

HASHGACHA PRATIS

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



Parsh Shemini-Tazria 5784 ■ Issue 136

HEART TO HEART

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

Fulfilling the Mission

There are many messengers sent from on High, and often one of them is me. Many times I find myself in the role of giver. People ask me for something, wait for an *eitzah* from me, or expect me to help and support them. Sometimes we're talking about an act, sometimes about a gift, and sometimes about a loan. How should I to react to these requests?

Rabbenu Bachyai directs us, in *Shaar Habitachon* (perek 4): "If someone of higher or lower status than him makes a request..." The person making the request could be greater than him in age, level, or status, and he could also be less than him. Sometimes, we are walking on the sidewalk and suddenly see a small child who wants to cross the street. In this case, the one making the request is "less than us." The same request can come from an old man as well – a wise man, who is wary of crossing the street alone. This is a request that comes from someone who is "greater than us." At home there are children who are under our jurisdiction, there is a spouse, and there are parents, *baruch Hashem*. In life we meet everyone – those who are "greater than" as well as those who are "less than."

How do we respond to a Yid's request? "He should try with all his heart to do what he asks, and he should be happy to fulfill it." We should try to fulfill the request in the best way possible! Let us look at the words of Rabbenu Bachyai. He doesn't just tell us to do *chessed* and *tzedakah*, but rather to do whatever it takes to fulfill the request. His wording enlightens us regarding how to view all the *chassadim* that we are *zocheh* to do in our lives.

The Director of the world wants each one of us to receive his needs in the time that is right for him, and He alone chooses messengers to bring this about. After learning many sections of *Shaar Habitachon*, we've already gotten used to thinking that everything is *min haShamayim*, and we will not blame another person for the fact that he did not succeed in helping us. If someone hurt us, ruined things for us, or caused us harm, we'll remember that this was from Hashem, and that person is only the messenger. If someone helped, assisted, or saved us, we'll thank him as *hakaras hatov* for the goodness of his heart, because virtuous things are brought about through virtuous people, but we'll remember to first thank Hashem *yisbarach*, the Navigator of all circumstances, Who enabled us to succeed through the hands of the one who was sent to assist us.

We should view the help that we extend to others in the same light: The Master of the world wanted to send Yankele someone to help him with some matter, and He chose me to fulfill this mission! What a *zechus* it is for me that the Creator chose me to be the channel through which he will receive benefit. We then approach the fulfillment of the request with the feeling that we are fulfilling a mission, with the understanding that we are part of a wondrous system that the King Himself arranged in order for some blessing to reach another Jew.

When all the members of the family learn *Shaar Habitachon*, we can hear the language of the *Chovos Halevavos* ringing through the house. The spouses tell each other "The Creator of the world chose me. I am so happy that I was chosen to fulfill this mission..." and these could be daily missions – to serve a meal, to give *tzedakah*, to lend an item, to make things easier for someone who is ill, to give advice, to calm, to gladden, to teach, to arrange.... So many activities that we do within and outside the home include help and assistance to others, and they are all missions for the Master of all.

When someone asks for something, we need to remember that in essence it is not the child, neighbor, friend or customer who is making the request; it is Hashem Who is asking me to take part in a process that will bring the good to whomever it is meant to reach.

Rabbenu Bachyai adds, importantly, that one should fulfill the request "if the opportunity to do so is available to him," meaning if it is within the normal range of *hishtadlus* to carry out the person's request. If you're in Yerushalayim, and someone asks you to bring him something he forgot in Tzfas, for example, that is not considered to be in the normal range of *hishtadlus* and exertion demanded of you.

We need to be honest with ourselves in order to identify whether the *hishtadlus* that is being asked of us is rational and proper, or whether it is something that is completely impractical. We should approach the matter with a warm heart and with a true desire to help, and we should do it happily. This is something that is inside a person's heart. No one else sees or knows, but He Who discerns all concealed things sees how much we want and truly try to give, to help, and to support others!

May we be *zocheh* to be good messengers, to do good to the creations of the Omnipresent, with joy; *amen*.

FROM THE EDITOR

I Davened for It a Thousand Times. Why Don't I Receive It?

This is the question of all questions.

