

HASHGACHA PRATIS

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



Parshiyos Chayei Sarah - Toldot 5781 ■ Issue 49

HEART TO HEART

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

Two Guaranteed Segulos

There are two ancient segulos for parnassah. Both are simple and effective. They don't require you to travel around the world in the time-consuming pursuit of business deals. You don't have to miss *limud* Torah or tefillah with a minyan. Nor do you need to frequent non-kosher environments. You can do these segulos without losing anything in the physical and spiritual realm. In fact, even if these segulos would not bring parnassah, they are sweet and pleasurable for both body and soul.

The Chovos Halevavos teaches us about these segulos when he discusses a mistake that many people make. They admire wealthy people, become jealous of them, and then devote their lives to making more and more money. This makes it hard for them to do mitzvos properly, as they get lost in the race for money. They're missing the two main points of our lives, which he defines as the following: **1) To fulfill our duties to Hashem and 2) to thank Him for the blessings He gives us.** If they do these two things, he concludes, "their needs will certainly be closer to becoming fulfilled."

In other words, a person who wants Hashem to fulfill his requests should focus on these two areas. Keep mitzvos, learn Torah, and thank Hashem. The idea of thanking Hashem constantly is not a new one. Rabbenu Bechaye said it long ago. He promises that doing so will bring you closer to receiving all your needs, including parnassah.

These two segulos go hand in hand. If you thank Hashem more, you'll be happier and want to do mitzvos better.

People make *seudos hoda'ah*, say *Nishmas*, or recite *Mizmor L'sodah*. All these means of giving thanks to Hashem give a person a wonderful feeling. He becomes filled with the consciousness that Hashem cares about him, loves him, and takes care of him. When a person feels this way, his desire to do mitzvos and serve Hashem is ignited. Thanking Hashem is a means of coming to greater *avodah*.

The Yalkut Shimoni says a beautiful thing about the possuk "הודו לה' כי תרבו" (Tehillim, 118). He explains that we have nothing with which to pay Hashem back for all His kindnesses. We are completely surrounded by His kindness. What do we have of our own with which to repay Him? The only thing we can do is appreciate all that He does and express our thanks for His kindness.

As soon as Adam Harishon was created he said, in the *mizmor* for the Shabbos day, "טוב להודות לה'!" That's how the world began – with *hoda'ah*.

When we thank Hashem, it spares us so many mistakes and problems. We realize Who really gives us our wealth. It's not a result of our extra efforts. We become humble, recognizing that we are constantly on the receiving end. Then we feel that we want to give back something to Him, so we work on serving him better and giving Him more nachas.

These are the tried and tested segulos of the Chovos Halevavos. May we always enjoy tremendous bounty in parnassah and every other blessing!

(From shiur 118)

FROM THE EDITOR

A Few Small Words- An Entire World

A Yid who is involved in *zikui harabbim* has approached me several times and suggested the following: "It is a fact that Machon Shaar Habitachon is one of the most famous organizations in the world. You should use it as a forum to publicize the importance of saying nice things to people. Sometimes a few good words can build an entire world!"

He gives examples. You can go over to someone learning, and say, "It makes me happy to see you learning so nicely." You can say to the chazzan, "When you daven, my tefillah is a different tefillah." Encouraging words do wonders for people, no matter their age, position, and personality.

I completely agree with him.

I remember when I was a bochur and davened together with a boy who was the brother-in-law of my friend from yeshiva. I told him one day, "You're so lucky to have such a great brother-in-law!" A few days later, my newly married friend came over to me with a big smile. "You have no idea what your compliment accomplished," he noted. The boy had told his parents, who then told the new kallah and all their friends. "You made many people happy – including me!"

The goal of our organization is to spread emunah and bitachon, and the power of speech is not really our topic. Nonetheless, there is a connection between the two. Someone explained to me that positive words don't happen in a vacuum. Only if someone is filled with emunah and is genuinely happy within can he bring joy to others. When he is in such a state, the kind words will flow by themselves.

