HASHGACHA **PRATIS**

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



Parshiyos Mikeitz - Vayigash 5782 = Issue 78

HEART TO HEART

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

If the Ari Hakadosh were With Us

Every Yid knows that parnassah comes, not from our own sweat and effort, but from Hashem. He places us into certain lines of businesses, and our success and failures have nothing to do with our business acumen and financial strategy. They are all direct results of Hashem's

How do we know that Hashem wants us to invest effort in making a living? When everything goes according to the Shulchan Aruch, we know that Hashem wants us to work at this job. A Jew works in the same workplace for sixteen years and everything is in accordance with halachah - he has time in the morning to daven with a minyan; he is able to protect his eyes and his ears from evil; he does his job honestly and brings about a kiddush Hashem - how wonderful!

day, things change administrators, the atmosphere, and the office staff. Suddenly there are people at work with whom one should not associate, and he knows he should no longer be working there. A person with strong bitachon knows that his job, which until now was a means to give him his livelihood, is no longer where Hashem wants him to work. Now, he is prepared to leave his job and find another one because Hashem gives money, and nobody else. Other people may not understand how someone can leave a lucrative job after sixteen years, but he knows! Because he trusts Hashem to give him what he needs, not his job. This is what gives people the strength to get up and do what's right. When they do so, it is a tremendous Kiddush Hashem.

"And if you shall say, 'What shall we eat?'" Hashem has many ways to send people their livelihood. Haven't we heard of the rich philanthropist who walks down the street and decides you remind him of his grandfather and, crying with emotion, pulls out his checkbook and writes out a check for a hundred thousand dollars?

We don't have to worry. We never can know who Hashem's messenger will be to send us parnassah. We must always remember that all our efforts, our work and toil are only a means, not the reason

for the blessing we receive from Hashem. A believing Jew doesn't get upset when things don't work out. Think, for example, of two scribes. They are both yirei Shomayim, careful to concentrate on holy thoughts when writing Hashem's Name. Both immerse in the mikvah before writing a mezuzah, and their script is beautiful. Just as they are about to finish the mezuzah, little Yankel hands them the telephone. His unsteady hand turns over the inkwell. The mezuzah is ruined. The first sofer gets all angry at his son, and at the stupid person on the phone (who turns out to be a solicitor). He sighs from the depth of his heart at how hard he has to work just to put bread on the table, and cries for the lost workday. The other sofer reacts calmly and accepts the loss with faith. He knows it is from Hashem. He knows that in writing the mezuzah he did what Hashem wanted, and if Hashem decided he should lose time and money, he is prepared to do so with joy. It's not that he has a more even-keeled personality. He simply learns bitachon! He withstands the test and overcomes his anger because he believes that everything is from Hashem.

If the holy Ari were alive, he might have told him, "You should know, the parchment is made of the hide of an animal which contained a reincarnation of an ancestor who lived hundreds of years ago. Because of otherworldly reasons his correction is to have holy Names written on the parchment and then get thrown away with the sheimos. Rejoice, for you have brought your forefather his final correction!'

But the holy Ari is not here with us today and there is no one to let us in on these hidden matters. But what's so hard about reacting calmly when you know the truth? The point is to behave properly even without knowing. Emunah means that success, just like failure, all come from above, as Rabbenu Bachve savs in chapter 5, "And he should strengthen his faith in Hashem and trust Him in his heart, without [understanding] the reasons.'

An excerpt from lesson #229 on Sha'ar Habitachon

FROM THE EDITOR

First Read Page 3

The following insight was sent to us by a caring Yid. We are grateful for his kind words:

In your previous Hebrew newsletter, the 3rd and 2nd pages got mixed up. I'm sure you received all kinds of comments about it, but I have to tell you - there are no mistakes in a Hashgacha Pratis newsletter. I learned a profound lesson from this printing mishap.

