

# HASHGACHA PRATIS

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



Parshas Vayeitzei 5783 ■ Issue 126

## HEART TO HEART

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

### How Does Something Like This Happen?

There is a wonderful *midrash* in *Devarim Rabbah* (1:12): Rabi Levi bar Chama says that if, regarding someone who worships idols, it says (*Tehillim* 115-135), "Those who make [idols] will be [as powerless] as the idols, [and the same for] all who trust in them," then how much more will one who serves Hakadosh Baruch Hu be like Him. How do we know this? Because the *navi* says (*Yirmeyahu* 17:7), "Blessed is the man who trusts in Hashem."

In the *perek* of *Tehillim* from *Hallel* (recited on those days when we say the complete *Hallel*), Dovid Hamelech fulfills the mitzvah of mocking *avodah zarah*. He describes the idols – the handiwork of mankind – and mocks them in seven different ways: Their mouths don't speak; their eyes don't see; their ears don't hear; their legs don't move even a millimeter; their hands don't feel; their noses cannot smell; and from their throats, not a syllable will emerge. Afterward, Dovid Hamelech curses whoever made these idols and all who trust in them, saying that they should be just like the idols. *Klal Yisrael* continues to curse them every time we recite *Tehillim* or complete *Hallel*: "Those who made them shall be like them..."

The *midrash* teaches that from this curse we learn the opposite: Whoever trusts in Hashem will be like Him. How is it possible to say that a person will be like Hakadosh Baruch Hu? Perhaps the idea is that one who trusts in Hashem will reach the level of a righteous man, who decrees and Hakadosh Baruch Hu fulfills. Whoever trusts in Hashem and believes in the foundations of *emunah* – that only Hashem does everything and that no one can take anything from him or give him anything without the will of the Creator – is calm and serene. He is focused on his *avodas Hashem* and does not fear other people at all, and he can reach very high *madreigos*.

Whoever trusts in the Creator of all worlds is himself blessed. Radak explains the words "...and Hashem will be his Protector" (*Yirmeyahu*, *ibid.*) as implying that he does not fear any evil. He is taken care of. He has a secure place to go, where he will be protected. How wonderful that is! How do we merit this *brachah* that is bestowed on the one who trusts in Hashem?

The Sfas Emes explained (*Eikev* 5652): "Trust in Him at all times" (*Tehillim* 62:9). We need *bitachon* during times of *tzarah*, but the main challenge of maintaining *bitachon* is during times of serenity.

A person has pain; he doesn't feel well; someone is stuck at home and doesn't find his *zivug*; or there is a *chassan* and a *kallah*, but it is so difficult at home with all the expenses...it's nice that

he trusts in Hashem, believing that Hashem will help him and save him. But it's most important to have *bitachon* during times of serenity, when all is rosy: There are no debts to the bank or the *gemachim*, the children are healthy, the *mechanchim* praise them excessively, the neighbors are wonderful, the house is redone, there is cash at home, the weather is wonderful – hot when appropriate, cold when expected, and there is cold seltzer and watermelon for dessert – the trick is to feel specifically at that time that one is completely dependent on Hashem, to feel that "I am alone and poor" – on my own I am powerless. It wasn't me, with my wisdom, who brought all this wealth and happiness to myself. These are not my skills and strengths. "Remember that it is Hashem Who gives one the ability to do mighty deeds." The *Targum* explains that He is the One Who gave you the skill to make good investments. Remember that the idea that brought about your success came only from the Creator of the world.

During times of *nisayon* and pain – may they never come – there will then be strength to cope. The person with strong *bitachon* won't lose his equilibrium when someone does something he doesn't like.

You might see a very respectable Yid, who sits at the *mizrach* wall, who davens beautifully and learns diligently, who buys *arbaah minim* for a four-digit sum; but suddenly, when someone insults him, or pushes him, or causes some item of his to fall down, or the *gabbai* doesn't give him the *alyah* he wanted...he bursts out with offensive words and tones that are literally shameful. How does something like this happen? And the simple people standing around him are shocked and ask themselves, *Where is his honor? How did all his Torah wisdom disappear in an instant? He was always such a respected Yid...* This is due only to the fact that he did not invest time and energy into learning the subject of *bitachon*.

A Yid for whom *bitachon* is a way of life doesn't lose it when someone hurts him. When others apologize to him, he doesn't even understand why they are apologizing, since everything was decreed by the Creator *yisbarach*. He doesn't hold a grudge against anyone, all sorts of circumstances and worries don't faze him, and he is not pained over things that happened to him, since he is strong in his belief that Hashem alone does everything for the good. As a result, he copes well with his difficulties, and his life is happy and blessed. Blessed is the man who trusts in Hashem!

