

HASHGACHA PRATIS

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



Parshiyos Emor - Behar Bechukotai 5781 ■ Issue 64

HEART TO HEART

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

Sending Coins to Heaven

We trust that Hashem will reward us for our mitzvos. On one hand, we don't deserve anything for them. We get so many gifts from Hashem, all the time, that even if we would do millions of mitzvos it would never be enough! And yet, one of the 13 foundations of faith is that Hashem rewards those who do His mitzvos. This isn't just a nice idea, but something we are obligated to believe and remember always! Why is this so?

The Mishnah teaches us how to relate to the reward for mitzvos. "Do not be like servants who work to be recompensed, but rather like servants who serve their master not for the purpose of reward." (Avos 1:3) The Ramban explains that we should not perceive ourselves as workers who get paid on the day they conclude their work, but rather we should know that reward awaits us in the future. Every good thing we do is put in the "safe" – every good thought, every good word, every desire we overcome. It's all kept for us, for the Next World.

Rav Aharon Yosef Luria zt"l, one of the leaders of the Slonim community in Teveria, wrote the following question in his Avodas Pnim (Letter 11). Chazal tell us that when a person suffers yissurim, they serve to deduct from his punishment in the Next World. So, is the converse true, as well – that every pleasure in this world deducts from one's reward in the future?

He answered with a mashal. Imagine an employee in a store. He receives his paycheck for his work, and if he wants, he can take home some products from the store, to be deducted from his salary. What if he pays in cash for the items? Obviously, the price of the items won't

be deducted from his salary. We're in the same situation in this world. If we simply enjoy the pleasures of the world, they will indeed be subtracted from our future reward. That is, unless we pay for them now. How do we pay Hashem? With gratitude! The Midrash says, "**Yisroel has no way to pay back Hashem, except by thanking Him for all the goodness He does for them!**" (Shochar Tov Tehillim, 118)

We have many opportunities – the hundred daily berachos, expressions of thanks in davening, and our own personal appreciation for the blessings in life. Every time we eat something, we make a beracha, and that is our way of paying for it. Interestingly, Chazal refer to berachos as "the coin which our Sages coined." Berachos are the "currency" with which we pay back Hashem! Each time we make another beracha or say a tefilla, it's an opportunity to pay Hashem. There is an explanation brought in the name of Eliyahu Hanavi, for the possuk in Tehillim "ושב תהילות ישראל". What does it mean that Hashem "sits" on our praises? It's like people say that someone "sits on an income" of a certain amount of money. So too, Hashem "sits" on the income of our praises to Him! We give Him parnassah, so to speak, says the Zohar; "Give might to Hashem!"

So this is the answer. We can't ever repay all the gifts Hashem gives us. But He set up a system whereby we can "pay" for them with our expressions of thanks, and in that way receive our reward in its entirety in the future.

May we merit to always thank Hashem for our endless blessings!

(From shiur 196 in Shaar Habitachon)

FROM THE EDITOR

The Guest who Loves Complaints

We received an exceptionally powerful letter, which stated the following:

I am including a copy of a passage from Igra D'kalla that gave me a lot of chizuk when I lost my husband six years ago. I'm sure it will help others as well.

Igra D'kalla, Parshas Shoftim: "We have a kabala from the talmidim of the Baal Shem Tov that whenever a person is lacking, he should contemplate what is good about the situation, and this will sweeten the midas hadin with mercy. This is what it means when it says, 'Be wholesome with Hashem.' One should find the chessed concealed in the challenge, thus filling in the place where he is lacking."

This idea is mentioned all the time on Kav Hashgacha Pratis – to see the good in everything and accept every situation with joy. This is a fulfillment of the halacha that one should say "everything Hashem does is for the good," and also results in an abundance of blessing!

