

HASHGACHA PRATIS

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



Parshs Chayei Sarah 5783 ■ Issue 125

HEART TO HEART

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

I Determine the Outcome of All Wars

In the past, people realized there was a special expert for every field, but nowadays, everyone has become wise and knowledgeable about every topic. Yidden hold parliament outside shul, and one of them says, "It's all because they didn't send a thousand missiles to Gaza. I'm telling you, we should have finished them off ages ago." The second guy gets excited and proposes an even more original idea, and it seems like all that's left to do is to invite the people in charge over to the shtetlach so we can finally start doing something that will help.

I myself saw a serious Yid in tallis and tefillin saying that in his opinion, we need to sing thanks and praise to Whoever is running this whole war. He's doing it in the best way possible, and there are no claims or complaints against Him. Such well-thought-out processes, such perfect execution – no one can do what He is doing. And everyone, the zealous ones and the patient ones, nodded and agreed and, in unison, they all said the same things.

It's not only this Yid who said this, and not only yesterday, and not only in the shul where I daven; they're saying this in all the shuls. Millions of Jews are announcing this, day after day, in the brachah of Yotzer Or, in clear and pleasant words: "For He alone...performs mighty acts; He is the Master of battle!" The angels in Shamayim constantly praise and glorify and admire Hashem, for indeed, "Hashem is Ish milchamah – the Master of war!"

The Gemara relates (Avodah Zarah 2b) that in the future, Hakadosh Baruch Hu will call upon all those who occupied themselves in Torah to come to accept their reward. Then, immediately, the idol worshippers will gather and ask for their reward as well. First the Roman Empire will come and say, "We built so many bathhouses, we engineered so many bridges, we established so many marketplaces, all so that Am Yisrael would be able to occupy themselves in Torah!" Hakadosh Baruch Hu will answer them, "Fools! You did all these things only for your own benefit!" The Persian empire will then come and say similar things, and they will add, "We captured many cities. We waged many wars, and we did all this only so that Yisrael could occupy themselves in Torah." Hakadosh Baruch Hu will then tell them: "I waged the wars!"

Regarding other things, Hashem tells the empires that the things they did were for their own benefit and for their own honor, but regarding wars, Hashem answers them: It's not you at all; I made the wars. You only actualized those decrees that I already decreed. They are not your plans and not your strategies.

How intensely we are pleading to be redeemed. Yidden, from the depths of pain and suffering, are crying tearfully: Redeem us! The Midrash (Tehil-

lim 31) tells us that at the time when Am Yisrael ask for the geulah, Hakadosh Baruch Hu says to them: Are there righteous people among you? And the Yidden answer: Indeed, we are trying, learning Torah and doing mitzvos, but great tzadikim like our holy Forefathers, the nevi'im, Tanna'im and Amora'im, we do not have. The spiritual level of each successive generation is lower. We are so weak.

And Hakadosh Baruch Hu answers them: My sons, trust in My Name, and I will stand by you! For anyone who trusts in My Name – I will save him!

Because we believe with perfect faith that this war will be the final war, we cite here the words of the Midrash, "Kumi Ori" (Pesikta Rabasi, 36): Rabi Yitzchak said: In the year that Melech haMashiach will be revealed, all the leaders of the nations of the world will be fighting with each other. The leader of Persia will be fighting with the leaders of Arabia and Edom [i.e., the Arabs and the Christians who rule over the Western countries]. All the nations will shudder and will be confused, and they will fall on their faces and will be overtaken by pain, like that of a woman in childbirth, and Am Yisrael too will shudder and will become confused and will say: Where can we go and where can we hide? And Hakadosh Baruch Hu will say to Am Yisrael: My children, do not fear. Everything I have done, I have done only for you! The time for your redemption has come! And after the final redemption, you will no longer experience pain or subservience to other nations. It is told that a Gentile once wanted to partake of the Jews' leil haSeder. He dressed up as a Jew and sat near the table. The Jews spoke a lot and drank one cup of wine, spoke a lot more, and drank another cup. When finally he saw them starting to eat, they brought out a piece of dry matzah, followed by bitter herbs. The Gentile was hardly able to breathe from the sharpness of the maror, and he became angry. "Is this what I waited for all these hours?" He got up in anger and fled from the home.