Like all your readers, I started reading the first inner page and felt something was missing. I continued and sort of figured out the story from the end to the beginning, but with the other stories it was almost impossible to understand. What was aoina on here?

Then I realized that this time, we need to read the stories in the other direction, from left to right.

This was an epiphany. Many times, life seems incomprehensible, impossibly mixed up. What's going on, we wonder. Why? At such times, it is as though Hashem is telling us, "Stop. Don't you see - you are reading the story from the middle. Wait until the end, and you'll see how clear it is. Just wait a little bit more."

When the Chashmonaim reconquered Yerushalayim and entered the Beis Hamikdash, the scene that greeted them was dismal. There was utter destruction. The Greeks had defiled everything, and there were no funds for extensive refurbishing either. Many years later they would still be lighting a menorah made of wood or iron because they lacked the means to recreate one of gold. (see Menachos 28b) Moreover, the Greeks continued shooting arrows at the Beis Hamikdash for thirty years following the miracle of Chanukah. (see Doros Harishonim) What, then, was cause for celebration? What a depressing day! Had we been there at the time, chances are that we would have made it a day of mourning.

Chazal, however, saw the full picture. They understood that this story would have a happy ending. The single jug of pure oil, rather than all the surrounding destruction, took center stage. The day was marked as a time of joy and light, a holiday. Hashem had shown us His great light, His guiding hand hidden in the darkness. Look, my nation, I am with you always. See how this small jug of oil will last eight days!

Hearing Hashem's message, our Sages made these days into Chanukah, consecrated until the end of time, driving home the message so we always remember - everything is just as it should be. Everything is good. We don't always know the beginning, we never know the end, but we always believe that it's all for the best.

> Good Shabbos Pinchas Shafer

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

THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

Disappearing Wart

I've been recently reading stories here, on these pages, involving warts. If you happen to ever write a book about warts, call it Wart Mix-Ups and don't forget to include my story:

I had a wart on my right thumb. When I came to the doctor for something else, he noticed the wart and decided to remove it. He mixed something in a paper cup, dipped a cotton swab into it and pressed the swab on my thumb. "There," he said. "In a few days you'll see your wart just shrivel up and disappear."

And indeed, a few weeks later the wart dried up and fell off.

Six months later I suddenly noticed a wart growing back, right on the same thumb, at the same spot. This time it was larger, and it bothered me more. And this time it came along with some friends – there were two other smaller warts growing in right next to it. Since my right thumb is a useful finger – I use it to express myself in learning – removing it was important. Such an unsightly wart was even an issue of bein adam lachaveiro!

Meanwhile, I had changed health funds, and could no longer visit that first doctor who had taken care of the original wart. The secretaries at the new fund they told me my regular doctor couldn't take care of the wart. In order to have it removed, I would have to go to a specialist who only saw patients in his office located inside a shopping mall. I didn't know what to do-I usually try very hard not to go to such places because of the improper sights and atmosphere.

Had a wart been dangerous, I'd have no other option but go there and take care of it, but since warts are just unpleasant additions to my finger, I could see no *heter* to go there. I davened to Hashem that He should help me withstand the test, and indeed, He did. The warts started shrinking until one day they disappeared, never to return.

Lost and Found

At the beginning of the summer I was driving up to the mountains. On the way I stopped in Monsey, where a *chashuve* Yid, a Rebbi in seventh grade, asked me for a ride. He needed to get somewhere a half hour away from my destination, but I agreed to take him, and was treated to two amazing stories on the way.

This is what the Rebbi told me:

One day towards the end of the year, in the middle of class, a student got up and asked a question I cannot repeat. His question left me floored. How could a Jewish child ask such a question? Real *kefirah*! How could such a thing happen? Where had I gone wrong? And if one child asks a question out loud, there must be others asking themselves the same thing quietly. How can I be standing here every day, teaching Chumash, Rashi and Gemara while children have such fundamental questions in emunah? Hashem saw how upset I was and on my way home, I found myself sitting next to an important rabbi, one of the great speakers in the kiruv world.