I met a man who is overwhelmed with debts. He was seriously about to give up on everything. I wanted to help him – but how? Providentially, I remembered a quote I had seen from Rav Boruch of Mezibuzh zy"l, who says: *Botzina d'nehora, entry oni*: Every person who descends from our holy Avos must experience the taste of poverty. However, there is no set timeframe for how long the experience must last, and a person can shorten the experience for himself. Poverty is a very unusual guest; it prefers *bizyonos* and abhors honor. Thus, if one reacts to poverty by getting upset and complaining, the unwanted guest will settle down and stay awhile. On the other hand, if one receives it with love, humility and honor – it'll run away! If you accept the challenge of poverty with tranquility, emunah and bitachon, it won't feel comfortable in your home, and it'll be on its way! But if you hate it and get upset, then the poverty revels in this sort of reaction and will extend its stay.

This is what I told that Jew.

He said that the idea gives him chizuk, and he'll work on it.

I'm sure he'll soon see a yeshuah.

This is the best advice possible – to accept everything that happens with joy – and then we'll merit an abundance of shefa that Hashem wants to bestow upon us!

Good Shabbos Pinchas Shefer

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

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• Kav Hashgacha Pratis for women
(Yiddish and Hebrew) - Menu 4

THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

The Man in the Picture

About fifteen years ago I went with my extended family to Meron for a special chalaka. My nephew, born after many years of prayers and tears, was turning three. While we were there, I found a camera lying on a low wall. I looked for an identifying name, but there was none. This was the old kind of camera, with film that you had to develop in order to see the pictures. So I put up a sign about it and took it home with me, to Modiin Illit.

I developed the film, hoping for a clue about the owner of the camera, but I didn't recognize anyone in the pictures. What more could I do? I asked Hashem to help me return the item to its owner.

A few weeks later I went to my in-laws in Yerushalayim for Shabbos. On Friday night, I walked with a friend to daven by the Kosel. I was standing there during Kabbalas Shabbos, when I looked at the man next to me. His face was oddly familiar. I searched my memory, trying to place it, when it hit me – I had seen him in the pictures!

"Excuse me," I asked him, "Did you lose a camera in Meron?"

"YES!" he practically shouted. "How did you know?!"

I told him I had developed the film to get a clue as to the owner. He was overwhelmed with gratitude to Hashem and to me, His messenger. The man lived in the north of Israel, and had just come to Yerushalayim for that Shabbos. Just like me!

(Wednesday morning Parshas Shemini story 3 #18879)

Loan Repaid

I live in a town not far from London, England. I moved there a year ago from Bnei Brak, where my in-laws live. Shortly before I left, I was checking out my purchases in a store there, but found I was 240 shekels short of cash. I was trying to figure out what to do, when a chassid noticed my problem and readily lent me the money. I was very grateful and put his name and number into my phone, to pay him back.

Unfortunately, it got erased somehow. I had no idea how to find him, and soon after I moved to England. I started davening that I could repay the debt; I added a short tefillah at the end of every Shemoneh Esrei.

This past Pesach, we went to visit my in-laws. I was standing outside their building when a chassidishe man walked by.

He glanced at me, and then stopped. Each of us seemed familiar to the other. Suddenly, I realized – it was him! The man who had lent me the money! He said he actually lives in Petach Tikva but was also visiting his in-laws. Baruch Hashem, I was able to repay the loan.

(Tuesday night, Parshas Shemini, story 1

#29680)

Shidduch on the Road

Reb Yitzchak from Tzfas:

Two years ago, I was traveling with my friend Shimon from Teveryah to Tzfas. He was then 25 years old, and still single. As we were driving, we spotted a car on the side of the road. As we got closer, we saw a man – the driver, apparently – and a young couple with a baby. The car had caught fire. We felt bad for them, but had already passed them when we stopped to think about their situation. They were obviously stuck on the road; maybe we could give them a lift?

Shimon turned the car around and went back to them.

"Do you need a ride to Tzfas?" he asked.

The husband looked absolutely worn out, and at the suggestion he lit up – a yeshuah! They got into the car, thanking us profusely, and we continued on our way.

We were amazed at the Heavenly intervention – when a police car stopped us. The officer looked in the car and said, "What's this? A baby without a car seat?"

Shimon told them the story; we had just picked them up on the road next to their car which had burnt up and hadn't had a chance to get a car seat.