How foolish is this Gentile! Wait another few moments for Shulchan Orech, and you'll enjoy a feast like a king! This is our situation today. There is a Seder, and there are bitter herbs, but soon, very soon, Shulchan Orech is coming. We have endured almost 2,000 years of galus, we've come so far, and we are so close to the complete redemption. Let us hold on, overcome the fear, hold on to bitachon, strengthen ourselves in emunah, anticipate salvation, and be zocheh very soon to see how the words of the Creator of all worlds come true: Trust in My Name and I will save you!

Excerpt from shiur 325 in Shaar Habitachon. To listen) to the shiur, press 4 after selecting a language, or dial (directly, 02-301-1904

FROM THE EDITOR

"If You Asked Me..."

"If you asked me..." some know-it-all says to several meivnim, "they should have done such and such, and then we would have long since been done with this war..."

People have ideas. The wisdom of the masses is rich and filled with some especially original thoughts, all of which focus on the natural order of the world and what seems to be the proper form of hishtadlus. People like to think in practical ways about what types of actions can help and save us.

But in our situation today, this way of thinking is irrelevant. Masters of ruach hakodesh from previous generations revealed to us that, indeed, relinquishing all intellect completely will bring us the yeshuah. Emunah without the logical mind's interference is what will save us from this current situation.

This is the explanation of the Kli Yakar in Parshas Vayeitzei (28:14). He preempts his comments with the words of the Midrash (Tehillim 44:2) that the yeshuah will come to Am Yisrael only at a time when they are in the depths of lowliness (b'tachlis hashiflus). As it says (Tehillim 44:26), "Ki shacha l'afar nafsheinu – For our lives were pushed down to the dust"; and what words follow immediately? "Kumah ezrasa lanu – Rise and help us!" Dust represents the lowest place, the place from which one cannot fall any lower.

Why is it that in order to see salvation, Am Yisrael needs to fall to the lowest place?

The Kli Yakar explains that the reason for this is that so long as the people are not in the lowest depths, they do not trust solely in Hashem; they still think that human strategies can save them, and therefore Hashem distances them, and the sense of abandonment is very acute. As soon as they see that there is no power in their hishtadlus, and there is no one to help or support them, they lift their eyes to Hashem and call out to Him from their most difficult and painful situations. Hashem hears them, and their subsequent salvation takes them from the lowest depths to the greatest heights, from tachlis hashiflus to tachlis hama'alah. And this, concludes the Kli Yakar, is a promise regarding the final geulah.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants us to see that Klal Yisrael has no chance through natural means, so that their eyes will be lifted only to Hashem, and then Hashem will hear them!

This is what is happening to us now, at the end of days. Our defenses have failed us, everything meant to provide a sense of security has failed us, and this situation has one sole purpose: to cause us to turn our hearts toward Hakadosh Baruch Hu, to rely only on our Father in Heaven, to place our hopes only in Him, and to call out only to Him.

And the yeshuah will certainly come. The situation will change from one extreme to the other, from lowliness to exaltedness, from galus to geulah.

Good Shabbos, Pinchas Shefer

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

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THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

An Address Without a Bullet

I am a Yid from Ofakim:

I have a nephew who lives in one of the settlements near Gaza. My nephew was on his way to hakafof in shul, and suddenly a terrorist caught him and pointed his gun at him. The terrorist pulled the trigger, and nothing happened. He tried again, and no bullet emerged! He started checking the gun to find the problem, and my nephew escaped. He ran away quickly and hid among the trees. There he hid for hours that seemed like an eternity. On Motzaei Shabbos he called to say that he had been saved, b'chasdei Shamayim.

