

HASHGACHAH PRATIS

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



Parshas Vayigash - Vayechi 5786 ■ Issue 178

HEART TO HEART

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

Hashem Knows What Will Be in the End

We know very little about things we have gone through and things that are happening to us right now. Nonetheless, the experiences of both past and present are a part of us.

The future, however, is unknown. We have no idea what is going to happen, and this uncertainty arouses a plethora of thoughts and emotions, including surprise, joy, hope, and anticipation, along with fear and suspense. No one knows what the future holds for him.

So how should we relate to that which hasn't yet occurred? Rabbenu Bachyai teaches that one who trusts in Hashem neither rejoices nor mourns over what will be in the future. As it says (*Mishlei* 27:1), "Do not take pride in what will happen in the future."

We know that there is reason to think about the future in a positive light, and we are even commanded to do so, as *Chazal* teach, when a person is judged on High, they ask him, "Did you anticipate salvation?" (*Shabbos* 31a). Did you hope to emerge from your difficult situation and were you confident that Hakadosh Baruch Hu would send you His assistance? Did you ask for redemption during the days of exile? A person's approach to the future should be to turn his eyes Heavenward, to daven, and hope for the best, to anticipate salvation and to trust in the Creator, that He will indeed redeem him.

We would think that it is very good to rejoice in that which has not yet occurred, since we believe it will be good and we believe in Hashem's mercy. But Rabbenu Bachyai teaches that one who trusts in Hashem "does not rejoice in the future." We need to understand: What is wrong with being happy about the good that will come our way in the future?

To answer this question, Rabbenu Bachyai cites the *passuk* in *Mishlei*, "Do not take pride in what will happen in the future." By understanding this *passuk* we can know what type of joy regarding the future is not desirable.

Looking into commentaries reveals that this *passuk* refers to rejoicing over one's own future deeds.

Sometimes a person will be proud of himself off and say, "Tomorrow I'm going to do something serious and make a lot of money; tomorrow I'm going to get a new closet and my house will be organized." He takes pride in his plans, his ideas. He celebrates that which is a figment of his imagination regarding what he will do tomorrow.

But regarding tomorrow, the *passuk* continues, "You do not know what the coming day will bring." Ibn Ezra explains that this refers to acts of *tzedakah*. A man promises to give *tzedakah*. "Yes," the

honored patron promises, "I'm donating \$180,000 toward the new building." Everyone has already heard about his promise. He brags about how he is going to donate, but at those moments he has no idea what the next day will bring. The next day his investments could plummet; he could turn into an impoverished man overnight and will have no way to give the promised donation. The *passuk* warns us, "Let a stranger praise you but not your own mouth." After the deed, let someone else relate that you already gave *tzedakah*, and do not speak of it yourself beforehand.

This is the meaning of not taking pride – *Al tis'hal-lel*. Tomorrow is not now, and you have no control over tomorrow.

What then? Should we not make promises or have intentions or wait for good things to come in the future? Certainly we should, but only with *siyata diShmaya!*

We can and we should make plans, and for every idea we have and new direction we hope to take, we should add, "*im yirtzeh Hashem!*" Not only as "verbal taxes," and not only to do our duty by saying the words, but to truly think so: This thing will come about only if Hashem wants it! For He alone does all deeds.

At the time of *Mattan Torah*, Moshe and Aharon went up on the mountain, followed by Nadav and Avihu. The Midrash tells us (*Vayikra Rabbah*, 20:10) that Nadav and Avihu were thinking, *When will we lead the generation?* This was a mere thought. Nadav and Avihu were great *tzaddikim*, they were the only ones other than Moshe and Aharon who were allowed to go up on the mountain!

Nonetheless, this thought became a stumbling block for them, because Hashem, Who knows a person's thoughts and desires, commanded them, "Do not take pride in what will happen in the future." Ultimately, they were called up to the Yeshivah on High on the day of the inauguration of the *Mizbe'ach*, on the first of Nissan.

Do not take pride in what will happen in the future. Don't think: *I'll succeed, I'll do, I'll work, I'll advance. I? Who am I? I'm here today, but tomorrow? Who knows? Rather, you should think: With Hashem's help, I'll succeed; if Hashem wants, I'll do; with siyata diShmaya I'll work, and if Hashem wills it, I'll advance.*

Hashem's Name should be constantly on our lips, and we should internalize the awareness that Hashem controls the future just as He controls the present and the past. We should rely on Him and constantly strengthen ourselves in *emunah* and *bitachon*, and with Hashem's desire, we will do and we will succeed.