For this reason, we don't see a need to address the issue of positive words directly. Speaking positively is something that will happen on its own as a result of a person working on his emunah and bitachon. A big *mashpia* told me that this can work the opposite way, too. Even if someone doesn't really feel like sharing in his friend's simcha, he can force himself to do it anyway. Then, it will have an effect on him, and he will start to actually feel happy for him! Just like speaking about emunah brings you to more emunah, speaking positively to others helps you develop positive feelings.

Good Shabbos,
Pinchas Shefer

THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

In the Zechus of Amen

My name is Shlomo. I live in Yerushalayim, in an apartment on the fourth floor. We have two windows, both protected by metal bars. We let our 3-year-old sit on the windowsill, as everyone does here. The metal bars on one window can be opened, though, to reach our laundry lines. We have two locks on it, for safety – one with a code and one with a key.

On erev Sukkos this year, we were all busy getting ready for the Yom Tov. I was working on the sukkah and my wife was cooking in the kitchen. We didn't realize that our little boy was left to his own devices, with almost catastrophic results...

He decided to get his doll ready for Yom Tov, so he washed its clothes. Now the clothing needed to dry – so he went to the window to put the clothes on the line. Somehow he climbed up on a chair and got the metal bars open. He sat on the ledge, four floors up, and reached out to the laundry line –

At that moment, my wife was taking challah in the kitchen. She has a custom of calling all the children to answer amen to her bracha. She called our son. When he didn't respond, she went to look for him – and found him on the open window ledge! Baruch Hashem she got to him just in time, in the merit of "amen."

(Interview 53, Hebrew)

From Humiliation to Salvation

Reb Yaakov Kletzkin from Bnei Brak tells his tale:

I'm not a professional collector. Actually, I am a *sofer stam*. Nonetheless I found myself once travelling to America to raise funds for an important cause. I had just finished writing a Sefer Torah, and had no jobs lined up. I decided to take along a sample of my writing, just in case.

When I got to Boro Park, I hired a driver to take me around to *gevirim*. Unfortunately, I wasn't making much money. One day, the driver said he heard about a new address in Lakewood. Off we went. I was waiting in line, and the people ahead of me were coming out with donations of \$200, \$180. When I went in to the office, however, for some reason the wealthy man got upset at me.

"Who are you?! Who sent you?" he yelled. Then he kicked me out!

That was humiliating, to the say the least. It's not like I'm even a *shnorer* – I was doing a favor for others. Why should he treat me that way? Soon I calmed down, though, and said "*gam zu l'tovah*." Everything is from Hashem.

I decided to go back into his office to show him the sample of my writing and ask if he would be interested. I wanted to be left with a good feeling about him. This time, he was polite to me, and examined the *ksav* with interest. The next morning, he called and said he wanted me to write a Sefer Torah for him! He told me to come right away and sign a contract.

The problem was that I had no way of getting there. I had already made up with my driver that I didn't need him that day, and he had found another client instead. To travel by bus from Boro Park to Lakewood takes some time. Plus, as soon as I left the house where I was staying, it started raining, then hailing.

Suddenly, a car pulled over right in front of me. Behind the wheel was none other than the driver I had been using! He said his new customer had cancelled. Baruch Hashem, I didn't have to deal with public transportation, especially in such weather. We got to Lakewood and the *gvir* agreed to my price right away. I walked out with postdated checks for the coming year. I didn't get a donation from him, but after I accepted the humiliation, I saw immediate salvation from on High!

(Interview 49, Yiddish)

The Rebbe said He Could Go

Rabbi Yosef Munsenago *shlit"a*, from Bayit Vegan, relates:

My father, Rav Aharon *zt"l*, lived in Casablanca, Morocco. The Brisker Rav advised him to go there and establish mosdos Torah, and he saved thousands of children from assimilation.