A Brachah and a Kabbalah

I went with my son to the Rosh Yeshivah to get a brachah for Rosh Hashanah. The Rosh Yeshivah greeted us warmly and blessed us. Then he asked, "How did you get here?"

"In a taxi," I said.

"Perhaps the driver also wants a brachah?" The Rosh Yeshivah asked.

I told him I would check, and I went out to call the driver. He was excited by the idea that the Rav wanted to bless him, and he came with me into the Rav's home.

"Do you agree to accept something upon yourself?" the Rosh Yeshivah asked.

"Something small," agreed the driver, who, painfully, does not wear a kippah.

"Commit to keeping Shabbos during the month of Tishrei," the Rav proposed.

He committed to this, and he received a brachah for a shanah tovah.

When friends invited him to the festival that would be taking place in the South, which was to be held on Simchas Torah, he was almost tempted to join them, but then he decided to stay true to his promise. He kept Shabbos, and the Shabbos safeguarded him, and he was saved from the massacre that the terrorists perpetrated there, R"l.

A Jewish Dance

Rav Mordechai Malachi relates, as he heard firsthand:

My son Yair made my life miserable. I

Windows Cracking

Rabbi M.L., *shlit"e*, relates:

I grew up on a secular kibbutz. Hakadosh Baruch Hu showed me compassion, and I discovered the truth. I did *teshuvah* and left my wayward brothers behind. I daven for them that they too will recognize and fulfill the Torah.

A few months ago, a friend from the kibbutz called and asked me to get him tefillin, but not to tell anyone that he was donning tefillin and saying *Shema*. I am sure that these steps toward *Yiddishkeit* stood by him to save him.

On the Shabbos of Simchas Torah, he got up at 6:30 in the morning to the sound of the air-raid siren. A moment later a rocket fell near his home and the house was instantly dark; the electricity was cut off. All the electronic devices, including the refrigerator, stopped working, and he realized that his life was in danger.

He is a diabetic and must have insulin injections with him. Insulin needs refrigeration, and since he didn't know when the problem would be fixed, he needed to find someone who had a refrigerator who could host him.

He hurried to the home of a friend, where everything was still in working order. A few seconds later a rocket fell in his friend's courtyard as well. The friend, who had only recently completed renovations on his magnificent home, watched as the front wall blew up. This was a special wall made completely of glass, and it cracked with a huge crash, its shards spreading everywhere. While the interior of the house remained stable, the outside was a picture of total destruction.

The sounds of war, shooting, and screams rent the air. They went to the sealed room and locked themselves inside. Afterward it became clear that two things that had seemed to be terrible tragedies were in actuality what saved them: First – my friend's diabetes. Because it was urgent for him to find a working refrigerator for his insulin, he hurried to his friend's home. The rocket that landed near his home caused him to leave it, and thus he was saved from the terrorists who later burst into his home and found it empty.

Second, the exterior wall of his friend's home blew up dramatically, and the glass shards spread over a large expanse, giving the impression that the entire home was destroyed. Seeing the exploded wall, the terrorists assumed that the house had already been "taken care of" on the inside as well, and they skipped over it. Their lives were saved.

Not knowing what was going on outside, they stayed in the sealed room, and not until 18 hours later did soldiers come to save them. My friend is still pinching himself, overtaken with emotion at the fact that he is actually alive. They were literally in the inferno and were saved, b'chasdei Shamayim.

Without a Helmet

Rabbi M.L. continues:

We were a small group of friends who became religious. We had a friend who respected tradition and would listen to our ideas, but he remained the way he was. Now he told me what happened to him during the massacre:

My home has two floors. I woke up early in the morning and heard the sirens. Immediately, I went upstairs and brought all the children down. The minute everyone got downstairs, a rocket fell on the upper floor, and I don't want to think what would have happened had we remained there for a few more seconds.