FROM THE EDITOR

Abba, Why Don't You Bring Me Water?

A Yid who is dealing with something difficult told me the following:

Why am I going through so much? How is it that I daven so much and yet I am never answered?

Min haShamayim, I remembered a story that Moishy's father told me, and this story is a wonderful answer to all those questions:

Moishy was in the hospital. He was generally okay, *ba-ruch Hashem*, but he had a certain medical issue for which he had to be given liquids intravenously, and he was not allowed to drink.

On one of the days of his hospitalization, the child cried bitterly, "I want to drink! Give me water! Please!" I stood at his side and felt terrible for him. I pitied him to the depths of my soul, and yet I did not bring him what he wanted. It was hard to hold back, but I had to, because I could not interfere with the medical process that he had to undergo.

Suddenly Moishy turned to me personally and asked, "Abba, please have pity on me, give me something to drink!"

My eyes filled with tears, but then I caught myself and told my dear son, "Moishy, I am your father. I love you so much, and I could do only what is good for you. I see it is difficult for you, very difficult, but I know that drinking will be harmful to you. Would you want me — your father — to cause you harm? I am simply not capable of that."

Slowly, slowly, his crying eased up. He understood the idea, and he stopped asking. He understood that "it's hard for me, but it's for my good."

This is the answer to people who are dealing with something difficult and going through all sorts of processes in life. When we remember that it is a Father, Who is more merciful than any merciful creature in the world, Who is causing this, then we also remember that it's for our good. We remember that if it's difficult for us, then it is also hard for our Father. Our Father in *Shamayim* does only what is good to His child, and He will protect us from everything that is not good, even if it would seem easier if He did not, because our Father is a merciful Father.

May we merit to see His revealed and visible mercy.

Gut Shabbat

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THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgachah pratis, as told on the hotline

Reminder Under the Car

We lost our phone. This was a really hard loss. Dozens of numbers were saved in it, as well as several important messages that it would be too complicated to get back. My wife was at a loss. She remembered that the last time she'd held the phone was in our family car, but when she sent our son out to search there, he returned empty-handed. She sent him out again and called the cell phone, but it was consistently silent. It seemed the phone was either offline or on silent.

We didn't give up. The truth is that it was hard to manage without a phone, and in that one day the possibility of purchasing a new phone came up as many times as my wife needed the phone urgently, but we tried to hold out, because – who knew? Perhaps we'd still find it.

In the morning when we came to the parking lot, we heard the sound of the phone ringing. The sound was coming from under the car!

How was this possible? The phone was offline.

The riddle was solved very quickly. My wife is registered to get a reminder about *shemiras halashon* every hour on the hour. The reminder would ring even when the phone was offline, and that is how we heard it exactly when we were nearby.

Chizuk in *shemiras halashon* enabled us to find the phone!

A Successful Beginning

I am an *avreich* from Modi'in Illit. On Motza'ei Shabbos *Parshas Lech Lecha* I met for the first time with a precious nineteen-year-old *bachur*. It was not only his first meeting with me, it was also his first meeting with a Gemara. Nineteen is an age when it is quite late to start, but with goodwill and *siyata dishmaya*, he would certainly succeed. The Torah is available to anyone to come and take it, even if he did not start at *cheder*-age.

People with experience told me that if he was learning Gemara for the first time, it was preferable to start with *perek "Eilu metzios"* in *Maseches Bava Metzia*.

"Let's begin," I told the *bachur*. "Bring me *Maseches Bava Metzia*."

"I don't have books at home," he said, "only one Gemara *Bava Kama*."

"Fine, bring *Bava Kama*," I said, hoping I would manage with this *masechta* as well.

He went over to the closet, pulled out the only volume of Gemara that was there, and then he told me in surprise, "It's not *Bava Kama*, it's *Bava Metzia*!"

We were excited. We saw this as *he'aras panim* from Hashem, Who had prepared the Gemara so that this beginner would start his learning career in the best possible way, with Hashem's help.

L'chaim! L'chaim!

I am a Yid from London. My story began on Yom Kippur 5785, between *Minchah* and *Ne'ilah*. A precious Yid from the community gathered the children together to say *Tehillim*, and he had them recite the section of *Shir Ha'ma'alos*, as he is accustomed to doing every Shabbos. Many *avreichim* joined the emotional *tefillah* coming from the mouths of young children. I and a friend also joined the group that was reciting *Tehillim*. The pure voices of the children merged with the voices of the *avreichim*. Something about this impromptu gathering was very poignant and brought great *hisorerus*.