Once, he had kidney stones that required surgery. Baruch Hashem he found a nice Jewish doctor there to do it.

It Doesn't Have to Make Sense

My friend Reb Noach *shlit"a* has a new story for us:

It was Sunday morning, Parshas Lech Lecha. I was organizing my desk when I came across a paper I got from Reb Mordechai Malachi with a story of hashgacha pratis. He had given it to me the previous year, in Shevat. I put the paper in my pocket, thinking that if I find the time I could read it.

The time came sooner than I thought!

I have the *zechus* of running an institution which I started together with a friend. We built it from scratch. At first we worked together very well, but after a while, we saw that we had disparate ways of doing things. My friend is a very nice person. We discussed it and decided that he would leave. I will never forget his tremendous part in establishing the institution.

Anyway, that Sunday night, I found out that my old friend bought up the lot next to my building – and that he was planning to start an institution just like mine! Well, that was not an easy *nisayon*, having someone open a competing institution, and right next door! And this was the person who used to work with me, no less! I strengthened my *emunah* and told myself that it's all from Hashem. And then I took out the paper I got from Reb Malachi and began reading it.

The timing was perfect.

Reb Malachi wrote that he heard the following story firsthand. In his words:

"I'm a locksmith. A few years ago I got a call from a lawyer who wanted me to open up an old safe. I went to the address and found four lawyers there, the trustees for the abandoned house on Rechov Chaim Parchi in Yerushalayim. The owner passed away many years before and the empty, broken-down house was a popular place

for neighborhood children to play in. There was a large safe in one of the rooms and they wanted me to open it.”

“I told them my price – 800 shekels – and started to work. Ready with my tools, I tried the handle – and it opened in a second! It wasn’t actually locked!”

“The lawyers rushed over and found an absolute treasure trove within. Jewelry, gold, money... They called an appraiser who checked it and said it was worth \$1.75 million!”

“I was blown away. A million dollars of gold was just sitting in this unlocked safe, for 80 years, as all the kids ran around it, and nothing was touched. What are the odds of such a thing?”

“Two weeks later they called again from the same place. They found another safe they wanted me to open it. I brought along my brother for an extra pair of hands and went to check it out. This time it really was locked, and the lock was old, rusted and stuck. It took us two hours to break it open, and again the lawyers rushed over. What was inside this time? Some rusty silverware! Wow, they were disappointed. They threw the rusted stuff in the garbage.”

Reb Noach continues:

That was just the message I needed to hear at that moment! There’s no connection between our efforts and the outcome. The gold just sat there without even being locked, and Hashem protected it during all those years, while the locked up safe had garbage in it. Likewise if someone wants to open an institution that threatens mine – it’s not really him. Hashem provides parnassah, and nobody can take what is coming to you.

This gave me tremendous chizuk. Nine months after Reb Malachi had given me this story, I opened it and read it at the exact moment when I needed to hear its message! I called my old partner, wished him well, and offered him help. We’re both trying to increase *kavod shamayim*, and the donations that are meant for me will not go to him. Hashem is in charge!

(From Daily bitachon in 5 minutes, Tuesday, Parshas Lech Lecha #6. Press 2 then 0 after language preference)

My brothers and I all live in Eretz Yisrael, and we were worried about him. We thought we should be at his side through this difficult period. We asked my father if he thought we should come, and he replied that he would think about it. This made me even more nervous, because it seemed out of character. My father was usually very independent.

When I called again a few days later, my mother answered the phone. She insisted there was no reason for any of us to come, since my father was very optimistic and upbeat about his upcoming surgery.

I wondered how his attitude had undergone such a sudden change for the better. “Last night,” my mother explained, “Aba had a dream. He was sitting in the Satmar Beis Hamedrash with the Rebbe *zt”l* and Rav Chaiken *zt”l*.”

