

# HASHGACHA PRATIS

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



Parsh Lech Lecha 5783 ■ Issue 124

## HEART TO HEART

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

### On That Day That Song Will Be Sung

How many prophecies of the *nevi'im* relate what will happen on "that day" when the redemption will come! How many *yeshuos* and *nechamos* are awaiting us! "And you will say on that day, *Hodu laHashem*..." "And you will say on that day, this is our G-d, in Whom we have trusted..." "On that day I cause the reign of the House of Yisrael to sprout..." "On that day the mountains will drip rich juices..." "On that day a great shofar will be blown..." "On that day Hashem will be One."

The eternal prophecies of consolation and of the eternal and complete *geulah* tell about *that day* in the future, that day that is surely so close.

At the end of *Shaar Habitachon* Rabbenu Bachyai brings the *passuk* from *Yeshayah* (26:8) that also talks about "that day": "Even [when we are subjected to] Your judgment, Hashem, we placed our hopes in You." *Mefarshim* explain that "Your judgment" refers to difficulty and suffering. Even when Your judgment comes, causing us suffering in the *galus*; with all this, "Hashem, we hope toward You." "Hashem" hints to *rachamim*. Despite the suffering, we will not despair of the *geulah*! And how do we strengthen ourselves so as not to fall into despair? The *passuk* continues: "Every person's desire is directed to Your Name and Your Memory." Everyone's desire is to be reminded of Your Name and to say something from You. This is how a Yid copes in *galus*, strengthening himself in *bitachon* again and again, and not giving up. Again and again he needs to remember that the suffering is a cure administered by a merciful Father. How great is parents' desire to bestow good on their children, and when they see a child suffering, how greatly they wish and desire to make things easier for him! And our good Father in *Shamayim*, Who shows man mercy more than any other merciful being, does everything in order to lighten things for us, with a precise *cheshbon*, so that it will not hurt more than necessary. It is possible that the *yetzer hara* comes to a person and tells him, "See how much you are suffering, see what happened to you. Hashem abandoned you," *chalilah*, and he speaks words of despair that weaken the person and lead him to believe that he has been left alone. We will not listen to these words! These are the words of the *yetzer*, who grabs a person during times of weakness and feeds him lies and disappointments, while the truth is that the Creator of all worlds watches over us all the time, nonstop, with *chesed* and *rachamim*, and He alone makes everything happen, and everything is for our good. As in the words of Elifaz Hateimani, when he came to comfort his friend Iyov: "Fortunate is the man whom Hashem chastises, for He is the One Who smites and Who heals; He crushes, and His Hands soothe" (*Iyov* 5:17-18).

In *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 222) there is a special section that discusses making a *brachah*

over both the good and the bad. It is concluded there that this is a halachah that every Jew must fulfill. It states (222:3), "A person is obligated to recite a blessing for bad things with full awareness and acceptance, just as he blesses happily for good things, because for an *oved Hashem*, even a bad occurrence brings him happiness, since he accepts lovingly whatever Hashem brought upon him, and by accepting it, he serves Hashem, and this is a joy for him."

The Vilna Gaon says that the word "obligated" means that one must fulfill this halachah with *mesirus nefesh*! The *Mishnah Berurah* explains: "For truly all punishments, whether they affect a person's body or his finances, all bring atonement for his sins, so that he will not need to suffer in the Next World."

This is such a great favor, that Yitzchak Avinu was the first one who asked Hakadosh Baruch Hu that suffering should come upon a person in this world, while he is alive, and this will lessen the sins that he will be punished for in the World to Come. Hakadosh Baruch Hu answered him, "You did well to ask for this, and I will begin with you." And indeed, Yitzchak experienced *yissurim* – "and his eyes grew dim," and he became blind. This is the right perspective on *yissurim*. A Yid had plans to make money, and instead of the number appearing on the left, with every additional zero multiplying its value by ten, he discovers that Hakadosh Baruch Hu moved the number over to the right, and all the zeros are worth nothing more than zero. He is liable to listen to the *yetzer* that causes him to despair, but he could listen to the *Shulchan Aruch* instead, and make a *brachah* on the loss just as he would make on a profit, for he believes that it is the best thing for him. And thus he says: Master of the world, if this is Your will – then it is my will as well. And then he accepts upon himself all the difficulties willingly, and his promised reward is very great.

