

HASHGACHAH PRATIS

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



Pesach 5784 ■ Issue 161

HEART TO HEART

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

Dovid Hamelech's Unique Method

Dovid Hamelech could have been very miserable and drowning in tears, eulogies, and pain. But *Sefer Tehillim* sings a completely different tune, a tune of hope and *bitachon*, joy and thanksgiving, prayers integrated with steadfast *emunah* that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is with him and will certainly help and save him.

Dovid Hamelech begins *perek* 26 with the words, "Judge me Hashem, for I have walked in innocence; in Hashem I trusted!" And therefore, "I shall not stumble." Rabbenu Saadya Gaon interprets this chapter in an incredible way: Dovid Hamelech is asking Hashem to deal with his enemies. He himself chose not to take revenge on them. What they are saying or plotting does not interest him. He hears them outside his window, asking each other, "When will this king die already, so that his son Shlomo can be king and build the *Beis Hamikdash*?"

He doesn't try to answer them, doesn't speak up in defense of his honor. He only turns to Hashem and asks Him to judge them, and this comes from a sense of strength. His innocence is his strength. "I have walked in innocence," and therefore he is certain of Hashem's salvation – so much so that he is willing to undergo a *nisayon*, and he asks Hashem to test him.

Bitachon in happy times is nothing like *bitachon* in times of difficulty. How does Dovid have the certainty that he will stand strong in his *bitachon* when he experiences a *nisayon* as well? He has a unique method: "Your *chessed* is the focus of my eyes!"

Even in difficult times, when flooded with pain and the difficulty overwhelms me, I see before my eyes the *chessed* that You do with me. I keep thinking about seeing the good, focusing on all the good and pleasant aspects. I recall all the times that I was saved and that I succeeded, with Hashem's mercy. I know that everything is true, just and right, and this knowledge gives me a feeling of stability. I am in the Hands of the Creator *Yisbarach*, Who does only good to me. There is nothing evil that comes from Above.

Perhaps it is possible to find a Yid who has everything going for him. He has bountiful *parnassah*, and he can buy whatever he pleases, his children bring home only hundreds on their tests, and the *melamdin* are full of praises for them. In *shiddu-*

chim things go smoothly and easily, but then suddenly something happens that doesn't seem to go according to the plan. His reaction is: *What is this? Why did Hashem do this to me? What happened? What's wrong?* He has complaints, and he feels that his world is destroyed.

This is the opposite of the approach of Dovid Hamelech. From the time he was young, he was considered abnormal. His brothers treated him with contempt and sent him far away from home to watch the sheep. He quarreled with his father-in-law Shaul Hamelech. His life story is filled with very difficult chapters, and he always remembers Who brought it all upon him: *Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave me this life, together with the ability to choose, and I am choosing to strengthen my belief that all of this is for my good!*

There were times in his stormy life that he suffered every minute of the day. Those who wanted to kill him pursued him everywhere and sent him threatening messages. According to their plans, Dovid should have disappeared long before, but Hakadosh Baruch Hu arranges all events, and He determined that Dovid would live. *My enemies received permission to hurt me, in order to test me, and not only do I accept Hashem's hanhagah, but much more than that – I thank Him!*

Sefer Tehillim is filled to overflowing with *pesukim* of thanksgiving. In this *perek* alone we find so many different forms of thanksgiving. And his thanksgiving is not only between him and Hashem; rather, he blesses and thanks Hashem publicly.

It is very nice to say thank you for good news, but Dovid Hamelech goes far beyond that. We might have to sit down for a painful meeting; the father is in the hospital and we need to arrange for family members to take turns sitting at his side. The situation is not pleasant, but how do you begin such a meeting? By publicly thanking Hashem! Start with the words, "We will thank Hashem!" Say that we see the *chessed*, tell stories of *hashgachah* that we have seen tangibly, and then continue on to the practical part of how to handle the situation. *Bitachon*, thanksgiving, and seeing the *chessed* in all situations – those are the instructions Dovid Hamelech bequeaths to us with his songs to Hashem.