I understood that a war had begun, and as a member of *kitat konenut* – the military guard, I was on the alert, and I took my gun. Before going out, I stood near the mezuzah and said *Shema Yisrael*. That's what I knew, and I asked Hakadosh Baruch Hu to help me – I knew that only He could help. I was certain He would be with me. I couldn't find my helmet to protect my head, so I went out without it. I let the other members of the military guard know that I could not leave the area of my home, and I would help to secure the area from my yard. My house is the last one on the kibbutz, right near the gate.

I went out and saw a van belonging to Hamas. Twelve terrorists came out of it and started cutting through the gate. I immediately called my friend to help me stop them. It was terrible. Bombings overhead, fire in the air, and I have to stop twelve human animals whose sole purpose is to kill. I lay spread out on the floor, for fear of the bombings, and immediately got up to fight the terrorists. I knew only one thing: I cannot do anything; only the Creator of the world is all-powerful. "Hakadosh Baruch Hu, You are with me." That's what I said all the time as I pulled the trigger again and again. *Baruch Hashem*, we killed them all. This friend told me, "I'm no hero. It is not me. It's Hakadosh Baruch Hu." Throughout our conversation he kept saying, "*Baruch Hashem, Baruch Hashem*." This is his new language. I've never heard him speak this way until now. *Emunah*. That is what saved him.

On the giving end

For over half a year my wife has been seeking work unsuccessfully. As a segulah, I donated toward the dissemination of these newsletters in an entire neighborhood. Not many days passed before she got a job offer with a respectable salary! As thanks to Hashem yisbarach, I am adding another donation toward the dissemination of the newsletters in another neighborhood.

—Chaim Y. Teveria—P. Stern

On the receiving end

I wanted to thank you so, so much for all the new content you added recently to the phone line, especially the *shnur*, "A Spark of *Emunah*," and all the new *shiurim*. They give so much *chizuk*; they are so special. These days caught me unprepared. The pressure and fear overwhelmed me. I couldn't function; I was terrified. Inside this big mess, I connected to your phone line. I did not simply connect; it was like a direct infusion into the vein, an infusion of *chizuk* and *emunah* – Really! So much *chizuk* and *emunah*, so much encouragement. It is truly a healing and a consolation for a soul in pain. Thank you, and special thanks for the added content. May you continue more and more!

You're Watching Over Me

Rabbi M. L. continues:

My mother *a"h* was *nifteres* when I was a child, and my father's second wife raised me devotedly from the time I was twelve years old. When I was *chozer bitshuvah* I kept up the connection with my father and his wife, and from time to time I came to visit the kibbutz together with my wife (without the children). I brought new-old concepts with me. I would tell them words of *chizuk*, nice things, and speak words of *emunah*. I especially emphasized how Hakadosh Baruch Hu sees everyone and is *mashgiach* over each and every person. I told stories of *hashgachah pratis* and said that if we only delve into things, each person can feel the *hashgachah pratis*. These words of mine had an influence, and from then on, every time I came, my father's wife had a few things she had collected to tell me, stories of *hashgachah pratis* that had happened to her.

My father passed away a few years ago, and since then she has lived alone. My sister also lives on the kibbutz, and on Motzaei Shabbos she told me of the terrible tragedy that the kibbutz experienced. "Come," she told me, "come and give us *chizuk*. We're waiting here for people like you."

I was not able to speak to "Ima" on Sunday. She was not capable of talking about anything. The next day, Monday, we met, and then she told me what had happened to her:

"I heard the sirens, and a moment later the booms. Such a sense of fear grabbed hold of me that my entire body grew hard as a rock. I tried to move my lips, and saw that I was able to do that, so what did I say? I said *vidui*, and I asked Hashem to forgive me and to watch over me. I remembered all your good words, and I said, 'Ribbono shel Olam, You love me. You are with me. You're watching over me. I have nothing to fear.'