People daven, ask, plead, and hope, and they are not answered. Sometimes a person will conclude that he should stop davening. If I asked for it so many times and I didn't receive it, isn't that a sign that Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn't want to give it to me?

This conclusion is fundamentally wrong.

People are accustomed to equating *tefillah* to Hashem with a request made of a human king.

When a person approaches a king of flesh and blood, or, in our times, when he needs something from an important person, he prepares himself carefully, and then he comes and makes his request. If this influential person tells him "No!" the person who approached him understands that the response is negative. Perhaps he'll try again, but if he gets another *no*, he'll realize that he won't be able to change the negative response.

This is not how it works when a Jew davens to his Creator.

A Yid is a son of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the Father of every Jew, and when a son makes a request and the father does not provide it, it is because he first wants to make sure that fulfilling the request will be good for his son. The Alshich Hakadosh explains this tremendous principle on the *passuk* in *Tehillim* (22:3), "My L-rd, I cry out during the day and You do not answer; when night [comes] I do not keep silent."

Dovid Hamelech taught us:

Elokai – Every Yid says to Hakadosh Baruch Hu: You are my L-rd and my strength; You are my Father, and therefore...

I cry out during the day and You do not answer – I call out to You in the daytime, and You don't answer me, but I know this is not due to hatred. If a stranger made a request of the king and did not receive a response, he won't repeat his request, since he is afraid this will anger the king. But if the one making the request is the king's son, he'll ask again and again, knowing that the king did not ignore him out of hatred, because he is his father. He understands that the king ignored him only because of his faults; the king wants his son to show him more loyalty, and afterward he will respond to him. And that's why he says: You are my L-rd, and therefore I do not despair of coming before You to daven again. And because I know that You ignore my *tefillas* only because You want me to come closer to You...

When night [comes] I do not keep silent – Although I've already davened during the day, I will daven again at night, because I know that this is what Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants from me. He wants me to daven yet again and to humble myself before Him, until He accepts my *tefillas*.

If a Yid davened a thousand times and he wasn't answered, he should daven again, and again, until Hakadosh Baruch Hu listens and responds to him.

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• Kav Hashgacha Pratis for women
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THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

He Passed through All the Barriers

A Yid from Manhattan told me an amazing story. Sometimes, he explained, it seems to you that you can't get what you want, that you have no chance of getting it, but if Hakadosh Baruch Hu helps, even a tough Gentile will soften his mode of behavior for your sake.

I work during the day, he related. At 2 p.m. there's a minyan for Minchah in the shul located across the street from the store where I work. This is a main street and it's very wide, unlike anything you'd see in Eretz Yisrael.

One day, close to 2 p.m., I wanted to cross the street so I could daven with a minyan, and I saw that the entire street was blocked. Uniformed guards were walking around importantly, barriers were set up over the entire width of the street, and there were no vehicles on the scene other than a police car.

I tried to cross the street, but one of the security guards stopped me immediately. "No crossing here!"

"Why?"

"The president is going to be passing here now!"

Nu, if the president has to pass on this street that is indeed important, but I had something even more important to do. I needed to daven with a minyan! Two p.m. was approaching, and I had to cross that street! I had to!

I could have said, *That's the situation; there's nothing to do. The president needs to pass here, and I will daven biyechidus, because I have no way of getting to shul.*

But, I thought, while the president is the most important Gentile in the United States, and he is certainly an influential person, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the King of all kings, and His influence is far greater than anything imaginable. I am going to daven to Him, and He will certainly help me get to shul.

I told the officer, "I want to speak to the man who is in charge here" – the head security guard. The policeman pointed to a huge soldier and said, "There he is."

I went over to him and asked, "How long does this street need to be closed?"

"Until the president passes by," he said.

"I want to cross the street," I told him.

"There is no entry."

"But I must!"

"What do you mean, *you must*? There are many people who want to pass here now. You aren't different from any of them."

"But I must cross, because there, across the street," I pointed at the shul, "there is a synagogue, and I must go to pray there at two o'clock."

The Gentile's expression shifted, and he told me, "Okay you can go, but only for prayer! Not for anything else!"