FROM THE EDITOR

The Same, but Completely Different

"If I had to point out the day I became a *mentch*," someone told me, "I would have to say it was the day I discovered the *sefer Shaar Habitachon*. My life can be divided into two parts: life before this discovery and life after it."

I asked him to tell me, "What changes did you make? Did you do something different from what you had been doing until then?"

He told me that he hadn't changed anything. "Whatever I did before, I still do now, but whereas I used to feel pressured and angry, I now act with the feeling of being on a mission, and with the joy of doing what Hashem wants of me."

This Yid reminded me of a story from one of the *maggidim*. He related that in past generations there were people who would disconnect from this world for a period of time. They literally behaved as the *mishnah* in Avos describes it, eating bread with salt and drinking water in measure, and then these people literally felt, "How fortunate you are and how good it is for you." They became closer and closer to Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

One of the disciples asked: How can this be? In some jails, where criminals remain for many years, they sleep on the floor without a mattress, and once a day they get a slice of bread and a cup of water. When these criminals are discharged, not only do they not improve their ways, but they often become much worse.

The *maggid* smiled and said, "True; if you feel like a criminal in jail, then it has no effect on you; but if you do it with a feeling of joy and the desire to draw closer to Hashem, then it works."

Each year, Pesach is the time of our freedom, and true freedom is a life of *emunah*.

There are people who recoil at the idea of *emunah*. They suspect that living with true *emunah* will obligate them to transform their whole lives, to leave behind everything they were accustomed to doing until now, and they are afraid to make such changes.

But the truth is that *emunah* enlightens one's life. *Emunah* brings a person to a place of freedom. He can now do exactly the same thing he did before, when he was feeling so pressured, and do it with the feeling of being on a mission, and with joy and satisfaction.

Emunah is acquired through consistency, through learning *Shaar Habitachon*, and through listening again and again to messages of *emunah*.

May Hashem enable us this Yom Tov to go from slavery to redemption and from darkness to great light.

Gut Shabbat
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 hashgachah pratis, as told on the hotline

The Sensational Discovery

When my grandson was almost bar mitzvah, I asked my son-in-law how he was planning on purchasing tefillin. I knew he was not rolling in money, and I was looking for ways to help him out. I told him that I would try to do what I could, and he was very pleased with my offer.

I am not the type of grandfather who gives tefillin as a gift, but I have a lot of good will. I approached an organization in Williamsburg whose goal is to provide tefillin for low-income families, and I put my grandson's name on the waiting list for tefillin. Several days later I received a phone call from the organization. "There is a wealthy man who wants to donate tefillin for your grandson!"

They gave me the wealthy man's phone number so that we could communicate directly and arrange for the transfer of the funds.

I called the philanthropist, and he was very happy to hear that my grandson was a *chashuveh bachur* with the desire to grow in Torah and *yiras Shamayim*. "Do you know why I decided to donate tefillin?" he asked, and then he gave me a surprising explanation:

There is a Jew living in Williamsburg who has a special talent: You can tell him the secular date, even dozens of years in the past or future, and he can give you the exact Hebrew date of that day.

One day, out of curiosity, I went over to him and told him the secular date of my birthday. He responded immediately, "You were born on the 28th of Av!"

"I caught you," I answered teasingly. "As far as I know, I was born on the 29th of Av, the day before Rosh Chodesh Elul."

"It cannot be," he stubbornly insisted. "It has to be that you were born on the 28th."

"But everyone knows that when I was born it was in middle of *Yom Kippur katan* davening. Ask my father. Whenever someone mentioned my birthday, he would recall how at the time of my birth there was a *tefillah* for *Yom Kippur katan* going on."

"Is that your sign?" he asked in wonder. "If so, I understand everything. On that year Rosh Chodesh came out on Shabbos, and they moved *Yom Kippur katan* davening up to Thursday. So I did not make a mistake!" He smiled – and I saw black...