"I said this again and again, until I felt that my body was slackening and I was able to move. I got up and took something to eat, and the whole time I was hearing the sounds of war and I strengthened myself: *Hashem is with me, Hashem is watching over me. He is mashgiach on me. I am not alone*. Do you understand? No human being was with me, but I was not alone. It was clear to me that the Creator of the world was not leaving me and that nothing would happen to me. This calmed me down.

"In the end, the terrorists did not reach our home. They didn't even enter our row of houses. Tell me, is this not the *Borei Olam*, who watched over me within the inferno?"

I Was Upstairs

Rabbi M.W. relates:

I was walking near Tel Hashomer hospital. A Yid came out and saw me with my beard and *peyos*. It seems he was looking for someone like me. "My son is injured," he told me. "He is hospitalized here, and he has something to say that will be of interest to you."

I went in to the injured man. He was in pain, but he was emotional. It was obvious that he had endured a far-from-simple experience. It sounds strange to talk about a serious injury as an "experience," but that is exactly what he wanted to talk about.

"I was called to a specific place in the South," he said. "A difficult battle was raging there, and they called me to come in and help. I came to the place, close to one of the settlements. There is a memorial monument there on which is written, 'It's not the tanks that will win, but only Hashem.' There were four of us up against 12 terrorists. I fought like a lion, under fire from close range. Suddenly, there was a bullet in my back. It had hit a main artery, and I lost tons of blood. I recalled that in my left pocket I had a tourniquet, but because the injury was on the left side, I couldn't reach that pocket. I lay on the ground and quietly rolled in the direction of the monument, so that no terrorist would notice me. Let them think they had finished me off..."

"The monument was round, and I was able to find shelter underneath it. When I got there, I lost consciousness. During those moments I was not in this world at all. Blue, pure skies spread over me. I felt enraptured in a profound love, the likes of which I had never felt in all my life. 'I am not so perfect!' I thought. 'Why am I so beloved? What have I done, that this is how I am being embraced?'"

When he related this, tears flowed from his eyes, and he continued:

"I felt myself disconnecting, and I understood what was happening, 'I have a family,' I said. I sensed that someone was listening to me, 'I need to go back.'

"'You can go back,' they told me, and then I regained consciousness on the hard concrete under the round monument. New strength and vitality rushed through me, and I managed to pull out the tourniquet and stop the bleeding. I felt a tremendous thirst, and in order to survive, I imagined myself taking up a canteen and drinking more and more water. It was clear to me that I'd be saved, since I had received permission to come back.

"Along with some friends who were also hurt, I lay in total silence so that the terrorists would not notice us, and we anticipated *yeshuas Hashem*.

"Eight hours of lying there with the tourniquet, and then a helicopter landed 300 meters away from us. How could an injured person like me traverse this distance? I have no idea, but it's a fact. I got up and ran toward the helicopter, and there was...water!!

"My life was saved. Everyone who was in that structure with me survived.

"I am pained at how I led my life to this day. I did not believe in Hashem enough, but today, I believe in Him completely. There is a G-d! *Yesh Elokim!* He causes people to die and revives them, He watches over me in the most personal and exacting way. Do you see me now? Today, I am a believing Jew."

didn't think I would

miss the days he

spent at home after he was

thrown out of his yeshivah. I

thought that was the worst that

could happen, but it soon became clear

that the friends Yair had found dragged him

down to unbelievable levels. It would be hard for

anyone to imagine how bad it was.

Before Sukkos this year, I asked him where he

would be. "I'll be home," he said. This made me

happy. With all his bitter *nisyonos* of the *yetzer*

hara, he tried very hard to respect us. He did not

do things *b'davkah* to anger us. He was quiet; he

would come and go without telling us where, and

he would sit though the *seudos* in the holy sukkah,

and I hoped that the holy *Ushpizin* would influence

him.

Before Simchas Torah, we spoke again about his

plans. "For Simchas Torah I'm going South," he

told me.

"South? What's in the South?"

"My friend suggested that I join him for a huge fes-

tival there. He said it's going to be amazing."