Excerpt from *shiur* 327 in *Shaar Habitachon*.  
To listen to the *shiur*, press 4 after selecting a (language, or dial directly 02-301-1904

## FROM THE EDITOR

### The Greatest Gift of All

A Yid from Beitar relates: On Shabbos *Parshas Bereishis*, the first Shabbos after *Simchas Torah*, we were in the middle of the evening *seudah* when we suddenly heard the undulating wail of a siren. We had already grown accustomed to this, to the point that we don't always see the greatness of the miracle. Every missile reveals our enemies' desire to kill as many as they can, but by now we're used to hearing shooting, and dry reports regarding missiles falling in open areas. This time, however, following the siren an announcement was made: *Terrorist infiltration, terrorist infiltration!*

Now that is terrifying. Tremendous *sakanas nefashos*. Nothing to do. How would it help us to lock the doors? Just a week ago we discovered that if there are terrorists, nothing stands in their way. They break the door easily. We also have no way of finding out what this announcement actually means. Today is Shabbos, and we have no means of communication to assure us that the announcement was simply a mistake.

I can't even call my *rav*. I have nowhere to run.

What can I tell you? That announcement was the greatest gift I've received in my life. I told my family members, "Only Hashem can help us! Only Hashem! There is no one but Him! Nothing can help us. We are in the Hands of the *Manhig ha'olam*, the Leader of the whole world, Who does all deeds – past, present and future." We felt completely embraced by Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and no one could detract from this profound experience. We closed our eyes, sang songs of *emunah*, strengthened our *bitachon*, and thus merited a full hour of *deveikus*.

Wow, what a gift that was!

Dear *Yidden!* There are so many Jews experiencing difficulties with *parnassah*, *shidduchim*, health issues and so much more, doing whatever they can, making every possible effort, doing what they need to do, until they discover that they've reached the end of their rope. *That's it. We've done our hishtadlus, and there's nothing left to do. There is only the Ribbono shel Olam.*

That helplessness, the total giving over of oneself to Hashem's path, the *emunah* that He is leading us in the best way possible – that is a special gift from Hashem *yisbarach*. When there is nothing left to do, there is something to do: learn Torah, sing songs of *emunah*, strengthen ourselves in mitzvos, live with *deveikus* to the Ribbono shel Olam.

The *nisayon* will end, the *yeshuah* will come, the darkness will be gone and light will spread, and we will take with us the gift we received during this time of *nisayon*. Closeness to Hashem is the greatest possible gift.

Good Shabbos, Pinchas Shefer

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

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

# THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

## Thirty Hours Together

My cousins who live in England came to Eretz Yisrael for Sukkos. Like all the *Yidden* here, they followed what was happening with great fear and pain, and they felt the fear of the war. They wanted to return to their home in England, but all the flights were cancelled.

They stayed on, angry at the airline for shirking their responsibility, and embittered by the long stay that was forced upon them, far away from the normal routine of their lives. It was really not simple for them to stay. They had no appropriate clothing, and they were missing basic items. They remained in the country for a week and a half, until a flight was arranged for them. They had to take whatever was available by default: a long, thirty-hour flight with a stopover and an overnight stay in Cyprus.

As it was wartime and many flights had been cancelled, people from all over England got onto that flight. Ordinarily, many of them would have taken a different flight and landed in a different airport. But on this flight, together with my uncle was a chareidi family, and they have a son, a *masmid*, learning in yeshivah in Yerushalayim. That son did not join them; he remained in the "battlefield," to protect the people of Eretz Yisrael by learning the holy Torah.

My uncle has a daughter, and the other family had the opportunity, for thirty hours, to observe her. It was enough time to see how she acted, and how she helped her parents and siblings. They were very impressed, and they felt she could be a suitable *shidduch* for their son.

Indeed, the *shidduch* materialized. May the *zivug* be *oleh yafeh*. *Od yishama b'arei Yehudah uv'chut-zos Yerushalayim...kol chassan v'kol kallah!*

## You Saved Me

I am very sensitive by nature, and I have found myself hurt many times over by people's reactions. This became a bigger problem when I started teaching in Talmud Torah. Whoever knows this situation personally understands what I'm talking about, and for whoever doesn't, I'll try to give you a small taste of it.

I prepare a complex *shiur* in Gemara, offering many details, and I come to class after a tense night of preparing. I am a new

## Who Has Strength to Prepare Thirty Portions?

My Rebbe *shlit'a* expressed his desire that we, his chassidim, go to visit families who lost their loved ones during the terrible massacres of Simchas Torah, for *nichum aveilim*. I went to the homes of mourners who were sitting *shivah* in a *yishuv* near Ashdod. They lost a daughter, a son-in-law and three grandchildren from Kfar Aza. The pain is great and the gaping loss cries out.

"They were with us for the first days of Sukkos," the bereft father related, "our daughter, son-in-law, and grandchildren. We were planning to get together again on Simchas Torah in their home." "Really?" I responded in astonishment. "This means you were saved from the massacre. Why didn't you go? How were you saved from death?"