These two men were very instrumental in my father’s life. Rav Chaiken, a talmid of the Chafetz Chaim, started a yeshiva in Ax-le-Bain, France after the war and my father learned there for seven years, never even going home once throughout that time. My father became a *ben bayis* by Rav Chaiken, and eventually followed his example of *mesirus nefesh* for Klal Yisroel.

My father was also very close to the Satmar Rebbe as well, and every time he went to America, to the offices of the Joint, he would speak to the Rebbe. The Rebbe once gave him a donation of \$200, which was a lot of money in those days. My father didn’t want to take it; “Give it to needy people,” my father said. The Rebbe smiled and insisted that he wanted a share in the Torah of Morocco! My father would always quote the Divrei Yoel in his *derashos* at Shalosh Seudos, and he looked up to the Rebbe as his mentor.

“And so,” my mother continued. “These two tzaddikim appeared to him in a dream. They were about to make kiddush, but Aba didn’t want to go in. He said to them ‘Gut Shabbos,’ and the Satmar Rebbe responded, ‘Go!’”

My mother explained that Aba interpreted this dream as a good sign. They scheduled the surgery that very day – and incredibly enough the date they were given was for 26 Av, the Satmar Rebbe’s *yahrtzeit*!

Baruch Hashem, the surgery was successful and my father lived exactly another 24 years. He was *niftar* on the 26th of Av, just like his Rebbe!

(Interview 45, Hebrew)

A Kiddush Hashem with Fifty Shekels

It was *bein hazemanim* and about fifty of us were learning in a Beis Medrash on Rechov Yehuda Hanasi in Brachfeld. An older man walked in and came over to me. “Are you learning *Maseches Midos*?” he asked me. I had actually just studied this *masechta*.

“Do you want to buy a sefer on *Midos* and *Tamid*?” he asked.

Although the sefer was of interest to me, I didn’t have money on me at the time. He handed me the sefer anyway.

“Don’t worry, you’ll pay me whenever you can,” he said. He wrote his name and address on a small scrap of paper. Then he told me, with tears in his eyes, how hard he had worked on the sefer, how many years he had put into it, and that it was *l’ilui nishmas* his parents *Hy”d*. He was trying to sell it, but not many people learn these *mesechtas* about the Beis Hamikdash. He was so happy to find someone who was interested.

Some time passed and I lost the scrap of paper with his contact information. I had no idea how to reach him, and I davened to Hashem that I would meet up with him. Six months later, I was on a bus to Yerushalayim with my younger brother, when we overheard a conversation behind us between a Jew and an Arab. They were arguing which religion was better. It didn’t interest me, but I heard the older Jew say, “Even you have to admit that our Torah is truth and applies forever. The gentiles have nothing to offer!”

My brother looked back at them, and said to me, “Hey, isn’t that the man who sold you the sefer?” I wasn’t sure, but I approached him and asked if he was the author of “*Chayei Tamid*.” He replied that he was, indeed, the very same. I was so happy – I had finally found him!

I told him he had given me the sefer six months ago, and that I had been hoping to meet him and be able to pay him back.” I gave him the 50 shekels.

The man turned to his seatmate, the Arab. “See what I was saying? Here’s a classic example of Jewish education. A young man came to pay up the money he owed, without my even having to ask him for it. Why? Simply because our Torah says so!” The Arab was left with his tongue hanging out. “That would never happen by us. To get money out of someone you have to yell and hit him. You’re right – the Torah of the Jews is true and lasts forever!”

50 shekels waited half a year for just the right moment, a moment when they would bring about kiddush Hashem!

(From shiur 175 in Shaar Habitachon. Press 4 after language preference)

Q's & A's

Readers ask and readers respond

Questions and answers about emunah, bitachon and hashgacha pratis



Q #7

I have the zechus of working for the needs of the tzibbur. We know that when you're helping other people you can't just depend on emunah and bitachon and say, "Hashem will help. It'll be OK." On the other hand, it is impossible to do anything without emunah and bitachon. What is the proper balance?