The officer looked like he was about to believe us, but an older policeman jumped in, shouting, "You're liars! I don't believe your stories! You're getting a fine!" He was so angry that he wrote out a ticket for a larger fine than he would've – 1000 shekels – and even took off six points from Shimon's license! (12 points can revoke one's one's driver's license; six is a lot.)

You can imagine how everyone in the car was feeling. The couple felt terrible that they caused him such trouble, Shimon was perplexed. Why would Hashem do this to him as a result of an act of chessed? I and the baby were spectators to the tense atmosphere.

The man offered to pay for the fine, but Shimon showed his amazing middos and refused. "This was my mitzvah, and this is part of the cost of it. Don't worry," he added with a smile, "it was decided in Shamayim that I would lose this money, so at least it came through a mitzvah!"

We were all in awe of his emunah and calmness. The fellow was blown away by the generosity of this stranger, and they started schmoozing. They actually lived not far from each other, and they became fast

To listen to stories press

Let's reach out to every Jew! You, too, can take part in the tremendous

friends.

Afterwards, the man told his father the whole episode, praising Shimon to the skies. His father mentioned that he had a neighbor who had a daughter who needed a shidduch... and in the end they got engaged!

Shimon made a seudas hodaah after his vort, thanking Hashem for the chain of events which led him to find his wife. He got up to speak and remarked that he thought he was losing 1000 shekels and six points, even though he was trying to do a chessed, but really it was just a test Hashem was putting him through as the final step of his shidduch process!

(Bitachon Yomi in 5 minutes, Wednesday Parshas Tazria #150)

I was Looking for You!

My great-grandmother was a special lady. She lived in Hungary before the war in the Karasna region. She survived the war through many miracles and moved to Eretz Yisroel.

It was in the summer of 1963 that she was staying in a vacation resort. One morning she heard knocking from the hallway, and then more knocking. She peeked out to see who was there, and saw a woman knocking on the door of the resort's owner. My great-grandmother told her the owner was not home, and invited her into her room to wait.

The irreligious woman accepted her kind offer, and they sat together and got acquainted. The woman mentioned that she was from Hungary, from the same area as my grandmother.

"My parents died when I was very young," she explained, "and a lady used to take care of me. She was so dedicated; she gave me not only food and shelter, but also love and attention that nobody else gave me. All these years, I tried finding her to thank her for her tremendous kindness to me. I even put ads in the newspapers, but never found her."

Well, my great-grandmother took a good look at her and exclaimed, "It was me!"

They fell into each other's arms, laughing and crying as only long-lost survivors can, marveling at the hashgacha that had finally brought them together. Now they understood why the owner of the resort wasn't at home when she needed her...

The lady told my great-grandmother that she had two sons. She confided that she was afraid that they wouldn't even say kaddish for her. My grandmother, always a baalas chessed, offered to arrange for kaddish, putting the woman's mind at ease.

They parted ways, promising to keep in touch. Unfortunately the kaddish offer became a reality not long thereafter. The woman was killed in a car crash a month later. Everything is orchestrated from above, down to the last detail.

(Monday night Parshas Shmini, Yiddish story 4 #20661)

Tree Removal

If you go to Chavakuk Street in Bnei Brak, check out building #13. In front of it stands a tall palm tree, right next to a stump of another tree. What's so impressive about that? What happened to that other tree?

A year ago, when the first lockdown began, an elderly woman lived in that building, a few floors up. Being cut off from the whole world is hard enough, but she had an additional problem – a huge palm tree blocked her view of the street. She felt like she was in solitary confinement! She called up the municipality to come cut it down, but they weren't interested in helping her. Anyway, they were busy enough with all the logistics of that difficult time. So what did she do? She davened to Hashem to take care of it for her.

And you know what happened? Suddenly, without any apparent reason, the tree started rotting away! Branches began falling off, and soon enough she could finally see the street!

Afterwards, the city cut it down to a stump. And there it stands, testimony to the power of prayer and to Hashem's infinite control of the world.