"Yes, yes, we were saved from death," the father responded thoughtfully. "Being so busy with mourning, we haven't noticed the *chessed* that Hashem did with us. We were supposed to be in their home and hide together with them in their sealed room."

My eyes continued asking, and he went on. "We are extremely *makpid* on kashrus. The children, unfortunately, were much less *makpid*, and so when we go to them, my wife cooks all the meals. Since on Simchas Torah the *mehutanim* were also supposed to be coming, along with other guests from other *yishuvim*, my wife was supposed to cook thirty portions for each meal. On Hoshana Rabbah she said, 'I don't have the strength to cook so much. I can't manage it now. I think we shouldn't go to the kids in Kfar Aza.' We wouldn't have gone to them and eaten their food. We keep our standards of kashrus outside the home as well.

She called my daughter and told her, 'I don't feel up to cooking so much now. We'll come another time.'" Here the father's voice broke, knowing that there would never be another opportunity to visit.

I was amazed. Maintaining their standards of kashrus saved these parents from certain death.

## An Itinerary of Thanks

An *avreich* from Yerushalyim relates: Before Sukkos I traveled to the U.S. Like many others, I wanted to come back, but then I heard that the sky had fallen upon all the people of Eretz Yisrael. The bloodbath in the South hit everyone with force, leaving them in shock and mourning. Plans were all thrown off track, and airlines canceled their flights to Israel; we didn't know how we would return to our home.

The airline refused to reimburse us for the cancellation. The officials explained impatiently that the outbreak of a war is considered "an act of G-d," and in such cases there are no reimbursements. People bought new tickets at exorbitant prices, but I and several of my friends tried to find a way to get home without spending so much money.

My originally scheduled flight had a stopover. I contacted a travel agent, who proposed switching that flight, which would cost several hundred dollars. I tried speaking with other agents, but whatever they had to offer would cost even more. They all asked us to add 300-400 dollars – a large sum of money that all of us would have a hard time paying.

While I was searching for phone numbers of people who might be able to help, one of my friends suggested, "Let's say *Mizmor I'sodah* together," and he began. He said the whole *perek* in a lively, happy way, and then I made one more phone call – which resulted in a perfect solution: The flight we had originally booked would be able to depart as planned. The route was changed a bit, but we would not need to pay anything at all for that change.

This is the power of *Mizmor I'sodah*. By saying it, we strengthen our *emunah* that everything comes from Hashem *yisbarach*, and even if it seems now that there are difficulties and complications, we discover that these too are part of the mercy and kindness of the Creator of all worlds.

## Come Make Kiddush

I teach *bachurim* who have discovered the light of truth, and they learn in a yeshivah in Petach Tikvah. These wonderful *bachurim* are *bnei aliya* and *yarei Shamayim*. One sixteen-year-old *talmid* shared with me his own hair-raising tale, and at the end he asked me to learn *mishnayos* in memory of his friends who were killed *al kiddush Hashem, Hy'd*. This is his story:

I live in Sderot. My parents are not yet *shomrei Torah umitzvos*, and I needed to find my own path. My parents decided to travel up North for Simchas Torah. I could imagine what type of Yom Tov I would have with them, so decided not to join them. Instead, I planned to stay home in Sderot, together with a few other *bachurim* in similar situations. We prepared food, organized whatever we needed, and I prepared with great joy for Shemini Atzeres, *zman simchaseinu*.

On Hoshana Rabbah, when I returned from davening, I found a note on the kitchen table, written in my dear mother's handwriting: "My son, please come with us to make Kiddush and give us *chizuk*. Ima."

My mother's note indicated her desire to come closer to Hashem and to be *mischazeik*. If I don't make them Kiddush, I thought, *who will make them Kiddush? And if my parents are asking for chizuk, how could I not give it to them?* I was in a tight spot. I didn't know what to do. I called the *rav*, and he told me that it would certainly be better for me to travel up North to be with my parents.

I called my mother immediately, and she told me that they were already quite a distance from Sderot, but they would come back to get me.

## On the giving end

It was time for my daughter to begin *shidduchim*. We received many suggestions, and we checked each one out and tried, but for a long time nothing worked out. For a *zechus*, I decided to donate money for these newsletters to be distributed in shuls. I knew that the *zechus* of the *emunah* and *chizuk* of more *Yidden* will surely make a difference. I decided to dedicate a special *tzedakah* box for this purpose. When I wanted to give *tzedakah* for the sake of *hatzalachah*, I dropped in a coin; and it wasn't long before I had accumulated a nice sum, which I donated to the Hashgachah Pratis phone line. I promised myself that if my daughter would become engaged by Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan, I would publicize that the *yeshuah* was in the *zechus* of our donation to the phone line. Now, with great *simchah* and excitement, I am publicizing the great *yeshuah*. Thank you, Hashem!