"Perhaps you would be willing to do some kiruv for the kerovim?" I asked him, and told him what had happened.

"I'll tell you something, but it won't be too pleasant," said the rabbi.
"You ask how such a thing could be possible, and I'll tell you who is
responsible for it – you."

"|?"

"Yes, you. It's already summer now. The year didn't start yesterday. What did you teach your students at the beginning of the year? What did they hear from you? If you'd have spoken to them about emunah, Hashgacha Pratis, and Hashem's existence every day, you'd never have reached this situation."

Unnecessary Buying

I have a good friend who is struggling with his son. Or perhaps, his son is struggling through life. His son, a teenager we shall call Shmuel Dov (not his real name), is unhealthy, both in body and in soul. Thus it came as a real surprise when one day at the end of Elul 5781, Shmuel Dov said, "Dad, I want to lay tefillin, can you buy me a pair?"

The father, totally depleted both emotionally and financially from his son's behavior, said, "You think I can shell out thousands of dollars just like that? Let's see you lay tefillin every day until Succos. Then I'll buy you another pair." The boy had received tefillin for his bar mitzvah, but lost them somewhere along the way. Nobody could know what would come of his sudden spiritual awakening, but Hashem knew.

The Rav of a certain shul was preparing to travel to another shul where he had been invited to deliver a speech. Unsure of the direction, he called a friend, an experienced driver for instructions. After giving him exact instructions, his friend suddenly remembered, "Do you happen to know someone by the name of Shmuel Dov Greenstein? There's a pair of tefillin lying around in our shul and the gabbai wants to send them off with the *sheimos*."

Yes, the Rav did know a Greenstein, Shmuel Dov. Yes, it was that wayward teenager, who had suddenly woken up to start laying tefillin after several years of spiritual slumber. His Father had waited patiently for him to come around and lay His Glory on him, "My servant, Yisroel, through you I am glorified!" (Yeshaya 49:3)

Two Passengers, One Seat

My name is Ohad Nagi. I live in Beit Shemesh. Every so often I need to travel for business. My story took place on a flight I once took from Turkey to Israel.

The airports in Turkey serve as an international change point. Flights from almost every point on the globe land there, and travelers from all over make stopovers there en-route to their destinations.

Two of my partners and I had been in Turkey for business. As we checked in for our flight home, the clerk refused to seat us together, "The flight's absolutely full. There is no way for me to seat you together." Aggravated, I prepared to spend the flight surrounded by Arabs.

I got on, and found my seat. 23C, an aisle seat. I sat down and watched the flight fill up – swarthy Arabs filled the aisles and I cringed inwardly. I tried to keep myself together with thoughts of how everything is from Hashem, and for the best.

Still lost in thought, I suddenly noticed a beautiful sight – an honorable looking Jew was coming towards me. He even looked like a rabbi! He stopped next to my seat and showed me his ticket – 23C. We had been

assigned to the same seat. "Strange," he said. I pulled out my ticket and he pulled out his, and indeed, we both had the same number. "It looks strange, but why should you go away? Here, climb in." I offered him the empty window seat near me.

After settling down in his seat, he fumbled around in his pockets and pulled out another ticket stub.

"Oh, that was a mistake! I was looking at my ticket from my first connection. For this flight I have 35C. Sorry," he said, about to get up and move over.

"Why should you move? Nobody is sitting here yet. Let's see if anyone comes. Who knows, perhaps this whole mix up was to allow me the opportunity to hear some words of Torah from you. Please, stay and tell me something. This place is so comfortable – we are both Jewish and even have an empty seat between us for our stuff."

He agreed and we waited for the rest of the passengers to board. Nobody came to sit in our trio, and although the entire flight was full, our seats remained unclaimed. The doors closed and the flight took off, while my seatmate told me he was a renowned rabbi coming back from a speaking tour. These hours with him were the best gift Hashem could have given me. And I thought I would have to spend the flight among non-Jews!