M. S. H., Yerushalayim

Bitachon and hishtadlus

Reb Naftali Orlinsky from Kiryas Sefer, Reb Yekusiel Yehuda Gottlieb and Reb Aharon Drenfeld from Bnei Brak, Reb Moshe Cohen from Chatzor Illit, Reb Aryeh Lebowitz from Haifa, and Reb Avraham Spivak from Modiin Illit: This touches on the famous question about the co-existence of *yediah* (Hashem's knowledge of past, present and future) and *bechirah* (man's ability to make choices). A person has to put in the proper effort but also trust in Hashem that the results will be good. You need to put in "100% bitachon and 100% hishtadlus." You make your utmost effort alongside the knowledge that the results are completely up to Hashem.

Reb Michoel Uiman from Bnei Brak: People think that bitachon is a segulah to get whatever you want. That's wrong. Bitachon is the way we should live our lives. In every aspect of life, you do what you need to do, together with bitachon. The only difference between physical and spiritual endeavors is that for *gashmiyus*, there is a limit as to how much effort you should put in, while for *ruchniyus* there are no limits. In both realms, however, the results are not connected to the efforts made.

Reb Michoel Shalom Winkler from Modiin Illit: "הוא הנותן לך כח לעשות חיל" The Ran points out that it doesn't say "He gives you *chayil*," but rather "He gives you strength to make *chayil*." Hashem created the natural course of the world in a way that a person has to do something in order to receive bounty from Hashem. If you don't do what you need to do, you can lose the blessings that Hashem wants to give you.

Reb Dovid Yisroel from Beit Shemesh: A simple example: A person wants to fry an egg. Regardless of how much bitachon he has, he will need to take an egg, crack it, put it into a frying pan, and so on. Although Hashem has the ability to make a fried egg appear straight out of the fridge, we do the hishtadlus anyway. That's how Hashem made the world. If a person refrains from doing hishtadlus for personal matters, that is laziness. If he neglects

his hishtadlus when dealing with the *tzibbur*, that is *gezel* and negligence.

A Public Emissary must do his Shlichus

Reb Aryeh Rubin from Tifrach: Let's say a father tells his son to clean up the toys. Do we think the father was incapable of doing so himself? So too, your job is to be Hashem's *shaliach* in this world. You can't throw it back to Him just because He could do it.

Reb Aharon Nachman from Beit Shemesh: Rav Dessler talks about this. The Gemara says Tornusrufus asked Rabi Akiva, "If your G-d loves poor people, why doesn't He give them parnassah?" Rabi Akiva answered him that this is in order to save their benefactors from *gehenom*. It thus follows that we can't assume that Hashem will help them Himself. The whole reason why they are in need is in order to help us get *zechuyos* and learn how to do kindness.

Reb Moshe Fogel from London adds: Tornusrufus had no understanding of true bitachon. Obviously if I help someone who is suffering, I am not going against Hashem's will! Throughout the generations, people made efforts to help each other.

Heresy?

Reb Elimelech Lampin from London, Reb Chaim Asher Willig from Modiin Illit: The Baal Shem Tov said that every attribute can be used for good or bad. His talmidim once asked him how heresy (*apikorsus*) can be used for good. He answered that when you have the chance to help someone, then you should be a "heretic." Don't just say "it's Hashem's will that he suffer," but rather try to help him with all your strength.

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Effects on Two Ends

On the receiving end

Someone hurt me very much and I suffered a lot from it. I felt I could never forgive him. Then I started listening to the hotline, and with each day I felt more and more calm, until I was able to say with a full heart that I really forgive him. I don't believe it!

Y. M., Ashdod

I waited 7 years to have children. I sponsored the distribution of the pamphlets in 280 shuls and merited salvation in a way that was completely beyond the rules of nature!

On the giving end

Message received on the hotline

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