"A friend? You don't mean a friend from yeshivah,

right?"

He laughed hollowly. *Mah pitom?! These were his*

new friends. "What are you going to do there?" I

asked.

"We'll dance," he said. "It'll be fun..."

It hurt. "Listen, Yair," I told him, "I understand you; I

understand that you're looking for something rare

and especially happy and fun, but who says you

won't be able to find it here? You want dancing?

You have it here in abundance on Simchas Torah.

Friends? Bring your friend here too! What do you

say? Can you do this for your father?"

As I said, Yair respects his parents, and he thought

about it. He decided that if he succeeded in per-

suading his friend to come, then he'd stay home.

The friend agreed to come. He came to our home

for Hoshana Rabbah, and for the first time ever, he

sat in the sukkah and said "*al netilas lulav*." Since

it was the first time he'd taken a *lulav*, he also said

Shehecheyanu, and the two went out to dance at

the *hakafo*s in shul. They danced like Jews, with

the holy Torah, and their lives were saved.

When everyone found out what happened to

those who attended that terrible, unfortunate fes-

tival, Yair understood that he had been spared

from certain death. He was shocked by what hap-

pened, and for the first time, he understood what

we had been trying to explain to him in a thousand

and one different ways. One can only truly *live* as

a Jew.

"Abba!" he announced after Yom Tov. "I'm coming

back! I'm staying here!"

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Sichas Chaveirim, Motzai Simchas Torah 5784

Every week there is a *sichas chaverim* on the phone line. It is lively and pleasant, full of newfound understanding, facts, and *chizuk* that sheds the light of *emunah* and proper *hashkafah* on the events of our life.

The *Rabbanim* who participate are: **Rav Moshe Zilberman shlit'a**, a *rebbe* in Yeshivas Sanz, Netanya; **Rav Yisrael Zev Braunstein shlit'a**, a *rebbe* in Yeshivas Lelov in Beit Shemesh; and **Rav Yosef Meir Mishinsky shlit'a**, one of the *chashuveh mashpi'im* in Beit Shemesh. In the Yiddish-language *sichah*, **Rav Eliezer Newhouse shlit'a**, one of the *Rabbanim* in the *kehillah* of Dushinsky, participates as well.

On Motzai Simchas Torah 5784, when the terrible news reached us, these *chaverim* gathered together for another conversation, where they deliberated on the issues of the day, to give strength and to be strengthened by relating how Torah giants throughout time acted during times of difficulty for *Am Yisrael*.

Am Yisrael Chai

Many thoughts and emotions came up after the terrible tragedy in the South. Mourning, pain...it's incomprehensible. There is no way to encompass this pain, the loss, the suffering of so many *Yidden*. If only we knew how to feel even one moment of true empathy, encompassing all of this pain.

Before we speak about the thoughts that came up in the wake of this terrible, bitter tragedy, it's worthwhile to think about the idea of sharing the pain of *Am Yisrael*. It is told of one of the *gedolei hador zt"l* that during the days of the Yom Kippur war he did not sleep in his bed. He would lay down to sleep on the floor. His *rebbe* asked him why, and he said, "I can't help. I am not going out to war, but I am empathizing with their pain."

There are those who have the custom of putting a stone under their head on the night of Tisha B'Av as a sign of mourning for the destruction of our Beis Hamikdash. These acts have the ability to arouse the heart, but we are not expected to do these things. What is demanded of us is to help and support in positive ways, and this begins first and foremost by safeguarding our emotional balance and, simultaneously, strengthening our *emunah*.

Minhag Yisrael – Torah

There are those whose *yetzer hara* accosts them with terrible thoughts and questions: This happened on such a holy day, the climax of the month of Tishrei, on Simchas Torah, the day of great closeness, of which it is said, "He will kiss me directly from His Mouth," the day about which Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, "Make Me a small feast, just Me and you." It is a day when Hashem asks that no non-Jews intrude on the connection between Him and His nation; and it was precisely on this day that all this happened. Perhaps Hakadosh Baruch Hu is not happy with me? Perhaps He was not happy to accept my *avodah*?