Because if what he was saying was true, then my bar mitzvah took place on the wrong day, a day late, and because our custom is to start laying tefillin only on the day of the bar mitzvah and not before, it turns out that I missed out on the mitzvah of tefillin on the day of my bar mitzvah!

Do you understand what this means? I became a man, and I missed laying tefillin. This is a terrible loss! What could I do?

First, I did *teshuvah*. I asked Hakadosh Baruch Hu to forgive me for the mistake, and I davened to be *zocheh* to atone for the loss of *mitzvas tefillin*; but I had no idea how to do so.

Where Is the Cell phone?

I live in the holy city of Yerushalayim. It is a big city with a large population, more than any of the other cities in the country. When I learned the halachos of *eiruv*, I decided to take a *chumrah* upon myself, which doesn't obligate others: I do not carry at all in Yerushalayim. This became my regular way of life.

As on every Erev Shabbos, I was asked to do my job of taking out the trash, but this time it was getting late and I did not want to carry the bag outside the building. Claims of *kavod* and *oneg Shabbos* crowded my mind for a moment or two, but I decided that since I was *zocheh* to keep this *chumrah*, I would continue to uphold it and would not carry the garbage bag outside. I set the bag down in an inconspicuous spot in my house and went out to shul. On Motza'ei Shabbos, my wife was looking for her cell phone – searching and searching and not finding it. I made a simple suggestion: Call the phone, and let's see if we hear it ringing. That's when we had a total surprise: The sound of the phone's ringing was coming from the garbage bag.

Had I taken it out on Erev Shabbos we wouldn't have heard the ringing of the missing phone. My *chumrah* enabled us to find the missing phone quickly and easily.

The Apartment Is Worth Much More

A few years ago on Shabbos morning, I surprised the members of my shul by giving out *mezonos* after davening. I made Kiddush publicly and thanked Hashem for His kindness and His wonders – not for a baby girl this time, but for another type of *chessed*.

Fifteen years ago, at the time of our *chasunah*, we bought an apartment worth about a million shekels, and in order to fund the purchase we took a mortgage of 750,000 shekels. I was young and afraid. I simply could not process the enormity of the sum. I was wondering how I, a young *avreich* who wanted to sit and learn, would be able to pay such a huge mortgage.

I had no idea how. There was only one possibility – to daven to Hashem for Him to help me. I davened with tears to the One Who fulfills the needs of all of creation – mountains for the mountain goat to hide in and rocks under which hyraxes can hide... I asked Him to give me my own home where I could live easily, and to enable me to pay my mortgage without a problem.

Several years passed, and then I discovered that the value of my apartment had increased greatly. I said to myself: Why have you been complaining over the high mortgage you pay? If you bought the apartment today, you'd have to pay a lot more! You won the lottery! Is that nice? Hakadosh Baruch Hu gives you such a wonderful gift – you have a nice apartment with a relatively small mortgage – and you're complaining?

No more. I thanked Hashem with all my heart for the apartment He had given me. And thus, in honor of the event, I made a Kiddush in my shul and thanked Hashem for the valuable apartment in which I live.

The mortgage payments continued each month. Nothing extraordinary happened. The bank wasn't persuaded to decrease the sum as a result of the Kiddush, but in retrospect, I noticed an amazing fact: I succeeded in paying off the entire mortgage and was left with no debt at all!

I saw tangibly the power of *tefillah* from the depth of one's heart and thanking Hashem for His goodness. *Baruch Hashem*, last month I made the final payment, and who would I inform if not the *Hashgachah Pratis* phone line, to join me in my *simchah*. I hope that all those among Am Yisrael who are building their own *bayis ne'eman* will know that even for huge sums, *laHashem hayeshuah!*

The Shefa Came After the Tefillah

I have a constantly changing source of *parnassah* – seasonal work. At the moment I am working on something that is connected to a project that started recently and is already almost finished. The work schedule is not convenient, but it's not bad, since it's only for a

On the giving end

My son was 37 years old and still looking for his *zivug*. We decided to do something for him, so we donated toward the dissemination of these pamphlets in an entire neighborhood. A short time afterward, a good *shidduch* came up, one we had never heard about before. Amazingly, within a short time he was engaged. We thank Hashem for His great *chassadim*.