## On the receiving end

My daughter reached the age of *shidduchim*. Proposals came and went. Names flew in the air. We checked into different ideas, but nothing came of it. I decided to donate towards the dissemination of the newsletters in shuls. I knew that the *zechus* of *emunah* and *chizuk* for so many *Jews* would certainly have an effect, and I decided to put aside a special *tzedakah* box for this purpose. When I wanted to give *tzedakah* for success, I put a coin inside. I did this again and again over a long period of time, and when I had collected a nice sum – I donated to the hashgacha pratis phone line. I promised that if my daughter got engaged until the month of Cheshvan, I would publicize the *yeshua* we had seen as a result of donating to the phone-line. Now with great joy and excitement, I am publicizing the great *yeshua*. Thank you, Hashem!

On the morning of Simchas Torah, while we were in the North, my father got an emergency call to go to the battleground in the South. I understood that something terrible had happened, but I didn't imagine how terrible.

Three of my friends had gotten up to daven *vasikin*, and the miserable murderers got them on their way to davening, *Hy'd*. My plan had been to daven *vasikin* along with my friends, and it was only the fact that I traveled up North to be with my parents that saved my life.

We don't know *cheshbonos Shamayim*, but from what we see, we can learn that the *zechus* of honoring my parents stood by me, and the *zechus* of my parents, who wanted to be *mischazeik*, stood by them, and their son remained alive.

## An Island of Shabbos

I heard this story from the brother of the person it happened to:

The father of a prominent family in Bnei Brak is a *talmid chacham*, and the sons are *avreichim* who are *ovdei Hashem* with genuine *yiras Shamayim*. Unfortunately, their oldest son fell victim to the lures of the streets and went very far off the *derech*, *Hashem yishmor*.

Several years ago the *rebbetzin*, the mother of the family, passed away. Her *petirah* touched the heart of her eldest son, and he committed to keep Shabbos, *l'ilui nishmasah*. He still hasn't done complete *teshuvah*, and he continues to spend time with friends who are off the *derech*, but, come what may, he keeps Shabbos.

Before Simchas Torah, his friends told him they were going to some sort of festival down South, and they invited him to join them. This festival was not in the spirit of Torah and not anything his parents would approve of; it was "in the spirit of nonsense" and spiritual harm. It was certainly not appropriate for a *bachur* from such a *chashuveh* family to be there at all, but he agreed to the invitation, with one caveat: "I'll come, but I'm keeping Shabbos."

How would he keep Shabbos with all the emptiness going on all around him? He went there with a trailer, and he prepared a *blech* with cooked food. He organized the trailer nicely and set up electricity so he wouldn't have to turn on the lights on Shabbos, *chas v'shalom*. He truly did everything like a kosher Jew; he created an island of Shabbos in the midst of the desecration.

Since he had already brought along all the equipment and had prepared so much, he invited some friends into his "Shabbos room" and traveled down South. He had just parked the trailer near where the terrible party was to be held that night, and he got a call. His father was on the line.

"Listen to me," he told his wayward son. "I want you back here in the house. Now."

"Why, Abba? What happened?"

His father himself has no idea what happened. He felt he was being pushed from on High, and he has no way to explain the strength he was suddenly expressing. "You need to be home for Yom Tov. There's nothing to talk about."

"But I'm already here, and I promise I'll keep Shabbos. I have a whole trailer here with everything we need."

"I don't care about that," his father answered. "I haven't gotten involved in your life before. This is the first time I'm asking of you. Come."

"But will I make it in time? It's a long trip."

"You'll make it. Leave right now. I'm waiting for you."

This precious *bachur* listened to his father *shlit"a*, and to his mother in Gan Eden. He traveled home immediately, leaving behind the trailer and his friends.

His life was saved. Now we understand that Hakadosh Baruch Hu put this extra stubbornness into the heart of his father in order to save the life of his son.

But the story doesn't end there.

When the lowly murderers infiltrated, the *bachur's* friends hurried into the trailer. They locked the door and lay down on the floor, with terrible fear of what was to come. The terrorists advanced in the direction of the trailer – a flimsy structure made of simple walls and a simple door that could be easily broken. The terrorists tried to break the door down but did not succeed. With great cruelty, they lit a fire underneath the trailer and only then left the premises.

The fire didn't reach the trailer; it went out on its own. The lives of those friends who were inside the "Shabbos room" were saved.

Shabbos saved them.

## Such Silence!

I have a son in Ofakim, and he told me something unbelievable: After the terrible massacre that occurred in the area, they checked the security cameras to try to see what had prevented the terrorists from going into the shul. By then it was known that the terrorists had a map of all the shuls in the city. Why did they skip over them?

The security camera from one of the shuls showed that just when everyone stood up for *Shemoneh Esrei*, a group of terrorists, *yemach shemam*, entered the courtyard outside the shul. Everyone inside was davening *Shemoneh Esrei* quietly, in the *ezras nashim* as well. The terrorists stood outside and waited, trying to hear what was going on inside. They concluded that the building was empty, and they left without harming anyone.