We went back to our places, and my friend, under the impression of this pure *tefillah*, gave himself *chizuk* aloud and said, "Aah, now we are going to daven *Ne'ilah*, a *heiligh tefillah*, and we can bring about great *yeshuos*!"

I smiled, but he looked at me knowingly. "So you have an older daughter who needs a *shidduch*. What is her full name?" he asked. I told him my daughter's name for *tefillah*, and then I rejoined, "You're also awaiting a *yeshuah* for your son. Give me his full name too."

We exchanged names – the names of our children, and the longing of parents to see them building their own homes and to see light and happiness in their lives. So much was contained in this short exchange that took place before the *gabbai* banged on the table and the *shaliach tzibbur* started singing the emotional *kaddish* that began *Ne'ilah*, and each of us davened for the other's child.

Almost a year passed. On the second of Elul 5785 I was *zocheh*, and my daughter, D., got engaged.

The joy was overwhelming. The news spread quickly, and *mazal tov* wishes from friends and family came one after another. In the midst of all these phone calls, one unique call arrived. On the line was my friend whose seat in shul is right near mine, and he had amazing news: "My son became a *chassan*!"

This was a double joy. Not only were we each excited about our *yeshuah*, but we sensed that this was a *he'aras panim* from on High. If each one had gotten engaged on a different date, then we could not have seen with our own eyes the influence of our *tefillas*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu arranged for both *simchos* to be on the same day, to show us how precious our *tefillas* were, how our caring for each other did great things, how the *tefillah* one prays for another on this *heiligh* day went right up to the *Kisei Hakavod* and brought us down bountiful *brachah*, *yeshuah*, and *simchah*.

It Will Pass by Motza'ei Shabbos

On Friday I was energetically occupied with preparations for Shabbos, returning from shopping for Shabbos foods and going to pick up my son from *cheder*. Holding many bags, I was rushing, as though in competition with the clock. It wasn't clear to me how it happened, but my leg got twisted.

The first moment, I felt a sharp pain, but I thought it was tolerable and I could continue my tasks. I hastened on my way, but my foot was not complying as it had before, and I could not move so quickly or easily anymore. I suffered silently, and by the end of the long trip I arrived home along with my son, the many bags from my shopping trip, and the pain in my leg. It was a sharp pain that kept getting stronger.

By the time Shabbos began I realized that there was more to this pain than a bit of discomfort; it had me confined to my bed and prevented me from going to shul to daven with a minyan. My head filled with worries. What would be next week? How would I go to work, and how would I do all kinds of urgent tasks that awaited me? I could not be stuck at home, certainly not in bed. What would I do? From where would my help come?

Then I recalled that I needed to use my legs for a certain activity that could be a *zechus* for me. I had promised my friend I would go to a certain address for him to bring him an important item, something connected to his *parnassah*. This is not the first time I would be going to do this. Many times he asks me to help him with this matter, and as I know him, it is a great *chessed* to do so. True, it had to do with his *parnassah*, and if he was earning money from it, it would make sense that I should earn something on the way as well, but here it was a different story. This is a Yid who has a hard life, and if I'm able to help him out, I do so. My *parnassah* comes to me in other ways.

I davened emotionally to Hashem *yisbarach*, Who prepares the steps of man, and asked Him that I be *zocheh* to do the mitzvah of *chessed* this coming Motza'ei Shabbos. I wanted

On the giving end

The tenant arrived at the right moment:

For several months we had been searching for a tenant to rent our apartment. The apartment was empty, and I promised myself to donate a significant amount of money toward an important goal. While I was still thinking about this promise, I got a call from the *Hashgachah Pratis* office, so of course I donated the money immediately.

More incredible is what happened several moments later: A man called and expressed interest in the apartment. Later, he signed a long-term rental contract on the apartment.

On the receiving end

I work in a Talmud Torah, and recently I was invited to speak with the principal. He updated me regarding a series of changes and new policies to be instituted. Among other things, he informed me of a new policy that resulted in my losing several of my set hours of work each week. While someone else might have been extremely perturbed, I accepted the news serenely. Since I listen constantly to the *Hashgachah Pratis* phone line, I knew clearly that it wasn't my boss who sustained me. I did not get upset but rather continued with my daily routine calmly, without worry. A short while later this issue worked itself out in a surprising way and in a way that was much better for me: The principal asked me to take on new work – easier work, and with a higher salary. I thank you from the depths of my heart for the wonderful content that you bring, which strengthened me in *emunah* and *bitachon* and reminded me of this truth at the exact moment when I needed the *chizuk*. Thank you!

to be able to deliver what my friend asked and to feel well. I davened that my foot would not hurt, that I would not need a cast or a bandage, and that I would not need three days of rest. Unfortunately, the mitzvah I had done until now was not done to perfection. When I went out of the house, I would always make some underhanded comment about this Yid I was helping, something about his difficulties and his weaknesses, or about the fact that it would be nice if he offered me payment.