"On that day," thus says *Yeshayah* *hanavi* about the times of the *geulah*, which are very near, "this song will be sung in the land of Yehuda" (*Yeshayah* 26:1). What will that song be? "Despite your ways of judgment, Hashem, we placed our hopes in You." We will yet sing and hum even about the dark *galus*, about all the difficulties and the agony, the tragedy and loss, the searing pain and the bitter mourning. On that day we will sing about the *zechus* of trusting and believing, hoping and anticipating, from within the valley of tears. On that day the mourning will turn into song, that song that is being written now with blood and tears.

We will yet merit and live to see all the promises of the *nevi'im* and of our Sages actualized, speedily in our days; *amen*

Excerpt from shiur 319, delivered with wondrous  
(hashgachah in the month of Elul, 5783)

## FROM THE EDITOR

### Security Notice

Dear Brothers,

There is only one way to be secure.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu enabled us to see with our own eyes that "There is me, and there is no other!" *Emes Malkeinu* – "It is true that He is our King; there is nothing but Him."

It isn't just little me saying this. This is the mutual feeling of *Yidden* of every type and stripe.

Four hundred years ago, Rav Chaim Vital *zy"ta* wrote in *Eitz Hadaas Tov*, in his commentary on *Perek* 124 of *Tehillim*:

"There is a fifth and final *galus*, harder than all the others, and it is the *galus* of Yishmael, who is called *perre adam* (wild man)... Our Sages write that he is called *Yishmael* (lit., the L-rd will hear), based on the fact that *in the future Yisrael will scream loudly in the days of that exile, and then Hashem will hear and will answer them*...."

"In *galus Yishamel*, they want to kill us, destroy our bodies and take our possessions. They want to swallow Yisrael alive, leaving "neither root nor branch," and they are going to persecute Yisrael in many harsh and terrible ways, with unprecedented fury."

And since nothing can stop them, and their wild behavior is worse than beasts of prey, what will happen to us? Regarding this, Rav Chaim Vital answers: "Our only hope is to trust in Hashem *Yisbarach* to save us from their hands."

The Alshich Hakadosh on the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 124:8), "Our help [will come] in the Name of Hashem, Maker of the heavens and the earth," writes, "In all the exiles, Yisrael had some physical assistance to be redeemed, but this is not the case in the final redemption, where we will have nothing but Hashem *Yisbarach*, and this is the meaning of 'Our help [will come] in the Name of Hashem' – that we have only Hashem's assistance – through His great and holy Name. This is our help."

Dear brothers, this is the only option: to connect only to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and to trust only in Him, to believe only in Him, to daven only to Him, and to anticipate help and salvation only from Him.

Let us internalize this deeply. We have no one to rely on. Our abilities in *hishtadlus* in the face of this bitter and impetuous enemy are nil, whereas the abilities of Hakadosh Baruch Hu are endless, for He is the Master of every power that exists. He is our strength and our shield. We place our hopes in Him, and He will save us.

Dear brothers, this is the call of the hour: Connect more *Yidden* to the *Hashgachah Pratis* phone line, make sure they also receive the newsletter and the *Hashgachah Pratis* magazine. *Chizuk* in *emunah* and *bitachon* is the true remedy and the real *yeshuah* for all of *Am Yisrael*.

It is my heartfelt prayer that even before these lines reach you, we will have seen the *yeshuah* of Hashem with our own eyes.

*Kesivah vachasimah tovah,*  
Pinchas Shefer

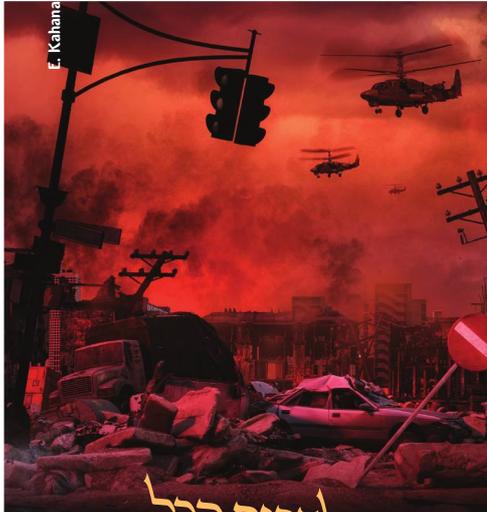
The shiur is aired on Mon. and Thurs. - menu 4 (Yiddish and Hebrew)