You Don't Go to the Hospital for This Sort of Thing

I am a Yid from Yerushalayim. I have a friend who made Aliyah to Eretz Yisrael from the States. He was married twenty years ago and has been learning in an excellent *kollel* since then. At first he would travel abroad from time to time, but with time, his trips to *chutz la'Aretz* became more and more rare until they stopped completely. For fifteen years he didn't leave Eretz Hakodesh; he's been learning with *hasmadah*, breathing the air and being infused with its *kedushah*, and he had hoped to continue in this way until Moshiach comes.

In the meantime, Moshiach still hasn't come, and his brother, who lives "in the *galus*," was suffering a lot. He was ill, and his situation became complicated; he needed serious treatment in the hospital.

My friend received an urgent call from his brother's family in America, asking him to come and strengthen his brother physically and spiritually, to give him what only a brother can give. As they say, blood is not water, and here his suffering brother was in need of a great deal of help and encouragement.

My friend understood that he was needed in America, so he quickly arranged everything, prepared all the necessary documents, and boarded a flight.

When he got there, he met his brother whom he hadn't seen for fifteen years, but within minutes they felt as though they'd been together forever. My friend did his job wholeheartedly, offering his heart and his words, his advice and his time. The years of Torah learning in Eretz Yisrael had done him well, and the presence of a brother from Eretz Hakodesh could only do good for someone living in *galus*.

Once, when my friend was in the hospital with his brother, he suddenly had a terrible headache. It wasn't the first time his head hurt, but the intensity of the pain was cause for concern. *Here I am in the hospital*, he thought to himself. *I may as well ask them to examine me.*

He was taken in for an examination, and the doctors were shocked. The results of the examination revealed something very problematic, and my friend needed immediate medical intervention.

What would have happened if the same headache had hit him on a routine day in Yerushalayim? He would have said that this was something familiar to him, and there was no need to get excited. You don't go to the hospital for this sort of thing. He would simply have waited for it to pass.

But he had this intense headache precisely when he came to help his brother in the hospital – and his life was saved.

Sometimes a person thinks he is doing something with *mesirus nefesh* to help another, and he doesn't realize that Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants to help him, to save him and to heal him.

"Tishrei"

For a while we've wanted to begin a *sefer* to learn *hilchos Shabbos* during all our *seudos*, and *baruch Hashem*, we were *zocheh* to do so. We are learning two *halachos* at every *seudah*, and we came to the halachah regarding how Shabbos and Yom Tov expenses come back to you.

That's right, *Chazal* have said that a person's *parnassah* is predetermined every Rosh Hashanah, except for Shabbos and Yom Tov expenses. *Dorshei Reshimos* even gave an acronym for all expenses that are not calculated on Rosh Hashanah, and they are the initials of the word "Tishrei," which stands for *Talmud Torah*, Shabbos, Rosh Chodesh, and Yom Tov.

One of the children got really excited.

"What – really? Everything comes back to you?" he asked in disbelief.

"Everything," I said.

"How does it come back?"

"The Ribbono shel Olam has many ways of providing," I said.

"And can it also happen that someone just gives you money in your hand?"

"Yes, it's possible."

A short while passed, and it was Erev Pesach. We strengthened ourselves in our *emunah* that Yom Tov expenses come back to you, and we bought what we needed, relying on the open Hand of Hashem, Who took us out of Mitzrayim. On Chol Hamoed, when I went down to the park with the children for a short outing, a car stopped right near us, and the driver called out to one of my children to come to him.

I saw this and I was suspicious. I immediately went over to him myself. What does this stranger want from my child?

"I have an envelope to give you," he said.

He handed me the envelope, and I could tell that there was money inside. I refused to

On the giving end

I lost something very important, and I searched for it in every possible place but did not find it. I decided to donate toward the dissemination of emunah as a *segulah* to find what I lost. Before making the donation, I thought that once I was donating, I might as well donate also as a *zechus* for my sister, who was having a hard time getting accepted to high school. So that's what I did.

A few minutes later, the phone rang and someone informed me that he found what I lost in a completely unexpected place. I had just completed that call, and another call came in from the high school, informing us that my sister was accepted.