That is what they saw on the camera, and the simple message shouts out: *See how great is the power of tefillah!*

## An "Empty House" on the List

One of the families in a *yishuv* on the border of Gaza decided to be *mischazeik* in keeping Shabbos. For quite some time they had been traveling for Shabbos to another part of the country in order to keep Shabbos properly, in an appropriate atmosphere. On Simchas Torah they happened to be home, but the terrorists skipped over their home.

Later, it was discovered that the evil ones had come equipped with exact lists of how many people were in each of the homes. Near the home of that family, they wrote "empty," since by then it had been a long time since anyone had been seen in the house on Shabbos. Keeping Shabbos saved their lives.

*melamed* and I want to succeed, and I am afraid of discipline problems and that perhaps my words will not go over the way they should. The *shiur* begins. *Baruch Hashem*, discipline is good, the *talmidim* are with me, attentive. I explain, make it tangible, invest my whole *ne-shamah* so that everyone, down to the last *talmid*, should understand and come out happy and satisfied. Then I thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu for the successful *shiur* He enabled me to deliver.

Then comes the *boom* – the fist in the heart, literally. I feel the pain physically.

The *menahel* calls me over, following a phone call he received from one of the parents. Of course they say it as nicely as possible, but the message is: You are not investing enough in the learning and the explanations.

It hurts; it hurts a lot. Because only Hakadosh Baruch Hu knows how much I've invested, and how the *shiur* was given over in the clearest and best way possible. What can I do when there are children with various learning disabilities, who do not grasp the material despite a *melamed's* best intentions and purest desire?

There were times when I thought of leaving, that perhaps I'm not suited to be a *melamed* – until I discovered the *Hashgachah Pratis* magazine, which changed my whole outlook.

Now when I hear negative feedback, the first minute it certainly hurts, but the second minute I say to myself, *This too is hashgachah pratis*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants you to lower your head a little, to work on your *gaavah* a little.

I hear another unpleasant reaction, and again I take it hard at first, and then immediately remember a story I had read in the magazine and say to myself, *It's min haShamayim*. That's what Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted. Accept it with love. In general, my *talmidim* know that if they behave well, then at the end of the day there will be a story of *hashgachah pratis*.

They wait for this, and they know that I won't be able to refuse their request, for I have in my arsenal a tremendous collection of stories that I've read. They are *mischazeik* together with me, and they add their own nice anecdotes of *hashgachah pratis* that they've experienced.

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Editors note: Following many requests, and with the current *matzav* in *Eretz Hakodesh*, it was decided to extend the introductory discount for the *Hashgachah Pratis* magazine; "and the exiled people will be redeemed only because of their *emunah*" (*Midrash Tanchuma*). To subscribe dial \*6176, extension 3

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או בעמדות 'נדרים פלוס' על שם 'מגזין השגחה פרטית'

## Readers of Hashgacha Pratis Magazine Share...

### The True Shadchan

When my daughter was eight years old, we realized that she had sharp mind for learning. I asked her, "Do you know Who gave you *seichel*?"

I thought a lot, and that's why I have *seichel*," she told me.

"And Who gave you the ability to think?" I asked. She asked me the same question – "Who gave me the ability to think?" – and I told her, "You should know that we received our *seichel* from the Ribbono shel Olam. It was not you who did this. Don't think you are more special than other girls, because they also received special gifts from Hashem, different gifts than yours. If there's a girl who wants you to explain something to her in math, don't think she's stupid. She's a good, smart girl, but math is difficult for her. You also have some subjects that are difficult for you, right?"

This was fairly accurate. There were subjects that she did not like so much, but she succeeded in all of them. I tried very hard to help her understand that she was really just like everyone, so she wouldn't boast, and so she'd help others willingly, with the sense that someone is always helping someone else. I think I succeeded in this when I heard her talking on the phone with her friend and explaining the material to her so well, and with such *chein*. *Halevai* all the teachers and *mechanchim* could explain like this.

The years flew by, and my daughter turned eighteen. She had developed into an especially successful young lady, with everything a *bas Yisrael* should have – *tznius*, *yiras Shamayim*, wisdom and *chein*. *Shidduch* proposals began coming in for her, and we checked into them one by one, seeking the very best for her.

*B'shaah tova* she got engaged to a *bachur* with "all the *ma'alos*." His depth amazed me. When he shared with me the Torah he'd prepared, I wasn't able to follow all his thought processes; they were brilliant.

Today, I think he got his *divrei Torah* from somewhere else, but I have no complaints about this. If a *bachur* understands what he's saying, that's also a great thing; but there were other things I had asked about directly, and the *shadchan* answered with confidence that he was completely good. He was so excited that I believed him.