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לתרע לו כל בני העולם. (זה"ק ח"ב דף כב)

## THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratit, as told on the hotline

### What Does a Mouse Have to Say?

An *avreich* from Yerushalayim relates: I live on a mountain, on the first floor, so that the porch of my home meets up with the sidewalk. This never bothered us until now. It's been four years that we've lived in this apartment, and we never had to deal with unwanted invaders such as undesirable animals.

One day I discovered a mouse on my porch. I went to the hardware store, bought a box-trap with a metal spring, put food inside, and waited to see what would happen. Some time passed, and a small mouse got trapped inside, but he wasn't the only one. Two large mice were outside the trap, trying to free their friend that was inside.

I understood that the mouse was not alone; there was a whole community here, a *makkah* of mice, and I had no clue how to deal with it. I called a friend to help me. He took the trap and released the mouse far away from my home, into a sewer hole.

I knew the story was not over yet, and so I prepared another trap, with food, to catch all the potential mice. The next day I discovered something amazing: The mice had taken the food and left the trap door open. This happened day after day: I put in food, the mice ate and enjoyed, and didn't get trapped.

I had to try to understand this. Hakadosh Baruch Hu speaks to us, and we have to examine our deeds. The first thing that came to my mind was the story in the *Talmud Yerushalmi* about Rabi Pinchas ben Yair, who was once in a city where the people came and asked him to save them from the plague of mice that was affecting their city. Rabi Pinchas called all the mice and asked them to tell him why they were eating the produce of that city. The mice gathered around Rabi Pinchas and squeaked that the inhabitants of the city were not careful to take *ma'aser*, and therefore they had received permission from on High to take the *ma'aser* from their fields.

Rabi Pinchas chastised the inhabitants of the city, and once they repaired their ways, the mice disappeared.

I thought to myself: I am careful to take *ma'aser* from every bit of food that comes into my home, even though the food has an excellent *hechsher* and was already *ma'asered* by the kashrus organization. Also, according to the opinion of Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt"l, a lack in the mitzvah of *ma'aser kesafim* can also cause the appearance of mice. In this matter too I act correctly and take *ma'aser tzedakah* immediately. If so, where was the problem?

I turned to my wife and asked her if she knew of a food that we eat without taking *ma'aser*. "I think I know," she responded. "In my parents' yard there is a cherry tomato plant, and the children pick from it and eat without taking *ma'aser*, because they eat the tomatoes in the yard and don't bring them into the house."

Indeed, when someone picks a fruit or vegetable in the field, he is not obligated to take *ma'aser*, but in a private yard the halachah is different. I looked into the matter and realized that the explicit halachah is that we are obligated to take *ma'aser* from a fruit or vegetable that grew in a private garden. It thus came to light that the tomatoes my children had eaten were *tevel vada!*

I was astounded. I called my two small children, and together we did *teshuvah*. We did *azivas hacheit*, *charatah*, *vidui*, and *kabbalah al he'asid*.

A week has passed since then, and the *makkah* of mice has left without leaving behind a trace. They disappeared completely, and for a week, not even the edge of the tail of a mouse has been seen in or around my house. They fulfilled their mission and squeaked about the *ma'asros*, and once we understood the hint, their job was over.

Just think how the Ribbono shel Olam is occupied with what enters the mouths of small Jewish children! He sends mice especially to arouse us, and he chases them away at the exact moment when the deed is repaired. This incident inspired me to pay attention to all of our deeds, words, and foods.