On the receiving end

As someone who listens regularly to the phone line and reads the newsletters, I wanted to thank you for the *emunah* and *bitachon* you instill in me. Lately I found myself involved in a *nisayon*. I had to take a morning flight, and it seemed that I would not be able to daven Shacharis with a minyan before the flight. But because of the *chizuk* I heard on the phone line, I decided to daven calmly with a minyan. The incredible thing was that, although usually the ride to the airport takes two hours, this time the highways were empty and it took only an hour, so I was able to daven b'tzibbur and also make my flight.

accept it.

"Why don't you take it? It's meant to be yours."

"What do you mean? Do you even know me?"

"I'll explain," the driver said, while his wife nodded along, agreeing with everything he said. "We are traditional. There is money here to give a family with children. We decided that we would go to Bnei Brak and give the envelope to the first family we'd meet. You are the first family we met, so the money belongs to you!"

Considering the incredible series of events, I understood that Hakadosh Baruch Hu had sent me the money, and I took it happily and with thanks.

At home we counted the money, and we saw that the sum equaled the exact amount we had spent on Yom Tov expenses.

Not only that, but for some reason, on the envelope was written one word that explains everything: Tishrei.

As Though He Didn't Know

I am a Yid from London. It was on Erev Pesach 5756 – quite some time ago – when I was twelve and a half. We would clean the house well, and then we would wait to go out shopping. In our house we knew that if we wanted something new, we'd have to wait for Pesach. Then you get everything – shoes, clothing, *kippah*, *tzitzis*, and a suit. Games – not for everyone, but nonetheless, a new game was one of the things we'd buy before Pesach. As children, this was a special experience for us, and we waited anxiously for our parents to call us and say that it was time to go to the store.

We dared not ask.

In truth, even if we could ask, that year we knew that asking wouldn't help. I was a very curious boy, and despite the strict *chinuch* of our home, I had my ways of understanding things. I understood that the financial situation in the house was difficult. It seemed my parents were scraping the bottom of the barrel just in order to provide our basic needs. How would they be able to buy everything we needed for Pesach?

We were advancing nicely with the cleaning. My father took out several cartons of old documents and decided it was time to throw them out. He asked his accountant if it was okay to get rid of them, and the accountant said, "Generally, British law is that you should hold on to these documents for seven years, but you can always say you didn't know there was such a law. But...you asked me nothing and you don't know about the law."

My father decided he would throw out the documents, but he wanted to keep the loose-leaf binder and the folders, as they were in good condition and could be used again. "Michel," Abba called to me, "can you please take the documents out of the folders?"

I was happy to do so. I enjoy such jobs. I could peek at the documents and see all sorts of interesting things, and I also like to deal with papers and files. It was just the job for me. I sat down near the cartons and started working. There were orders for merchandise, deliveries, dates. Nothing interesting there. Another file, another folder, and suddenly I saw a banknote sticking out of one of the folders. I leafed through the file and discovered it was filled with banknotes of various denominations. I counted them and discovered that there were 800 pounds there!

That is a really large sum.

I was very excited. I called my sister and told her, "I think we'll be able to go out shopping today. Look what I found."

She was just as excited as I was. We went upstairs to our parents' room together. I could hear Abba and Ima talking. Ima was saying, "We need shoes for Michel, Shima'le, and Raizy. We need new socks for everyone. And what about wine and matzos?"

"Yes, yes, it's all really important," Abba said. I'm breaking my head trying to figure out where we'll get the money for all these things."

At that moment I wanted to burst into the room with the 800 pounds, but I was a product of my British *chinuch*, and I would not dare to do so.

I stood outside and knocked on the door until I was given permission to enter.

"What do you need?" my father asked.

I said nothing, but simply showed my father the money.

He was amazed. "What's this? Where is it from?"

"I found it in one of the folders you asked me to empty out."

My father got emotional. "*Hodu laHashem ki tov!*" and he immediately started giving instructions. "Take it and go buy shoes, clothing, and everything you need." The *revachah* had come in one shot. He even gave each of us pocket money.

When the excitement died down, my father remembered where the money had come from.

Ten years earlier, my father had owned a fish store. He would order merchandise from a fish vendor in the marketplace, who would bring the fish late at night, when my father wasn't there to pay him. So Abba would prepare the money to give him and would leave it in a folder on the counter, and the vendor would take the money himself. During the final week before the shop closed, Abba prepared the money in the folder, but ultimately he didn't order the fish. The vendor never came, and the money remained. Eventually, the folder with the money was put into a carton with other folders, and now, when my father asked me to empty it, the treasure was revealed.