On the receiving end

I have been a loyal listener of the *Hashgachah Pratis* phone line for many years. The fascinating content you offer, the talks, the *shiuirim* and the stories – they are all like life-giving water for the soul, and without them I do not know how I would survive. I want to thank you for this, all the editors and managers, for your investment and effort and dedication to the upkeep of the phone line and to providing excellent content. Thank you very much.

short time. Last Motza'ei Shabbos I planned on going out to work. I knew I had to be there at the earliest possible time, and right after Havdalah I was bursting with energy as I prepared to leave the house.

But the *kaballah* I made at the time of my wedding caught me at the door. Ever since my wedding, I have eaten *melaveh malkah* properly, with bread and *zemiros*. How could I cancel my custom for some transient work? I told myself, "It's not terrible – I'll eat *mezonos* and do my obligation, but inside myself I felt that Hashem's Will was for me to trust that He would send me bountiful *parnassah* without my neglecting this important *seudah*."

I immediately went back into the house, washed my hands, sang *zemiros*, and only after *Birkas Hamazon* did I get up to go out to work. In the natural course of things, it seemed that I had lost out on a nice sum of money that I could have earned for an hour of work.

When I left home I took off my glasses as I am used to doing, and I walked with my eyes looking downward, and then, while I was walking, I discovered two 200-shekel bills on the sidewalk. A kosher find!

This money was more than the sum I would have received as payment for an hour of work. I saw that being careful regarding halachah brought about only good.

An Anonymous Bag and a Valuable Signature

Baruch Hashem, I am careful about *shemiras einayim*, and I usually function very well. While this is not always easy – there are *nisyonos* – getting into the habit makes it easier, and thus I make my way to places with my eyes looking down. Generally, the scenery I see before me is the sidewalk. With time I have learned how not to bump into poles or people, and *baruch Hashem*, I have never lost out because of this practice.

One day, I was walking near a construction site, and I saw a bag filled with *sifrei kodesh*. I was concerned for the *kavod* of these holy *sefarim*, and I hurried to pick up the bag. I took it home, and there I opened it. I took the *sefarim* out one after another, and I discovered that they were torn, missing pages, and not fit for use. I understood that these *sefarim* had been discarded, and all I had to do was take them to *genizah*.

But then I caught sight of an interesting signature. A quick glance revealed that this was in fact the authentic original signature of one of the *gedolei hador* of the previous generation. Now I had in hand something worth a tremendous amount of money. Collectors of antiques and letters of *gedolei Yisrael* would be very pleased to have this.

I asked a *rav* if I was allowed to use the item I had found, and he told me what action to take. I did what he said, and the item was halachically mine.

I thank Hashem for the find and for the monetary gain I have from it, and I am certain that this is in the *zechus* of my *shemiras einayim*. It is only because my eyes constantly sweep the sidewalk that I discovered the bag.

No Mistakes Whatsoever

One day my ten-year-old daughter came over to me with a request: "Abba, I want a nice siddur with my name engraved on it."

"Why should we buy it now?" I asked. "*B'ezras Hashem*, in honor of your bas mitzvah we'll get it for you."

But my daughter said she didn't have patience to wait until her bas mitzvah; she wanted such a siddur right now.

I told her, "I see no reason to buy an expensive siddur now. But if you really want it, then I have an idea for you."

My daughter, who for the sake of this story I will call Sara Cohen (in truth her name is a bit less common than that), was very curious to hear my idea.

"Daven to Hashem," I said, "and ask him to give you a siddur."