## Shekel for Shekel Precisely

*This is Motty from Beitar. My friend Reb Pinchas told me a story that happened to him over the course of an entire year:*

In the month of Av 5782, Hakadosh Baruch Hu blessed us with twins. Two healthy sweet babies entered our home, and with them the whole *seder* of the day changed. Materna, bottles, cribs, diapers...two babies each demand their own; day and night, they don't rest. My wife, *shetichyeh*, went on maternity leave for three and a half months and devoted herself to caring for the twins. Once we saw that the date of her return to work was approaching, we recalculated: We had been *zocheh* to incredible *brachos* from *Shamayim*, and we wanted to give the babies the best possible care, simultaneously safeguarding the *kochos* of their mother. How would she go out to work if, during the few hours that are available to her in a day, she has to make up her missing sleep? If she had a bit more time, there were a thousand and one urgent things to be done in the house, and of course, she also had to give attention to the older children, who were not much older than the twins.

Together we came to the conclusion that my wife's place was at home. This year she would not be returning to work. She would fulfill her job as a mother in *Am Yisrael*, and next year, *b'ezras Hashem*, when the babies would be older, she would go back to work.

This was our plan, which was accompanied by two significant questions: a) From where would there be money? From where would we get a salary of a few thousand shekels each month? b) Would my wife's boss agree to accept her back to work after a year's leave?

I did not have answers, but we placed our *bitachon* in Hashem, Who would fulfill the words of our Sages – He Who gave life would also give sustenance.

The year 5783 passed. Each and every day of that year we had what we needed. At the end of the year I made an accounting. I am a *melamed* in a *cheder*, and my salary remained what it had always been, except for one change: With the start of the school year, before Rosh Hashanah, a father of one of the boys in my class phoned me. This was a pleasant, easy-going boy whom I am happy to be able to teach. His father told me he was very happy with my work. The boy came home happy each day, and my investment in him was obvious, so he wanted to give me a gift.

"Thanks," I said, thinking that the following day the boy would show up with a jar of honey and perhaps also a chocolate shaped like an apple.

"So if you could, please give me the details of your bank account," the father continued, and I gave him that information.

Two days later I was surprised to discover that 8,000 shekels had been transferred into my account! The "modest gift" of the grateful father.

This was not a one-time occurrence. That same fine parent continued with his generosity and, from time to time, transferred a "few shekalim" – with three zeros – into my account; once just before Tu BiShevat, once in honor of Purim, once in honor of Pesach, and also as a gift at the end of the year. When I tried to say something and apologize that I hadn't intended to receive so much, he said, "It's okay. You do your work. You deserve it."

I sat and made an accounting at the end of the year of the sum total of bonuses I had received in 5783, and amazingly enough, the total sum came to the exact amount of money that my wife would have made if she had gone back to work immediately at the end of her maternity leave, until the end of the year. Exactly, shekel per shekel; no more and no less!

For "dessert," I'll relate that toward the beginning of this year, 5784, they called my wife from work and told her they were waiting for her return.

*This is my friend Pinchas's story, and it is a mitzvah to publicize it, so that people know that to raise doros yesharim is a great zechus, and that when Hakadosh Baruch Hu gives, He gives generously! He gives both strength and money. We need only believe and have faith.*

## קו השגחה פרטית - הצלת חיים כפשוטו

I live in the South of Eretz Yisrael. I want to thank you from the depths of my heart for your phone line, especially for the new extension you opened in light of the current situation. The truth is that I did not know about the phone line until now. A friend recommended that I call. I told her, "What would it help me?" She said it couldn't hurt me. I decided that since we were stuck in the secure room for so many hours with nothing to do anyway, I would put the phone on speaker mode, and the whole family could listen.

I couldn't believe what happened. There is life before and life after: Before – we sat around for 24 hours in the secure room with nothing to do, without eating or drinking, and from time to time we would swallow the strongest calming medications on the market. And afterwards – everyone is walking around the house, eating, drinking, learning, davening, not needing any medications, and when there is a siren or warning, going into the secure room. We started understanding that there is a Father in *Shamayim* Who is watching over us, and we are like mere dolls on a Playmobil mat – there is Someone Who is placing us in the best possible and most appropriate place for us. Continue your great work! You are being *mechazek* all of *Am Yisrael*!

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## THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

### Between Chatzos and the Siren

My name is Pinchas, and I live in Beit Shemesh. Two weeks ago I was *zocheh* to marry off my son, *b'sha'ah tovah*, and the Shabbos *sheva berachos* were held in a campsite in Kiryat Sefer. I ordered a caterer and arranged with him that I would pay him in cash on Friday, when he would bring the food.