It was amazing to realize that Hakadosh Baruch Hu had watched over our money for that Erev Pesach, when Abba was in a real pinch, and He had arranged that Abba would want to throw out the cartons and receive the advice that he should pretend that he knew nothing about the law regarding keeping documents for seven years.

Baruch Hashem, our Pesach needs were amply met.

I nodded my head. He informed all the security guards who stood where I would be walking that they were to open the barriers for me, and I crossed the street. There were other people who wanted to pass, but the head security guard did not allow them to under any circumstances. I was the only one who was given permission to cross, and only one way, and only in order to pray.

What would be after Minchah? I had no clue. I didn't want to be stuck, but first, I had to daven. With a minyan. The excitement over the president's passing by and all the hectic preparations around him aroused me to daven with *kavanah* before the King of all kings. I had received permission to daven to Him, and the fact that only I had been allowed to cross the street was a sign from *Shamayim* that Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted my *tefillos*, and He opened the barriers for me so that I could get to a minyan.

After Minchah all the barriers were removed, since the president had already passed. "You lost out," someone told me. "You didn't get to see the president!" But I knew that I hadn't lost anything. The truth was the exact opposite – I had gained worlds. I had davened.

It Disappeared in His Pocket

I knew that the envelope was supposed to come. It contained payment for a certain job that I had done, and I was waiting impatiently for the money. I called the messenger who was supposed to bring me the envelope, and I asked him when I could expect him.

He apologized a thousand times. It was not pleasant for him to talk about, and he couldn't imagine how it happened, but he could not find the envelope. "I have no idea where it could be. This is so strange. Believe me, I've looked everywhere."

You can tell when someone is saying the truth. I did not suspect that he stole it, and I also didn't blame him for negligence. The problem was the envelope. I needed the money.

What should we do?

Several days passed, and I asked myself again and again, *What should we do?* Hakadosh Baruch Hu had sent the angel of forgetfulness so the messenger would not find the envelope, and this meant that I had to make a *cheshbon nefesh*. What does Hashem want from me? Perhaps I should give more *tzedakah*?

Since this idea came up in my mind, I acted on it immediately. I took a sum of money and put it into an envelope, intending to give it to *tzedakah* immediately.

That same day the messenger called me. "Listen, I don't understand what's going on here. I don't know why I couldn't find the envelope before. It was there in my pocket! You can take it!"

I saw tangibly how Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted to arouse me to give *tzedakah*, and once I "took the hint," the envelope was found.

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Hashgachah Pratis in Sifrei Kodesh Hashgachah Pratis in the Sefarim Hakedoshim

Even If He Has His Needs, He Needs to Pray That They Not Be Taken from Him

It is said that the *heilige* Reb Yosef Dov of Belz *zt"l* explained that this *gemara* seems to mean that insufficient *emunah* means worrying about tomorrow instead of trusting that Hashem will send him *parnassah* for tomorrow as well. But we can also explain it as follows: A person needs to know in his heart that even at a time when it seems to him that he has everything he needs, there is no guarantee that this will continue, and he needs to pray that it should not be taken away from him. And this is why the Gemara teaches, "He who has bread in his basket and says, "What will we eat tomorrow?" – it sounds as though he is worrying only about tomorrow, since he feels that for today he is guaranteed to have his needs. This is referred to as insufficient *emunah*.

(Kovetz Imrei Kodesh)

Leaving Nothing for Tomorrow

When the Brisker Rav *zt"l* was in Warsaw, he would eat everything he needed each day, leaving nothing over for the next day, since he trusted in Hashem that he would have food to eat on the following day, and in order not to transgress the words of *Chazal*, "Rabi Eliezer Hagadol says that anyone who has bread in his basket and says, 'What will we eat tomorrow?' is a person of insufficient *emunah*." His son, the *gaon* Reb Yosef Dov, would eat nothing other than the hard part of the bread, which his father could not grind with his teeth, since he did not want to take away from what the Brisker Rav had to eat, and the Brisker Rav complained about him, saying that the reason there was not enough bread for him was because his son was not eating. If he ate, they would get hold of more bread. Nonetheless, Reb Yosef Dov did not eat, since he did not want to be a *baal bitachon* on the *cheshbon* of his father.