These are thoughts of the *yetzer hara*. We must not allow such thoughts to enter our minds. We need to strengthen ourselves with the knowledge that every good act of ours is desirable, every mitzvah accomplishes something, every time we lifted our feet even a tiny bit during *hakafo*s brought *nachas ruach* Above; every *tefillah*, every song and word of praise, and all the love and desire for the Torah and for Hashem *yisbarach* – all of these acts are beloved and achieve great and mighty things on High.

Simchas Torah is simply joy in the Torah. We should not try to understand that which is hidden from us.

The Shefa Chaim – the *heiligh* Rebbe from Sanz-Klausenberg *zy"ta*, went through the horrors of the Holocaust in Europe. On Rosh Hashanah they davened by heart, without a shofar. Those days were terrible, no matter what the date was; and then Simchas Torah came. What do Jews do on this holy day? They dance for *hakafo*s. The Shefa Chaim would not miss that opportunity. Together with other courageous and inspired Jews, he got hold of a torn page from a *Chumash*. They put it on a chair and stated dancing around it exuberantly. The singing was quiet, but it was there. The Rebbe was on fire with enthusiasm, and one of the Nazis realized what was happening.

He came closer, and the other Jews escaped. The Rebbe, however, continued dancing, and the Nazi *y"l*'s kicked him. The Rebbe fell to the ground, but still he would not give up. He continued his *hakafo*s, crawling around the chair...

There is much to learn from this story. While the Rebbe was engaged in *hakafo*s, smoke was coming out of the crematorium. Death was everywhere, Jews were suffering unimaginable horrors, the storm of hatred was raging all around. But all this did not prevent him from doing *hakafo*s on Simchas Torah. That is a time to be happy, so we are happy.

The Rebbe did not make *cheshbonos*. He did not ask, *How can we dance at a time when Jews are being murdered?* He danced, because what he saw before him was not *cheshbonos*; it was the need to safeguard the *minhagim* of *Am Yisrael*. It could not be that because of the Nazi *satan* there would be no *hakafo*s on Simchas Torah!

We need to hold on to this message, to do what is expected of us and not to give in to the storms of the war. Now we are already experiencing the "war routine." Many Jews are not at home. There are guests and hosts; children not going to school; routine is upside down, and this affects everyone differently – due to problems with transportation, financial difficulties brought on by the war, or any other reason. *Chailah* that we should think that these diffi-

culties were made to distance us. It is just the opposite – they are there in order to draw us closer to the Creator *yisbarach*, so that we will daven and place our hopes in Him and do His will and prove that we are cleaving to Him and that we will not forfeit being close to Him.

Dancing with Hashem Yisbarach

Rav Shach *zt"l* related tearfully a story that a Yid had told him. They were a group of Jews in a Nazi camp, and one of them said, "Today is Simchas Torah. Let us dance for *hakafo*s!" His friends said, "How can we dance? We have no *Sefer Torah*!" This dear Yid, who was burning with love for Hashem, said, "True, we have no *Sifrei Torah*, but we have the Ribbono shel Olam! He is here with us, and we will dance with the Ribbono shel Olam!" Immediately, those *Yidden* burst out in dance for the *hakafo*s. It was a dance with Hashem *yisbarach*, just them and Him.

When Rav Shach concluded this story, he added, "I would have given the entire world to be able to participate in such *hakafo*s! The Kotzker Rebbe *zy"ta* says: "Heitivu nagen bitruah" (*Tehillim* 33) – *teruah* comes from the root of *ra'ua*, meaning broken. The *teruah* call of the shofar is a series of broken sounds. Especially during times when we are broken, *heitivu nagen* – it's a great art to know how to make music. What is the tune that one plays during times of difficulty and brokenness? As the *perek* continues, "For Hashem's Word is just, and all His deeds can be trusted." This is the *niggun* we need when we are broken.