That Friday we traveled from Beit Shemesh to Kiryat Sefer, and only when we arrived did I discover that the envelope with cash that I had prepared for the caterer had remained at home. "I really don't understand," I said. "Why did this happen to us? I prepared the money and put it in an envelope and did everything we needed to do."

It was 12:30 p.m., and I was confused. What would I do when the caterer arrived? I called him, apologized, and asked if he would agree to have me pay him by bank transfer, or if he thought I was obligated to go back to Beit Shemesh to bring the money. "What's the pressure?" he answered. "Why is it so crucial that you bring the money now?"

"What do you mean?" I asked. "We agreed that I would pay when you bring the food."

"Yes," the caterer answered, "but your event isn't taking place until next week."

"The event is taking place *this Shabbos*," I answered him.

"But we spoke about the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month."

"We spoke about this Shabbos, *Parshas Pinchas*."

"I'm checking." The strange conversation ended with a very complicated conclusion. The caterer had confused the date. The money was the smallest part of this whole story, and now I had not even one chicken wing, one spoon of soup, or even a thin noodle. The fish were probably still swimming in the water, and as for the *cholent*, not one bean had yet been cooked. What were we to do?

"Listen," he said, immediately regaining control. "You can be sure that, *be'ezras Hashem*, you'll have a Shabbos prepared for you from beginning to end! By the time Shabbos arrives, everything will be there!"

He calmed me down, and indeed, *b'siyata d'Shmaya*, at 5:30 p.m. a truck exuding fragrant aromas pulled up at the entrance to the hall, and all the food arrived, fresher than fresh, rolls hot from the oven and portions organized beautifully.

The caterer then told me how it had happened. "I was sure I had no event today. I had already closed up the kitchen, but after your call, I told all the workers, and from that moment we all worked nonstop. The owner of the bakery opened up the bakery especially for me and baked 450 rolls just for you. We got a few other suppliers involved in the same way, so that nothing would be missing. B"H, we have everything here in honor of Shabbos *kodesh*. It should be with *mazal tov*, and nothing should be lacking for you and your guests."

He was excited, and I stood by, shocked. How was it that the very thing I thought of as an annoying mess-up was the reason for saving the Shabbos?

What would I have done if I hadn't forgotten the money? I would not have called at 12:30 but only at 5 p.m., and I would have asked him when the food was coming. Then it would probably have been too late, and how would I have managed? I prefer not to think about it.

It's amazing how Hakadosh Baruch Hu brought the solution before problem. I forgot the money in Beit Shemesh, and as a result I gained *oneg Shabbos*.

### Not Just a Wallet

Before the *chagim*, my wife went out to do some important shopping. She entered a store and found a wallet that suited her, and she called me from the store to ask if she could buy the wallet. The price was reasonable, and I agreed happily.

When she came home she told me, "In the end I didn't buy the wallet."

"Why not?"

"Because before paying, I realized that the store belonged to a chain that is *mechallel Shabbos*, and we already spoke about how we're not buying from *mechallelei Shabbos*. I put the wallet back and left without it."

At the time, my wife's boss was abroad. A few days later she returned, and she brought with her a gift for my wife: a wallet; not just any wallet, but something

It's been more than half a year that my wife has been searching unsuccessfully for work. As a segulah, I donated toward the dissemination of the newsletters in an entire neighborhood. Not many days after that, they called to offer her a job with a respectable salary! As thanks to Hashem Yisbarach, I am adding another contribution for the dissemination of the newsletters in another neighborhood.

—Chaim Y. from Teveria

### A Bundle in a Rubber Band

My name is Naor Cohen, and I live in Elad. A few years ago, I was walking toward the bus stop near my home, when I suddenly found a wad of blue bills on the ground, gathered together in a rubber band. I picked it up and saw that all the bills were 200-shekel bills, and they added up to 5,000 shekels all together – a very nice sum of money. At the time, I had not learned the halachos of *hashavas aveidah*, and I thought that maybe a kosher find had come my way. Ideas about what to do with the sum of money went through my mind. I knew that if you find money it is permissible to take it, but here I was not sure about it. I called a *rav*, who told me that I was supposed to announce the find, since the money had an identifying sign – it was bound in a rubber band, and the one who lost it could identify it using the sign and telling me the amount of money.