Did I look into it? Of course I did, but I didn't understand the hints. Someone told me, "He is definitely okay," and I should have understood that "okay" was too low a grade. The *shadchan* pushed, I was convinced, and the *bachur* became my son-in-law.

Before much time had elapsed, we discovered that this was not what we had anticipated. The successful *shidduch* was not so successful after all, and my daughter's struggle is very significant. I let out all my frustration on the *shadchan*. I was angry at him and felt resentment against him for having misled me. I stopped saying *hello* to him, and because he is part of my *kehillah*, every time I came to shul I was careful not to meet him. My life became a nightmare; the son-in-law within and the *shadchan* outside.

One day I decided to subscribe to the *Hashgachah Pratis Magazine*. For the children. I did not want them to read all sorts of questionable material, and I thought this magazine could be a great solution. They were excited by the pictures and the amazing stories, my wife enjoyed the women's column with *chinuch* advice, and I myself would skim through

it...until I found myself reading it more intently. One month, then another, and the magazine turned into a permanent guest in our home. I noticed my mood had improved and I was more relaxed. Suddenly, I understood the simple truth that the *shadchan* was only a messenger. It's not him, it's the Ribbono shel Olam, and my daughter did not "fall into" something; rather, she received a struggle that had been determined for her from on High, and if I want to help her, my job is to strengthen her and be *mechazek* her in *emunah*, not to weaken her by casting blame on everyone around her.

I went back to being friendly with the *shadchan*. Once again I can see him in shul, and I'm not uncomfortable about it. I must express my deep thanks to Machon Shaar Habitachon for recalibrating my mind and giving me the proper outlook on the *nisayon* that Hakadosh Baruch Hu brought us, and giving me back a calm and serene life.

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## Read, Gain Chizuk, Relax

You have no idea what a *chessed* you did for me on Motzaei Simchas Torah. Throughout the day we heard sirens, and we were terrified. When I heard about the terrible massacre carried out by lowly terrorists, I was seized by uncontrollable trembling. Across from my house there is a grocery where Arabs work. In the building where I live and in two other buildings nearby they are doing renovations, and the workers – Arabs, of course. One of the residents told me that when he goes up the steps it seems to him there are more Arabic speakers than Hebrew speakers. Being surrounded by "cousins" in this way, our fear is understandable. What would I do if some Arab decided to go crazy and attack us? The fact that they were not allowed in did not calm me. Who says one of them didn't hide? Who says he won't come out? Who can promise that nothing will happen, after what has already happened? The fear immobilized me. I was nervous, and I would enter my building in fear that perhaps someone was hiding behind the building.

"You don't look good," said my neighbor on the first floor.

"The truth is, I'm scared," I told him.

"Perhaps it will interest you to see the Hashgachah Pratis Magazine" he said, and soon he returned with the magazine. "Everyone in my house already read it. Give your family a chance to read it too."

I didn't understand what he wanted from me. What did this magazine have to do with my fears? But I took it. Even if it would just help to distract me, that would be worthwhile. I decided to look through it before I went into my house. It wouldn't be right for the head of the family, who needs to encourage everyone else, to be terrified himself.

I read. There were strong stories there of *emunah* and *hashgachah* at every moment – completely true stories that led me to remember Who navigates all circumstances, Who breaks through gates and Who safeguards us from harm. Everything is arranged from Above. We are in the shadow of the *Borei Olam*; what is there to fear?

My family gained a father who had the strength to gather together all the words of *emunah* he had heard before and to use them as something to lean on during times when it is so important to give that warmth and sense of home. *Yasher koach!*

## A New Language

I have a blessed home, *bli ayin hara*, filled with sweet, adorable children. Whoever sees them in the street will be sure their father is the happiest person in the world. They even learn well. What more can a Yid ask for?

No one can imagine what "bitter herbs" they feed me. Their voices and cries drown each other out and have gone way too far. One brings home a small prize from *Avos Uvanim*, and everyone starts crying – "How come only he got this?" When someone has a party or a trip or a *siyum*, it's a great *tzarah* for both them and me. Their crying and the complaints rise to the heavens, and each one recalls all the injustices that were done to him from the day he was born up to this day, including the dreams he dreamed at night about how someone took something from him. The language in the house is embittered. "He took...he did...he got..." not to mention what happens when someone makes a mistake or ruins something. I come home and am greeted by one of my children with a red face and terrible cries. "Did you get hurt?" I ask him. "Did something scare you?" and he answers, "Itzik spilled water on me!"