The *Vizhnitzer* Rebbe the *Imrei Chaim zy"ta*, who gathered the broken people after the Holocaust, would say that the words we say in *Ne'ilah* on Yom Kippur, when we ask Hashem, "And save us from all *gezeiros kashos* – difficult decrees," are also a request to save us from decrees about which there are *kushiyos* – questions. Before *bein hazmanim* he would warn the *yeshivah bachurim*, "Be careful not to get into discussions with people who went through the Holocaust. Be careful, because they are liable to bring up all sorts of questions, and it is not your job to answer them."

On one occasion two brothers, the sole survivors of their whole extended family, came to see him. They themselves had lost wives and children, and they were shattered. They told him in tears what they had endured, and they expressed their complaints – why did Hashem do this to them?

The *Divrei Chaim* answered them from the depths of his merciful heart: "I would not want to serve a G-d Whose ways I am able to understand."

In Yiddish we refer to Hakadosh Baruch Hu as the *Eibishter*. The literal translation of the word *eibishter* is above. He is above all, as it says, "My ways are higher than your ways, my thoughts [higher] than your thoughts" (*Yeshayahu* 55:9). Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the Creator, the Overseer, the One Who makes plans and Who carries them out, the First and the Last, and He sees from the beginning of time until the end of time. We are human beings, created by Him, here in the world for a short time, and we have no ability to understand anything. Would you want a G-d Whom you could understand? That would be like a child who wants a father on his own level. A child's entire sense of security, the feeling that his father can provide all his needs and protect him, stems from the fact that he knows and believes that his father is wiser and stronger than he is. And if his father decided to withhold from him something good, or to cause him pain, that is only because he cares for him and wants it to be good for him.

How good it is and how fortunate are we, that we do *not* understand the ways of Hashem, and we are able to rely on Him, knowing without a doubt that He is doing what is best for us.

The *heiligh* Reb Levi Yitzchak Levi of Berditchev *zy"ta* – the mere mention of his name draws *rachamim* and *chesed* to all *Klal Yisrael* – said, "We are filled with sin, and You are filled with mercy." How much sin are we filled with? There is a limit to how much a person can sin. A human being's powers are limited, while Hakadosh Baruch Hu is "filled with mercy." How much mercy is he filled with? Endless! Hakadosh Baruch Hu is not limited, and His mercies never, ever end. He is a merciful Father, and all the mercy in the world comes from Him. Whatever He does, that is the greatest mercy.

The Future Is Already Here

When you ask someone what time it is, he can answer, "6:30" – half past six. In Yiddish we say the opposite – *halb ziben* – a half hour before seven, for that is how a Jew experiences life: At this moment the present is unclear, but I have no doubt that it is a preparation for the future, when we will see that everything is for the good.

During the Holocaust people asked the Shefa Chaim, "What do you say now?" He responded, "Whether I will survive this war or not, I don't know, but I am sure that the war will end, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu will help us, and *Yiddishkeit* will be renewed, homes will be built, yeshivos will be built, *talmudei Torah* will be built, shuls will be built, and *Am Yisrael* will flourish anew. *Am Yisrael* will remain forever!"

The Shefa Chaim's words, spoken then in pain and fear, came true. *Am Yisrael* lives, and now too, during these difficult days, we are being strengthened by the words of our holy *rabbanim*, and anticipating, with hearts full of *emunah* and *bitachon*, that Hashem *yisbarach* is leading us all toward the final *geulah*, speedily in our days; *amen*.

עכשיו זה הזמן!

עם ישראל צמא לאמונה יהודים רוצים בטחון

יש לך אפשרות לתת להם את זה

הצטרף למאות מפיצי עלון השגחה פרטית ברחבי הארץ והעולם



התקשר עכשיו ל 6176* (שלוחה 2)

ותזכה לתת ליהודים את הבטחון האמתי ואת הרוגע הנפשי