I wrote up signs, posted them in the area, and went on with my day.

When I returned, I came across a Yid coming out of my building, and once inside my house I learned that this was the Yid who had lost the money. “He is so happy that the loss was returned to him,” my wife related, “that he counted the money, saw that everything was there, and left me 200 shekels.”

I thanked Hashem that I was *zocheh* to do the mitzvah of *hashavas aveidah* and to withstand the *nisayon*. After several days, a friend called and said he had something for me, and he asked me to come to him. I came over to him, curious, and he gave me a check made out to Naor Cohen for the sum of 5000 shekels. I saw tangibly how, if Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants to give someone a sum of money, it will come to him. There's no need for anyone to be lured to take forbidden money. He will gain nothing from it, because what is coming to him – will come. I had held back from taking forbidden money, and the exact same sum came to me in a permissible way.

### Five Years of Tefillah

I was *zocheh* to have my son the chassan make a siyum on Shas at his wedding. The simchah was very great – the simchah of the marriage combined with the simchas haTorah. What amazed me was the following:

The kallah related that five years earlier her older sister had gotten married, and the chassan, a talmid chacham, made a siyum on Shas at the wedding. That sister then told the now young kallah, “You should know that I davened for this. If you also want your chassan to make a siyum on Shas at his wedding, daven for it.”

From that day on, for five years, the kallah davened that her chassan should also make a siyum on Shas at his wedding, and her tefillah was answered!

I relate this story in order to strengthen bnos Yisrael to daven for their zivug. They should know that their tefillos for their future chassan, that he succeed in his learning and in his avodas Hashem, are accepted in Shamayim.

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# Inspiring Interview In the wake of recent events with HaRav Hatzaddik Rav Yehuda Mandel shlit" a, from Lakewood

*Klal Yisrael is in dire pain, in narrow straits. Jewish blood is being spilled like water. "War causes death from without, and within, there is constant dread" (Devarim 32:25). News reports keep coming at a dizzying rate; one incident follows another. There is trembling and fear, there is no peace, and who knows what tomorrow will bring?*

*What do we do? How do we act? How do we hold the pain?! How can we stop these terrible events? And most pressing of all, what are we to do during these days?*

*We presented all these questions to Moreinu Harav Hatzaddik Rav Yehuda Mandel shlit" a from Lakewood, and his words are a balm to grieving souls, shedding light upon the vast darkness, elucidating the proper hashkafah for Yidden who are strengthening themselves in bitachon, hadrachah on the path of emunah and bitachon, simchah and hischazkus. It is a time of tzarah for Yaakov, and we will be saved from it.*

**(The interview in its entirety can be heard on the Hashgachah Pratis phone line in all the languages, by pressing 77 after choosing a language.)**

## **What are in a situation the likes of which we haven't seen for many decades. What can you say to us?**

What dreadful terror we are facing! The pain has no measure. When one Yid alone is in pain, the pain is so great, and now there are thousands of Yidden going through terrible suffering; the pain reaches up to *Shamayim*. We could weep day and night. There are not enough tears to encompass this great pain. Yidden are sitting in great fear of the sword, Yidden are choking in pain from the *yissurim* and the wildness; thousands, thousands are mourning and crying, their loved ones have been taken from them, and hundreds are in captivity and *tzarah*, and as Chazal have said ( *Bava Basra* 8b), "Captivity is hardest of all." May Hakadosh Baruch Hu have mercy on them and take them from darkness to light, from *tzarah* to relief.

How should we perceive these events?

*Bitachon! Bitachon! Bitachon!*

That is the first thing – *emunah* and *bitachon*.

To believe completely that everything that happened is from the Creator, blessed be His Name. This is not an act of bloodthirsty rioters who went out on a massacre; rather, the Creator *Yisbarach* is the One Who makes everything happen. He is our Father, our shepherd, and we are His beloved sons. We trust in Him and rely on Him, and everything He does – He does for the good. Even in this situation, which seems to be the greatest evil, we need to trust and believe that there is great good here. This is our job – to instill in ourselves that there is good here.