I become the "judge" and call over Itzik to find out what happened. Itzik claims that he didn't spill anything, while Ari proves emphatically, with all sorts of *osos umofsim*, that no one but Itzik got his shirt wet. When I finally figure out that Itzik poured himself a cup of water, and some water dripped onto his brother's shirt in the process, I calm down. "He didn't do it on purpose," I try to tell the "victim," but he starts recalling all the things that were done intentionally. Itzik, on the other hand, recalls everything that was done to *him*. *Sisu V'simchu....*

When I subscribed to the *Hashgachah Pratis* Magazine, I wasn't expecting much. My hope was that they would fight less when they had something to occupy them, but a surprise awaited me. Of course they fought plenty over who would get to read the comics first and who would solve the riddle first, but in time their fights became less frequent. They read the magazine voraciously and started saying things like, "It's *hashgachah pratis*," or, "If they give it to you, it's *min haShamayim*," and most amazingly, "It's not your fault. What happened was because that was what Hashem wanted."

I can't say they've stopped fighting altogether, but I *can* say that the atmosphere in the house has changed completely. I've learned the "language" as well. Instead of being busy with exhausting "court cases" between plaintiff and defendant, we quickly come to the conclusions that "This is *bashert*." The talk in the house has become uplifted, happy, enlightened. No longer am I greeted by red-faced, angry looks. The children are able to play more pleasantly, to praise more, to enjoy more, to hear, to calm down. There is serenity in the house. *Nachas*. I attribute this change completely to the "*Hashgachah Pratis* Magazine for the home and family."

## The Strongest Protection

From the words of Rav Berisch Schneibalg, shlit"u

One of the chassidim of the Imrei Emes was a very wealthy man. He was a wheat merchant, and this gave him a respectable parnassah. He would purchase wheat from the farmers, who grew it in their fields, and he would sell it to the portizim. If the wheat stays in storage for too long it can get worms, and therefore he would arrange for a specific date when the merchandise would be transferred to the portizim.

The contact between the chassid and the portizim included two meetings: At the first meeting the portizim advanced part of their payments to the chassid. With this money the chassid would pay the farmers. At the second meeting, the following year, the chassid would receive the rest of the money, and the wheat would exchange hands.

In order to secure the money of the portizim, the chassid signed a contract declaring that in case he would not deliver the merchandise on time, he was responsible to return the money he had received in advance, along with an additional fine.

One year the predetermined date for handing over the merchandise arrived. All the portizim gathered at a certain inn and waited for the Jewish merchant to come and sell them the wheat. The chassid was traveling to the inn, together with his business manager, and on the way he grabbed his head in sudden fear. "You have no idea what we forgot," he said.

"What?" the manager asked fearfully.

"We forgot the wheat we were supposed to bring to the portiz of Kishinev! He is the biggest portiz of all, who ordered the most wheat. Do you understand what this means?! I'll have to pay him back the money he advanced, along with a fine! The portizim will lose their trust in me. I'll be in debt for the rest of my life and will pass on the debts to my sons after me. At this moment my business is a disaster. I'm not happy about what I have to tell you, but I think you'll be the first one to suffer, because I'll have to fire you. Since there's no more business, I have no need for a manager."

The manager did not yet understand the severity of the situation, but as soon as the merchant finished speaking he burst into song, to the manager's shock. He began with a slow, heartfelt tune, but then he picked up his pace until it became a happy, merry tune. As the chassid lifted his voice in song, the manager thought that perhaps the pain had caused him to lose his mind. With a smiling face and eyes shining with joy, the chassid entered the inn. Before approaching the seat of the portizim, he asked his servant to bring them plenty of whiskey to gladden their hearts.

The portizim were happy to meet the Jewish merchant, and he offered them all the whiskey they wanted. The portizim, seeing that his expression was open and happy, took the bait. The whiskey flowed like water, one cup after another, until they were all drunk, their minds completely unhinged. They sang and became wild, and then they lost consciousness. In the meantime, the heavens opened and rain fell to the earth. The wheat was outside, and it became completely soaked. By the time the portizim woke up, all the merchandise was lost.

"It's okay," the portizim said, still feeling the effects of their impromptu party. "It's not your fault. It's our fault. We weren't being responsible." Then the portiz of Kishinev made a decision: "We will pay you good money. You don't need to lose out because of our parties. I just want to remind you of one thing: Come here on this date next year, so we'll buy our wheat from you. Friends, bring out your money please!" the portiz called out to the others, and when the portiz of Kishinev spoke, no one dared to contradict him.

The merchant and his manager went home excited, thanking the Borei Olam with all their hearts for the open miracle He had wrought for them. "Can you explain what happened here?" the manager asked. "How did this miracle happen?"

The chassid answered him: "The last time I was by my Rebbe the Imrei Emes, he told me, 'Ki b'simchah teitzein – with joy, you go out – with simchah, you can leave all your difficulties behind.' At the time I did not understand what his words were hinting to, but when we were traveling, when I realized that all hope was lost, I recalled the words of my Rebbe and I thought, How can I possibly be happy now? That's why I started singing, until the song affected me deeply and I was filled with joy, emunah, and hope that Hashem would certainly help me, as indeed you were able to see."