She did as I suggested; every day she davened to Hashem to send her a nice siddur with her name engraved on it.

One day during that same year, her vice principal told her, "Sara, can you please come to my office? I want to ask you something important." In the office, the assistant principal took out a siddur from her bag, and on it, engraved in nice letters, was the name: Sara Cohen!

"I bought this siddur for my granddaughter, and it turned out that it wasn't the right *nusach*. I immediately thought of you. Maybe you'd like this siddur as a gift? The store won't agree to exchange it."

And my ten-year-old daughter received a beautiful siddur with her name engraved on it, just as she had dreamed. She asked her Father in *Shamayim*, and He gave it to her.

Hashgachah brought about that a short while ago in shul I heard a *shiur* in which the *rav* said that if someone made a mistake and did not lay tefillin one day, it is possible to atone for it by donating tefillin for another Yid.

I immediately seized the opportunity and called the organization, and now I am *zocheh* to donate tefillin for your grandson, to atone for my sin."

I was very excited by this story, both because I saw how Hakadosh Baruch Hu brings together the donor and the recipient in such a special way, allowing both of them to gain so much in *ruchniyus* and in *gashmiyus*, and also because the donor's pain touched my heart. If only my grandson will know how to appreciate the donation he received, to learn from the *yiras cheit*, the fear of sin that the donor possesses.

But the story doesn't end there.

At the *shalom zachor* of another of my grandsons, I told this story of the tefillin, and immediately afterward an *avreich* came over and told me, "I want to talk to you about this story."

He planned on leaving me in suspense until after Shabbos, but I ruined his plans on the spot, asking him to take into account my overwhelming curiosity and tell me what was so special about the story I had told.

"I am not like that rare rich man," the *avreich* said apologetically. "I did not understand that the information I had received incidentally affected me on a practical level, but now I understand that I am also obligated to do something."

"What?"

"To donate tefillin."

"Why?"

"For the same reason. A mix-up with the dates. I always knew two things about the day I was born. One: that on that day they made *Birkas Hachamah*, and two: that it was on the fifth of Nissan. That is what my mother wrote whenever she had to write down my birthday, and according to this information they made my bar mitzvah.

"Twenty-eight years passed since then. All the *chareidi* newspapers were addressing the topic of *Birkas Hachamah* and wrote that twenty-eight years prior, *Birkas Hachamah* had been made on the fourth of Nissan.

"I had to find out which of the two 'facts' was not true. One of the two had to be a mistake.

"*Birkas Hachamah* I could not deny. This was a huge, tremendous experience that came along with the exciting *mazal tov* and news of my entering the world, and therefore there was no choice but to move the date back and to determine anew that in fact I was born on the fourth of Nissan.

"Which means that I also lost out on a day of laying tefillin!"

I stood there open-mouthed in the face of the sad conclusion of the *avreich* sitting across from me, but he immediately composed himself and said, "How good it is that I heard your story! Now I know what I'm supposed to do – to fund the tefillin of another Yid. *Tizku l'mitzvos!*"

There is much to learn from this story, and I made a simple *cheshbon* that the *zechus* of laying tefillin every day of my life is worth at least thousands of dollars.

This means that I am a very wealthy man, and if we're going to be honest, thousands of dollars is nothing compared to the *zechus* of laying tefillin.

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Hashgachah Pratis in Sifrei Kodesh

Hashgachah Pratis in the Sefarim Hakedoshim

The Greatness of Am Yisrael

The greatness of Am Yisrael was that they believed in Hashem and in His servant Moshe and did not ask: *How could we go out to the endless desert without food to eat while we travel?* This was the greatness of their *midas habitachon*, and Hashem praises them through the *navi's* words.

(based on *Rabbeinu Bachyai, Shemos: 12:39*)

Hashem Praises Am Yisrael

We need to think about how, throughout the Torah, the Yom Tov is called Chag Hamatzos, while we call it Pesach. Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev explained that this is Hashem's way of praising Am Yisrael for their *bitachon*, for the fact that they left Mitzrayim with only some matzah on their shoulders, following Hashem into the wilderness with *emunah*.