Indeed, for someone who lives in this world – his situation is bad and bitter, and it is hard for him to see the good hidden within it. But we know that this world is like a corridor, and the main thing is the eternal life. We know there is nothing better for the *ne-shamah* than *yissurim*, which purify the *nefesh*. *Neshamos* found in the Upper World would be happy to be able to receive some more *yissurim*. All of this is a great *tikkun*, both for us and for those who were harmed, *R"l*. And who knows – perhaps if this tragedy had not come upon us, we would have had to endure an even greater loss.

Another aspect of *bitachon* is the hope. We need to place our hopes and anticipation in Hashem and His salvation, to know that right here, in another moment, we will see good, complete good, good that is revealed before our eyes, and this whole terrible situation will pass.

And another thing we need to know is that the entire purpose of our coming to this world is to purify our *nefesh* and our *middos*. We did not come here in order to eat, drink, and earn money – the main thing is to withstand the *nisyonos* that come upon us, and now we are in a time of *nisayon* in *bitachon*. In another few days, when everything calms down, those who strengthened themselves in *bitachon* at this time will see that they gained an eternal acquisition. A person can live for 60 years, all for the purpose of coming to that moment when he will strengthen himself in *bitachon*.

## **Our hearts are shattered and torn. How can we strengthen ourselves?**

We are told in the *tochachah* (*Devarim* 28:47), "Because you did not serve Hashem, your L-rd, with joy." Hashem's *midah tovah* is manifold more, so during times of calamity a person should strengthen himself in *simchah*. It is a mitzvah to be happy, especially now.

It sounds cruel to speak of such things now. Yidden are being killed, others are in dire straits and in pain, and we say to be happy?! The world is not able to handle such talk. But one whose entire life is *emunah* and *bitachon* knows that everything is for the good.

Nachum Ish Gamzu, even in this current situation, would stand and announce, "This too is for the good." The great *Tanna* Rabi Akiva would delve into Torah to the echo of the bombings and fires, and he would come up with hundreds of reasons for why we have to be happy even now. It was he who said, "Everything the Merciful One does, He does for our good."

I am not speaking to those whose emotions are dulled, but specifically to those who have hearts of living flesh, whose hearts are awake, alive, and reacting. When such a person goes against his nature and strengthens himself in *simchah*, he brings joy and goodness down to the world. It is told of the Rebbe of Riminov *ztk"l* that someone came to tell him that two Yidden were in pain, and when he heard this he sat and laughed. They asked him why he was laughing, and he said that with this laughter he was sweetening the judgment.

I once explained that the *inyan* of making seven *hakafo*s on Simchas Torah was not mentioned in the *Rishonim* until the days of the Arizal – specifically the Arizal – for in his time, a great darkness descended on the earth and the yoke of *galus* became heavier. He established the *minhag* of *hakafo*s on Simchas Torah. This is the proper way for us to act: When the darkness is strengthened and the *galus* grows thicker, especially then should we strengthen our *simchah*.

There is plenty to be happy about, and there is plenty to thank Hashem for. Imagine in your heart how many multitudes of people are in their homes healthy and whole, and they are the majority of *bnei Yisrael*. Yes, there are thousands of people shrouded in *tzarah*, but on the other hand, there are multitudes who are living in peace.

And we can also be happy about the mitzvos we merited to do today, the *tefillos* we davened, and all the good that we have.

This *simchah* comes from *emunah* and *bitachon* and placing our hopes in Hashem; this sweetens the *dinim* and is brings relief and light to those who are suffering.

## **To be happy?! All of Klal Yisrael is in pain. Don't we have to share in the pain of Am Yisrael?**

Let us examine this in depth.

There are *yechidei segulah* who are capable of feeling the pain of another. This is a very high *madreigah*. All the rest are tense as a result of fear and panic, and this *tzaar* brings them to a state of sadness and depression.

Each and every person should know that his being tense does not accomplish anything!

The *yetzer hara* wants to bring a person to sadness and depression, and he is sly as a snake. He does not stand and strike; rather, he confuses a person, tells him he is doing a great mitzvah of participating in the pain of others. Through this the person falls into depression, which brings him to the point of doing nothing and of being incapable of learning, davening, or functioning.