**Middas Hadin Does Not Have Control Over Someone Filled with Joy**

An avreich once went in to the Lev Simcha and complained about his difficult situation. He had literally reached the point of having no bread to eat. The Lev Simcha told him, "Be happy, and that is a good segulah for bountiful parnassah."

"How could I be happy when my situation is so difficult?" the avreich asked in a tear-filled voice.

"What doesn't one do for parnassah...?" the Rebbe responded. What does this have to do with our situation today? There is tension, fear, the sounds of war, missiles, shooting, and sirens. The South is still bleeding the blood of the sacrifices that were offered at Kiddush Hashem, people are seeking some way out and have no idea what to do. The advice is: simchah.

Does this sound strange? It's the truth. On the passuk (Bereishis 6:6), "And Hashem regretted that He made man...and he was sad in his heart," the Imrei Emes explained that the generation

of the Mabul was happy, and therefore the middas hadin had no control over them. For this reason, Hashem made preparations for the Mabul, and that was "vayisatzeiv" – He put sadness into their hearts, and then the Mabul could take control over them.

There is a profound message here. The generation of the Mabul, people who deserved to be wiped off the face of the earth, could not receive their punishment because of their simchah! It was necessary to make them sad first, and only afterward did Hashem punish them. If we want protection, if we want to sweeten things, to see yeshuos and be saved, that is the advice: to be happy.

**Good Words Bring Good Things**

Simchah is not something that comes on its own. One cannot be happy without a reason, and that's why we need emunah. Emunah brings simchah. Good words bring good things. There are people who talk about all sorts of limitations they have and sins they've done, but we know that our job is to speak well of Am Yisrael. We have to sweeten the din and bring down good and blessing, and this is done through good words.

When Noach was born to his father Lemech, the Torah tells us (Bereishis 5:29), "And he called his name Noach, saying: He will comfort us from our labor and the soreness of our hands." Rashi explains, "He will relieve us from the soreness of our hands. Until Noach came, they had no equipment for plowing, and he invented it for them."

Rashbam writes that the reason he was called Noach was not that it was a prophecy for the future; it was a tefillah. They davened that this child would be a good sign. He did not start building plows immediately, but they believed that things could be better, that they wouldn't have to work so hard. When they called him Noach, they started saying this name again and again. Every time they spoke to him or called him or spoke about him, they said "Noach," and when you say "noach" so much, then indeed things become easier, more "noach" for you. "And Noach found favor in the Eyes of Hashem." It is explained that one of the reasons Noach found favor in Hashem's Eyes was that he was indeed noach – comforting, easygoing, comfortable. That's why he had the patience to build a teivah over such a long period of time – 120 years, and he could bear living in such cramped quarters with three floors, built for man, animals, and refuse, and remaining there for a full year. Only someone who is "noach" is capable of bearing this, because he lives with Hashem all the time.

The Mabul, which caused fear outside, did not harm him, because he was inside; he was protected. Hashem was protecting him. How is it possible that this terrible Mabul, which obliterated the entire creation, did not destroy the teivah as well? It is because of the Ribbono shel Olam's special protection. There is no other explanation for this, and what is most calming is specifically the fact that there is no logic to it.

**The Ultimate Security**

Consider the mashal of a person who pays a security company once a month, and that's how he's confident that his house is protected. Several years pass, and one day the owner of the house decides to check and see if the security company is indeed doing its job. He sets up cameras and discovers that the company has been taking his money without providing any security at all. What does he do? First, he stops paying them. If Hakadosh Baruch Hu is watching over me without you, then I have no need for you.

This is what happened with us, the people of Eretz Yisrael. We thought that our technology was sufficiently advanced to ensure that our systems were strong and that we were fully protected. But we saw how, at the moment of truth, all these systems are no more secure than a garlic peel. The security company is not doing any work at all, and thus we understand that only He Who has protected us until now will continue to protect us. Missiles fall from all directions, and we are living on miracles. Blessed is the Protector of Yisrael! The hashgachah pratit is so obvious. We see tangibly, without any doubt, that only Hashem protects, shields and saves us, and there is no one but Him. In fact, what is most calming is specifically the knowledge that nothing helps, because in this way we rely only on Hashem yisbarach, Who shields all those who rely on Him, and through our bitachon we draw to us the best possible protection.

The Gemara (Sotah 49b) lists the signs of the final generation before the coming of Moshiach, and it concludes: "And we have no one on whom to rely but our Father in heaven" – at that time everyone will agree that this is the only effective defense. And this is what we have merited to see happening now.

The geulah is already at our doorstep – for emunah is the geulah.

(This wonderful shiur, and all the Rav's shiurim, can be heard on extension 23 after selecting a language, or by dialing directly: 02-301-1907.)

# שער הבטחון

מחובת הלבבות

עם ביאור משולב בשפה צחה ובהירה



מהדורה חדשה בפורמט ניס

עם חלוקה ללימוד יומי, למשך חודשיים

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