(Bitachon Yomi, Wednesday, Chol Hamoad Pesach # 138)

Like Free Men

Now I can look back and see how the challenge was another opportunity to see how Hashem takes care of us.

My wife works as a kindergarten teacher, making 9000 shekels a month. Together with my small stipend from kollel, we usually manage to support our family of nine children *bli ayin horah*. However, this year, she was told that since she missed so many days during the lockdowns, she'll miss a month's pay to make up for it. It was right before Pesach, and 9000 shekels makes a huge difference in our extensive holiday costs. But I tried to stay calm and trust in Hashem, no doubt because I listen to Kav Hashgacha Pratis a lot. So I told my wife that Hashem will help us like He did every year until now, and davened.

A few days later, a friend of mine told me he wants to help me out for Pesach. He asked me how much I spend on matzos and I told him around 500 shekels. He came by later with an envelope for 1600 shekels!

Then, we got a call that my wife was deemed eligible for compensation. For what? *Two years earlier*, she had been distributing letters for her gan, when she fell and broke her hand. We applied for compensation as a work-related injury, but were turned down with the excuse that it wasn't considered work-related. We had given up on it long ago, and now, right when we were tight on money, they told us they approved our claim and were giving us 1700 shekels! I called my bank and discovered that it was really 7400 shekels; the 1700 was just the last part of it.

Altogether, we got 9000 shekels for Pesach, the exact same amount my wife was supposed to get for the month! Baruch Hashem, we were able to celebrate the Holiday of Emunah with joy, like "free men" on Seder night.

(Motzaei Shabbos Parshas Shemini, story 2 #18945)

Q's & A's

Q's & A's about emunah and bitachon

Are emunah and bitachon the same thing? If someone has bitachon, does that automatically mean he has emunah, and vice versa? Or, are they independent?

R.S., Beit Shemesh

Q #18

The Tree and the Fruit

Reb Shlomo Shimon Rothman from Beit Shemesh:

Let me quote the Ramban in his sefer Ha'emunah V'habitachon. "Emunah precedes bitachon and may reside in the heart of the believer, even if there is no bitachon to go along with it. Bitachon isn't necessary in order to have emunah and therefore emunah does not indicate its presence. However, having bitachon does indicate emunah, because it's impossible for it to precede emunah or exist without it. A person who trusts in Hashem is by necessity a believer, but not every believer is a person who trusts. Emunah is like a tree, bitachon the fruits. If there are fruits, there must be a tree, but not every tree has fruits."

Reb Chaim Schwartz from Bnei Brak adds another quote from the Ramban: "Not every *maamin* must be a *boteiach*, but without doubt every *boteiach* is a *maamin*."

The Kad Hakemach wrote similarly, as called in by **Reb Chaim Shmuel Bruener from Elad:** "The midah of emunah is included in the midah of bitachon... One cannot trust in someone unless he believes in his power to fulfill his request..." (Erech Bitachon).

Reb Shlomo Bindiger from Bnei Brak brings another quote from Kad Hakemach: "Bitachon means one places his trust in Hashem alone and remembers Him whenever he does anything. He contemplates that any action he does is not in his hands, but dependent upon Hashem's will. Many people trust in Hashem in general and believe with complete belief that everything is in His hands, but they don't connect it to the particular details of their lives, every last action or path they go on."

Reb Tzvi Lezer from Haifa: How can one have emunah without bitachon? He believes that Hashem runs the world and every last detail in it, but yet he's worried about what might happen; he doesn't rely on Hashem. This is not a contradiction to his emunah, though. But if someone has bitachon, he obviously is trusting in Hashem based on solid belief that He is in control.

Reb Chaim Gerstein and Reb Tzvi Akiva Rothman from Yerushalayim; Reb Shimon Kenig from Emanuel; Reb Eliyahu Yaakovi from Bnei Brak: The Chazon Ish in his sefer on emunah and bitachon put it like this: "Emunah and bitachon combine as one, but emunah is like the halacha and bitachon is the

practical application." Emunah is intellectual, knowing that Hashem created the world and runs it all. Bitachon is in the heart, acting upon our emunah.