Every good thing has within it both good and bad. In the *middah* of happiness and in the *middah* of sadness there is both the *yetzer hatov* and the *yetzer hara*. From within the *tzar* one can also accomplish many great things, but this is a dangerous process. The inclination of a person's heart is evil from his youth. The *nefesh* of a person is inclined to *tzar*. This is a dangerous plot of the *yetzer hara*, whose goal is to cause a person to fall.

I'm not saying that one should not be in pain and cry. Certainly we need to say *Te-hillim* with tears and pleading, as we will explain. But in general, each day, we have to be happy.

## **There are people who, due to the situation, are paralyzed and fearful, and anything you tell them does not help them. How can we strengthen them?**

Before we speak to these people themselves, I want to say something to everyone. Each person, when he davens for *acheinu Beis Yisrael* who are in dire straits and in captivity, needs to daven for these people also, that Hakadosh Baruch Hu should strengthen their spirits and their souls.

We must daven for them not only now but all the time, because they are constantly in a situation of brokenheartedness. No matter what happens or doesn't happen, they will always find a reason to be *mitzta'er* and cry and be in fear and panic.

To these people themselves I say that their *tza'ar* is *kodesh kadashim*. Through it they are purifying their souls, purifying themselves and the entire world, and they need to be happy that they were *zocheh* to do so.

## **Is it in our hands to do something to stop this horror?**

Absolutely. *Chazal* say (*Yoma* 86b): "When an individual does *teshuvah*, the entire world is forgiven, as it says, 'I will heal them of their faults, I will love them generously, for My anger has departed from him.' It does not say *from them*, but rather *from him*." Any individual, with whatever small act that he does, shakes up the entire universe.

In *Novaradok* they used to say that the best *teshuvah* is strengthening oneself in *bitachon*, and therefore the first thing is to do *teshuvah*, and from then on to live with *emunah* and *bitachon* and to be happy, as we have said.

There are many other things we need to do.

When I heard the terrible news, I went into a shul and put together a *beis din* to annul the decrees. Each person can take three people as a *beis din* to declare that the decrees should be annulled.

Moreover, during times of *tzarah* I am accustomed to asking many Yidden for *brachos*, and I see open miracles with this.

And of course, to daven to Hashem, to beg and plead by saying *perakim* of *Tehillim*, and by talking and pleading before Him. I am talking about conversing with Him the way a person speaks to his friend, to say before Him in simple words: "Ribbono shel Olam, we had such a nice, pleasant, happy Yom Tov, and what happened here suddenly? Look down and see! Yidden are choking in pain. Have mercy on them!"

And also say words to defend *Am Yisrael*. "Look down and see, Yidden sitting and learning; Father in Heaven, I know many people in this world, even those who seem to be *resha'im*, and it is not in rebelliousness that they are doing this, but the *yetzer* lures them. They are *tinokos shenishbu...*," and so on. Look out for *zechuyos* for *Am Yisrael*. Who knows – perhaps it will be these very words of *zechus* that you say that will turn the tide in our favor, toward the good.

Another thing: Take the feeling of hope and anticipation for Hashem's salvation to a practical level. You can write the story on a sheet of paper – how one person was kidnapped by lowly *Yishmaelim* and tortured for several days, and suddenly the *yeshuah* came and he was released. You can go into the details: Children sitting in the house and crying, and suddenly they hear someone knocking. They open the door, and their father is there. They hug him and cry emotionally, start dancing and singing in joy, prepare a *seudah* and invite all the neighbors and friends. Each person can write the details of the unfolding of *yeshuah* according to his imagination. These thoughts and acts brings about *yeshuos*. It is a tried and true *segulah*.

And in general, with every mitzvah, whether small or great, that is done during these days, such as when we learn Torah or give *tzedakah*, we should say wholeheartedly, "I am doing this for the *zechus* of *bnei Yisrael*, for the *zechus* of those who were hurt and for their healing, and for the *zechus* of those who are in captivity."

## **Please give a brachah to all Klal Yisrael.**

May Hashem *Yisbarach* grant all of *Am Yisrael* a good and joyful year. May a new situation begin, and may it become clear that through all we have endured until now, we have received our *kapparah*, and that this will be instead of all the pain and suffering that was decreed for us, and may there be only good and kindness from now on, forever and always.