On the other hand, we call it Pesach, to praise Hashem for skipping over the homes of our forefathers when he killed the Egyptian firstborns. So Hashem is praising Am Yisrael and Am Yisrael is praising and thanking Hashem.

(based on *Bnei Yissaschar, Nissan, 10*)

A Lesson for All Generations

We can learn *bitachon* from our forefathers who left Mitz-

rayim in a rush, and they did not prepare provisions for the way, and thus they went into the wilderness. For if they hadn't left in a rush they could have prepared provisions for the way. However, the fact that they did not prepare provisions is not enough to demonstrate their exceptional *bi-*

Do Not Question the Ways of Hashem

Consider the *bitachon* of Am Yisrael when they left Mitzrayim and went into the desert. They left with only a little matzah and no other provisions, but they did not question the ways of Hashem and did not say anything; they trusted Hashem entirely to care for them in the wilderness.

If you want to see this written in the Torah, see what Yirmeyahu said about those who left Mitzrayim: "Go and call in the ears of Yerushalayim, saying, "Thus says Hashem: I remember for you the kindness of your youth, the love of your nuptials, your act of following Me in the desert in a land unsown" (*Yirmeyahu 2:2*).

Therefore, Hashem rewarded Am Yisrael and consecrated them, distinguishing them from the other nations of the world. Just as anyone who eats from holy *terumah* invokes the death penalty, anyone who hurts *Am Yisrael* becomes deserving of death from Heaven; as it says (*Yirmeyahu 2:3*), "Am Yisrael is holy for Hashem."

(based on *Tanna D'vei Eliyahu ch. 17*)

came baked on their shoulders. Therefore, for seven days we eat matzah, a poor man's bread, "because you went out in a rush."

We are commanded to remember the day we left Mitzrayim all our lives, and this means that we should always remember the great *bitachon* in Hashem we had on that day. We should always recall this and never despair of Hashem's mercy.

(based on *Drashos Kesav Sofer, Shabbos Hagadol*)



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A Thought on Bitachon

From the shiurim on Kav Hashgachah Pratis

Preparations for the Yom Tov of Pesach are at their peak: We are cleaning our homes thoroughly, shopping for food for Yom Tov, and, with Hashem's help, we will celebrate Pesach with joy and much fanfare. But there is a hidden secret: We can do the mitzvos of the Yom Tov – burning the *chametz*, eating the matzah, and making the Seder – and still miss out on the main point.

Pesach is not a time for only external cleaning; this Yom Tov is meant to make a deep internal change in a person's *neshamah*. Along with the physical burning of the *chametz*, we need to burn the spiritual *chametz* within – the bad *middos*. In addition to cleaning our homes, we need to clean our souls from all evil. Eating matzah is not difficult, but the main thing is to transform *ourselves* into matzah – to be humble, not blown up with *ga'avah*, like *chametz*. When you prepare matzah you roll out the dough to flatten it, and the matzah is silent. In the same way, a person needs to accept everything that happens to him.

On Pesach, "a person is obligated to see himself as if he personally experienced *Yetzias Mitzrayim*." Those

Excerpts from the popular shiur by
Harav Yehuda Mandel shlita from Lakewood

The Secret of Pesach

who went out of Mitzrayim thanked Hashem for the miracles and the kindness. We also need to change our attitudes and to thank Hashem for the good, to see only the good, and to feel as though we ourselves went out of Mitzrayim.

Many people define a successful Seder night as one where everything works out properly, the children participated, and nothing went wrong. But that is not the main thing! A successful Seder night is measured by one thing only: Calmness, joy, refraining from anger, and being connected to the inner meaning of the matzah and the *middah* of humility, and connecting to *Yetzias Mitzrayim* by recognizing the good and giving thanks to Hashem with all our hearts and with *simchah*.