Reb Aharon Elbaum from Yerushalayim: The mashal of the Rishonim to a tree and fruits means that without bitachon, the emunah is flawed, like a tree that doesn't bear fruits!

More Meshalim

Reb Yonasan Chazan from Yerushalayim: Emunah and bitachon are two steps of the process. It's like pressing a button to turn on a machine. You wouldn't do it unless you trusted that it will work. So too, you won't have bitachon unless you already know the principles of emunah.

Reb Rachamim Cohen from Beit Shemesh: There's a story of a tightrope walker who walked across a string high up in the air. After he did the trick, he asked the audience if they believe he could do it. They all replied in the affirmative. He asked who would be willing to climb on his back as he walks across it again, and nobody volunteered. Why not? Didn't they all just assert that they believe in him? The answer is that believing in something does not automatically result in the ability to place yourself in danger for it. So too, emunah by itself does not automatically result in the ability to place your life in Hashem's hands.

Reb Michel Dovid Green from Kiryas Tzanz: The Baal Shem Tov explains this in a beautiful way. In Parshas Mikeitz, he writes, "There is a *boteiach*, a *mavtiach* and a *mutvach*. What are they? Man trusts, and Hashem promises; *mutvach* refers to the means through which man receives his needs, like *parnassah*. If someone trusts in Hashem but does hishtadlus to achieve his needs, it's not the highest level. The optimal madreiga is described in Tehillim – 'וזהו ה' מבטחו' – Hashem alone is the source and means of his *parnassah*."

We apologize that due to space constraints, we cannot print all the wonderful ideas that other readers sent in.

Question for issue 66

Many people strengthen their bitachon as a segulah for a yeshuah. Being that bitachon is an important midah for every Jew, is it appropriate to perceive it and use it as a segulah?

D. P., Haifa

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 Bamidbar

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

The Alter from Navhardok once ran out of money. His family had nothing to eat, and no oil to light with – darkness shrouded their house. Do you think it bothered him? He called over his daughter, Rebbetzin Yaffan – she was very wise, a big tzaddekes and the Alter was very fond of her. He said to her, "Sara'leh, you should know, there's nothing in the world as valuable as a bare house! No amount of money can buy such a precious gift!"

Ah, the gadlus of the Alter! He was overjoyed with his nisyonos. In Navhardok, they knew how to value them. The Alter taught them to be happy when faced with nisyonos, and to view them as opportunities to work on your midos.

And all his gadlus came from learning mussar! Someone told me that the only hindrance when learning mussar is if a person studies things that are not relevant to him. If you learn mussar that's for other people, it won't help you with your midos! If someone has a problem with lust and desires, and

Excerpts from the popular shiur by Harav Yehuda Mandel shlit"a from Lakewood

Nothing as Valuable as a Bare House

he learns mussar about kavod, it's not going to his middos. He can't say, "Well, I'm working on loving every person – but not him!" A person has to face his negative midos head-on.

Each person has to learn mussar that's applicable to him, and then he can refine his middos and break his bad habits.

Doing this is the greatest simcha! It gives you new life; it makes you young again. Even when you're old, you feel young and vibrant. You rejoice with every challenge and get chiyus from working on your middos. There's always something new going on! We don't look for nisyonos, but when they come, we embrace them.

There are some people who can improve themselves by learning Gemara, Rashi and Tosfos, or doing chess. But most of us need to learn mussar. The Manchester Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Yehuda Zev Segal zt"l, used to scream in his shmuessen – "Mussar is life!"

Rav Mandel's shiurim are broadcast on Kav Hashgacha Pratis weekly in all three languages - Hebrew, Yiddish and English

Effects on Two Ends

On the receiving end

Please – I live in Belgium, and the number isn't working! Kav Hashgacha Pratis not working is like the number to Hatzala not working! It saves lives! Notice to residents of Belgium: the problem was fixed bs"d.

I was in need of an openly miraculous yeshuah. I donated to Kav Hashgacha Pratis and was saved!

C.Z.G., Bnei Brak

On the giving end

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