(Uvdos V'hanhagos L'veis Brisk)

Parnassah in This World Is the Reward of Emunah

"The insufficient [*emunah*] they had was that they did not believe in Hakadosh Baruch Hu," meaning: They would think their *parnassah* was dependent on the nature that Hashem embedded in this world. They did not believe that everything came to them through His

personal *hashgachah* every single day, for His table is set for all, as it says, "You open Your Hand and provide all living things with their desires." If their *emunah* were stronger, they would have *parnassah* in this world in the *zechus* of their *emunah*, as it says, "and the tzaddik shall live by his *emunah*." This means that the reward of his *emunah* is life in this world, which does not detract at all from his reward in the World to Come.

But since their *emunah* in this was not strong, they had *parnassah* in this world as the reward for their mitzvos, and therefore their table in the World to Come was incomplete. The good was subtracted from it because of the good they received in this world.

(Ben Yehoyada)

Believing Even When One Does Not Know What Will Be

It says (*Tehillim* 68:20), "Blessed is Hashem, each day," and He sustains His creations every day; therefore, someone who has bread in his basket and says, 'What will I eat tomorrow?' is considered to be of insufficient *emunah*. This shows that he does not really believe that Hashem Yisbarach sustains His world, for if he would believe in Him, he would not have any doubts about what he would eat tomorrow. This detracts from the reward of *tzaddikim* in the World to Come, because a believer believes in something that he does not know as fact, something that is hidden and concealed. Therefore, when the time that is hidden and concealed to us – meaning, future days – will come, his table (meaning, his reward) will be complete, and it will be exactly the size of the *emunah* he had in Hashem regarding concealed things. But if someone is of insufficient *emunah* and does not believe in anything he has not seen and does not know about, then as a direct consequence, his portion will be smaller in the World to Come, which is a time that is hidden and concealed from us.

(Chiddushei Aggados Maharal MiPrague)

A Thought on Bitachon

From the shiurim on Kav Hashgacha Pratis

Every mitzvah that we do has two parts. One is the practical part, and the other is the thought behind it. The two parts are dependent on each other, and only through both is the mitzvah complete.

Let us take an example from the building of the Mishkan, which we recently learned about in Chumash Shemos. Bnei Yisrael donated their share; they brought silver, gold, and copper as a terumah for the building of the Mishkan. However, the passuk states (Shemos 35:5), "Every generous heart shall bring it," meaning that before actually bringing the terumah, the people had to focus their hearts on Hashem. The Ohr Hachaim explains there that there are two acts of donating pertaining to the building of the Mishkan. One is the physical act of giving the terumah – the gold, silver, and other materials, and the second act is the person's devoting himself to serving Hashem.

We are now in the midst of preparations for the Yom Tov of Pesach. We've already discussed how Yetzias Mitzrayim is something that happens anew each year. As the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh wrote on the passuk, "The L-rd Who takes them out of Mitzrayim..."

Excerpts from the popular shiur by
Harav Hatzaddik R' Beirish Shneebalg shlit"a

The Inner and Outer Dimensions of a Mitzvah

(Bamidbar 23:22) – this does not refer only to the first time He took us out, but rather to each and every year, when He takes us out anew. Hashem continues to strengthen and uplift us, for there is no limit to how much Hashem wants us to be uplifted, until no trace of evil will remain.

The main point of Yetzias Mitzrayim is to leave behind the impurity we are in and to come closer to Hashem. The actions that we do during the days preceding Pesach – cleaning the house, burning the chametz, buying new clothing... all hint to the internal cleansing and renewal a person needs to undergo.

Thus, aside from the external acts that we do, the main thing is to focus on the internal aspect, to clean and purify the heart. Our nisayon is the murkiness that gives us the feeling that the main thing is the shopping for new clothes for Pesach. But this should not be our main focus. The main focus is the internal hischadshus, to purify ourselves and make ourselves holy in order to leave Mitzrayim behind.

May Hashem help us, and just as in the days when we left Mitzrayim, may He show us wonders. May we



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