Forgive and Forget

My wife owns a store. Ten years ago, we had a worker, a young lady who ran the store when my wife couldn't be there.

One day someone called up to find out information about the lady for a shidduch. The man questioned my wife extensively, asking for details that were important to him. My wife tried her best to tell the truth while keeping the overall picture positive, but when she hung up the phone her heart was heavy. She felt she hadn't been able to convey the positive image she had hoped to. She could have stressed the better parts more, and all those questions and details extracted some not-sopleasant sentences. She suffered real heartache from it.

The young lady waited a while longer for her match, and my wife suffered from the thought that it was because of her words that she wasn't getting married. After a while, the girl got engaged and moved away.

Some ten years after this happened, my wife was in Meron praying. This story weighed on her conscience and she asked Hashem to please help her receive the girl's forgiveness. She didn't feel comfortable calling her especially for that, and she asked Hashem for His help.

The next day (!), my wife received a call from her former employee. Baruch Hashem she was married, and she was calling to ask for my wife's forgiveness – she had once taken money from the cash register and not returned it.

Without asking how much money she had taken, my wife announced she had forgiven her, and said that she, too, would like to ask her for forgiveness – "You worked here for a long time. I want you to forgive me for times I behaved inappropriately to you." Obviously, the lady forgave her. Two hearts were lighter at the end of the conversation.

I heard what he said and accepted his rebuke. The next day I started speaking to the kids about emunah. Every day I spent a couple of minutes talking about Hashem. I don't know if the following anecdote happened as a direct result, but I felt Hashem was sending me a special gift to show me that my efforts were not in vain.

One of my students, Naftali Goldschmidt, would ride his bike to cheder every day. He transported his tefillin in a small basket tied to the front of his bike. One day, when Naftali got home, he realized his tefillin were not inside his basket. He was understandably upset – he had just recently had his bar mitzvah. What now?

Naftali rode all the way back to school to see if the tefillin might have fallen out of his basket, but they were nowhere to be found. What could he do? Naftali stood and davened to Hashem with all his heart: "Hashem, I lost my tefillin and I really want to find them. Please, grant me the opportunity to fulfill the mitzvah of returning a lost object, and I will do so. In that merit, please return my tefillin to me."

A few minutes later, Naftali noticed a bag with a pair of trousers. Inside there was a telephone number and address. Naftali called the people up and told them he had found their trousers. The woman on the other end of the line wanted to come and pick them up, but he told her not to trouble herself: "I want to fulfill the entire mitzvah of returning lost objects myself. I will ride over to you," he said.

Just as she hung up the phone, it rang again. This time, it was her husband, a gabbai in a shul close by. "Do you want to hear an interesting story? A Russian Jew just walked into shul with a pair of tefillin. He told me he found them on the sidewalk. I asked him if he laid tefillin today and when he said he hadn't, I helped him lay them. The man then picked up and left. What do you think I should do with the tefillin?"

"What name do you have embroidered on the bag?" asked his wife.

"Naftali Goldstein," said the man.

"Naftali Goldstein! Why, he's on his way over here right now. Come home quickly and bring those tefillin with you."

Just as he was walking up the path, Naftali came peddling up to the house. The gabbai and Naftali exchanged packages, blessing Hashem for His kindness.

First Quote

I work in construction. For a while I wasn't feeling well and had to stay home. A few months later I got a job offer from a contractor. I was excited and sat down to calculate how much the job would cost. I had to do some research – as all freelancers know, giving a price quote is a job in and of itself

The contractor agreed to my offer and down payment. Just before making the deposit, however, he called me back. "I just received a fax message from another constructor who agrees to do the job for six thousand dollars less than you. If you agree to do the job for six thousand dollars less, I'll take you. But if not, I'm going for him."

