards and checks, thinking I was a big *ba'al* bitachon. Well, I wasn't, really, and I suffered the consequences. Recently, I have been listening to the shiurim of Rav Beirish Shneebalg *shlit"a* on the line, and have learned the meaning of true bitachon. Hashem can send me money even without the gemach as intermediary, if I turn to Him with real emunah. He is there waiting for us, all the time, and is close to all those who truthfully call out to Him. Start to believe, and you'll start to receive!

## Use your common sense

**Reb Tzvi Reuven Dovidovitz, Reb Meir Yechiel Hamburger, Reb Refael Sheinberger of Yerushalayim; Reb Yaakov Segal of Teveriah; Reb Eliyahu Shmuelson of Ashdod:** This is not a valid Torah outlook, to spend money without any calculation and chalk it up to bitachon. You see from the outcome that this is not Hashem's will!

Part of bitachon is understanding that He gives you everything you need. If you don't have the ability to get something, it means it's not for you.

Reb Nachman of Breslov used to say that it's better to owe yourself than to owe other people. He meant that one should be satisfied with what Hashem has given him, and view everything else as extra or unnecessary. Usually, when someone is not satisfied with what he has, he'll spend a lot of money on things he doesn't need. This is definitely not bitachon!

**Reb Yisroel Dovid Greenstein of Tzfas, Reb Dovid Lazar of Yerushalayim:** Part of proper hishtadlus is to watch your spending and do it sensibly. If you don't, Hashem won't necessarily give you parnassah. It

could well be that the person who asked this question has a problem with compulsive spending, which he could only let loose now that he's working on bitachon and can use "bitachon" as a smokescreen. He has to work on this issue along with working on his bitachon. Also, if he doesn't have what he needs in abundance, it might mean that his bitachon is not strong enough.

**Reb Bentzion Ganzler of Ramat Viznitz, Haifa:** I counsel people with such issues. Certainly, you can't just spend without thinking. You have to learn how to spend intelligently so you can live in peace.

## Plant, and Hashem will make it grow

**Reb Yeshayahu Landy of Beit Shemesh:** The Sefer Maalos Hamiddos (Ch 20) spells it out beautifully. He writes that one should be careful to invest the proper effort and *zerizus* into every endeavor. One should never say that it's already been decreed on High, so "why should I put myself out to get my parnassah?" One who does so brings great damage to himself! Some people claim that their own laziness is a result of bad luck, but they don't realize that their laziness is what causes them to lose out their parnassah!

**Reb Yaakov Yisroel Korlansky:** The Chovos Halevavos explains how a person needs to exert himself for his parnassah (*Shaar Habitachon* ch. 4). The Mesillas Yesharim (ch. 9) says the same. He differentiates between bitachon and recklessness. Hashem created people with a sound mind and the ability to see reason and conduct themselves accordingly. A person should use his *seichel* to guard himself from dangerous things, which were created to punish the wicked. If someone ignores sensibility and exposes himself to dangers, that is not bitachon, but recklessness!

**Reb Chaim Eliezer Weiss of Haifa, Reb Aharon Rabinowitz of Beitar:** The Gemarah (Shabbos 31) says "emunah" refers to *Seder Zeraim*.

Tosfos explains it as "he trusts in Hashem and plants." Tzaddikim have pointed out that planting is not a *contradiction* to emunah, but rather it is the way to go about emunah. We are supposed to plant and do all the normal hishtadlus, and believe that everything is in Hashem's hands.

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On the receiving end

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M. Cohen, Williamsburg

On the giving end

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M. Moskowitz, Yerushalayim

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