I had no complaints on the contractor — that's how it is in business, but it was a bitter pill for me to swallow, especially after all that time I had spent on the quote. If I lowered the price by six thousand dollars, I would make almost nothing on the job! Why should I work so hard for such a tiny profit? Hashem can give me parnassah, I decided. Maybe this job would end up being too much for me and Hashem wanted to spare me the strain? I started thanking Hashem for taking care of me, for my parnassah and my strength, and for making sure I didn't tax myself too much.

After a few minutes of thanking Hashem I told myself, "Wait a minute. Sometimes, a price does not include all the things I included in the price, and he might have left out some crucial things which he would have to end up buying himself, at full price." I decided to check it out.

I called the contractor and told him to find out if the other quote included all the details mine did. And indeed, a few minutes later he called me back – the other constructor had left out some crucial details. He decided to take me, with my original quote.

I thanked Hashem. In the end I earned much more than I had initially anticipated. I felt how the power of bitachon and thanking Hashem helped me merit such clear *siyatta di'shmaya*.

We hear a lot of Hashgacha Pratis stories when it comes to returning missing and lost items. Seemingly, if it hadn't been decreed that the item should be lost, it shouldn't have gone missing to begin with. Why does Hashem cause us to lose items only to find them in providential

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

All the answers emphasized that we don't understand Hashem's ways. Everything that happens occurs with Divine Providence and cannot be fully understood in This World.

Hashem Admonishes those He Loves Rabbi Shmuel Blau from Yerushalayim; Rabbi Akiva Sinbergs from Rechasim; Rabbi Moshe Cohen from Beit Shemesh; Rabbi Shimon Lifshitz from Yerushalayim; Rabbi Yisroel Zacks from Beit Shemesh: This question is not limited only to lost items -- it actually relates to any kind of difficulty, struggle, or problem in life. Hashem sends us a test to see if we can accept His trials with love and joy. Then, everything returns to the way it was.

Rabbi Menachem Landau from Nof Hagalil: Rabbi Yosef Istanbuli from Modiin Ilit; Rabbi Dovid Boker from Tzefas: Rabbi Chaim Eisenbach from Ashdod: Rabbi Chanoch Rosenstruch from Ashdod: Rabbi Aharon Tribelsi from Yerushalayim; Rabbi Nachman Goldberg from Yerushalayim; Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Agensburg from Modiin Illit; Rabbi Boruch Tzvi Shor from Beitar; Rabbi Yehoshua Cohen from Yerushalayim; Rabbi Yechiel Hakohen Lubitzky from Modiin Ilit: Any difficulty has a purpose -- to arouse us to teshuva, fire up our emunah and bitachon and bring us closer to Hashem through prayer. One who understands this and utilizes difficult situations as a springboard for positive change earns merits which then eradicate the need for his difficulties. Rabbi Eliyahu Spitzer from Beit Shemesh quotes from the Me'or Eianyim (Parashas Vayeitze) along these lines: "Therefore, one should believe in complete faith that if he suffers some pain or discomfort, G-d forbid, or any kind of loss, even a slight one, it is to arouse him to come closer to Hashem Yisbarach... come and see what Chazal tell us: what is called yissurim, even one who sticks his hand into his pocket... because even this is considered... and when he thinks this, that is how it actually becomes in the upper worlds." Rabbi Meir Yechiel Foder from Yerushalayim mentions the words of Rav Nosson, the disciple of Reb Nachman of Breslov: When one's prayers become weakened, he suffers a loss, and this is what Reb Nachman says: losing something is a sign that he has fallen in his emunah. Rabbi Yehuda Gewirtzman from Beit Shemesh,

adds: The Gemara in Sanhedrin (97a) tells us: There are three matters that come only when one's attention is diverted: Moshiach, a lost item, and a scorpion. Da'as, attention, is also a term that connotes connection. One who diverts his attention from the primary connection his link with Hashem -- suffers a loss in order to arouse him to search for that which he originally lost - his closeness with Hashem.

Rabbi Dovid Leifer from Yerushalayim; Rabbi Yechiel Briesch from Bnei Brak; Rabbi Yosef Zweibel from Yerushalayim; Rabbi Aharon Beifuss from Rechasim; Rabbi Gil Brad from Yerushalayim: Hashem loves prayers of righteous people. Who is more beloved than the Jewish people? One sometimes suffers a loss only because Hashem misses hearing his voice.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Strauss from Bnei Brak; Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Goldschmidt from Beitar; Rabbi Mordechai Wallis from Bnei Brak: Some people are unaware of their good fortune! They just don't know how lucky they are. So, Hashem sends them a loss in order to open their eyes to realize and appreciate how much they actually have.

Rabbi Yehuda Soliman from Afula; Rabbi Mattisyahu Kitay from Yerushalayim; Rabbi Dovid Yishai from Bnei Brak; Rabbi Yehuda Cohen from Yerushalayim; Rabbi Aryeh Eidelmen from Yerushalayim; Rabbi Chaim Rothenberg from Bnei Brak; Rabbi Yaakov Yosef Klein from Haifa: Sometimes a person needs to lose something in order to cause him a measure of discomfort that is decreed upon him. Then, once the time is up, the lost item is returned to him.

Rabbi Dovid Stein from Modiin Ilit; Rabbi Dov Kaufman from Modiin Illit; Rabbi Yehuda Maimon, from Petach Tikva: Hashem does this so we acknowledge his constant supervision and appreciate it. Had the item not been lost, one might have forgotten Hashem's protection. When an item is lost and then found, one earns a heightened awareness of His Hashqacha and His Name is glorified.

Earn Merit

Rabbi Meir Eisenbach from Beit Shemesh; Rabbi Netanel Cohen from Rechasim; Rabbi Meni Drachi from Ramat Gan: Hashem looked in the Torah and created the world. Since there is a mitzvah of Hashavas Aveida - returning lost items -- there must be items getting lost in the world!

Rabbi Mordechai Goldman, Beitar Illit exposes a more profound aspect of losing and finding items, quoting from his grandfather, Rabbi Mordechai of Zeville zt" (Yekare D'Malka): The finder sweetens the judgement of the loser.

Question for Issue **80**

News of disasters and tragedies cause me to shake with fear. I worry these things might happen to my close family. How do you overcome worry? Isn't worrying the opposite of bitachon in Hashem? Do I calm myself and think 'it won't happen to me,' or is that simply deceiving myself? C.K. Modiin Illit

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 Vayechi

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 days of Chanukah are days of thanksgiving to Hashem. While a Jew's essence is to praise Hashem (the name, Yehudi is related to the term hodava - lehodot), on Chanukah it is a central theme.

I once met Dr. Yaakov Gruenwald, a holy Yid who was close to many Gedolei Yisroel, the Kopishnitzer Rebbe in particular. I asked him for a story about the Rebbe and He told me: The Rebbe was always looking for ways to thank Hashem.

Truthfully, every Jew should make this his full-time occupation. Filling our days with gratitude makes us G-dly and connects us to Hashem, and He responds in kind, showering us with blessing.

How simple - I'm a Jew, a beloved child of Hashem Yisbarach. I'm not only His creation, I'm a member of His beloved nation. I could have come into the

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

Praise and Thank Hashem

world as a stone or tree, but instead I'm here, a human being, and not just any kind of person -- a Jew! Hashem gave me life, health, parnassah, a

You know the warm feeling that fills your heart when someone comes up and tells you they love you? A grandfather tells his grandchildren, "I love you." A father tells his son, and a son tells his father he loves him. Friends, open your lips! Tell Hashem, "Ribbono Shel Olam, I love You!" That's exactly what Hashem writes in the Torah, "and you shall Love G-d with all your heart." Think how much joy Hashem gets when one of His creatures says that! Once, when Rabbi Avigdor Miller zt"l was at a simcha, he got up and said, "Let's all say together: Ribbono Shel Olam, we love You!"

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

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