I promised my Father in *Shamayim* that I would help His son fully, that I would not speak ill of him, *challah*, and that I now realized that the *chessed* I do for him is a *zechus* for me, and as much as he could possibly pay me, it would not equal the priceless gift of a healthy foot and the ability to walk properly. Please, Hashem, help me do this *chessed* on Motza'ei Shabbos as I promised, with healthy legs!

I felt that Hashem heard my *tefillos*, and I assured my family that we would certainly see an improvement over Shabbos and the leg would heal fully.

Nonetheless, we worried. After the *seudah* I went to the urgent care center in the area. The non-Jewish doctor checked the foot and said it looked like a fracture or a torn ligament, and he warned me to refrain from putting any pressure on the foot.

I heard what he said and tried to follow his instructions. I told my wife that I was sure the matter would work out okay, *im yirtzeh Hashem*, because I had an act of *chessed* to do. I also shared with her my thoughts about forbidden speech, and we accepted upon ourselves to learn our lesson and to do the mitzvah with completeness, without any extraneous comments.

On Shabbos night I already saw an amazing improvement. By Shabbos morning I was able to go to shul, and now, after *Maariv* on Motza'ei Shabbos, I am walking regularly, without any pain, thanking Hashem for healing me and also thanking the Yid in whose merit I am able to walk easily on both legs.

Signed for Life

There was a blessed *hisorerus* in our *beis midrash* about not talking during davening. A big *chasunah* was coming up in our *chassidus*, and as a *zechus* for the *chassan* and *kallah* and all of us as well, we decided to gather together and sign a commitment not to speak during davening, from beginning to end, for forty days.

The fortieth day was the last day of *sheva brachos*.

Among those who signed was a respectable Yid, *shlit"a*, who had been *zocheh* to marry off most of his children. He is a person whose countenance shines with *yiras Shamayim* and *kavod* in the *beis midrash*. For as long as I can remember, he always refrained from speaking during davening, and it seemed this whole idea was not necessary for him.

When he saw that people were getting together, he came over and signed his name on the commitment as well, to be *mechazeik* the whole project and to strengthen himself as well.

It happened on the fortieth day, the day of the final *sheva brachos*.

While most campgrounds and bungalow colonies in upstate New York are in use only in July and August, there are certain locations there that are actively inhabited and in use all year long. This honorable Yid traveled to a house in the area to prepare it for the cold winter months ahead.

Being that the cold can be frigid in the area, the water pipes need to be prepared ahead of time, emptied completely so they don't burst as a result of the cold. How is this done? There is a machine that uses tremendous air pressure to push all the water out of the pipes. In order to check whether this was done properly, you need to turn on the water faucet connected to the pipe and check that water is emerging from the faucet.

Our friend activated the machine and connected it to an old metal water boiler. He pressed the button and then left the area, in order to check whether water was coming out of the faucet.

It seemed that the machine was working well. Water flowed from the faucet, and the pipes had begun the cleansing process that would make them effective during the coming winter months. Satisfied with what he saw, our friend turned around and headed back in the direction of the machine. At that very moment there was a tremendous crash. The old boiler burst, and its heavy metal fragments flew in all directions.

Apparently, the boiler was rusty, and it had weakened over the years and could not handle the pressure placed on it.

If this had happened immediately after he turned on the machine, we don't want to think about what could have happened to him. If it had happened a few minutes later, when our friend was back near the machine, then, too, we would rather not speak about it.

But it happened when he was on his way back. He heard the crash and was able to act with presence of mind. We don't know Heavenly accountings, but the fact that the miracle took place exactly on the fortieth day of our communal *kabbalah* not to talk during davening speaks for itself.

How great is the power of *achdus* for a mitzvah.

The Tefillah Track

In the *kollel* where I learn, there are several tracks. In every track they learn something else.

The minute a person enters a specific track, he is committed to continue learning there for a period of time. It is not so simple to move from one track to another.

I started off in one track, and once I was deep into it, I discovered that it was not for me. The style of learning and the topic were heavy for me; they did not suit my personality, and when I heard that in the parallel track they learned in a completely different way, I understood that I was much more suited to learning there.

I asked the person in charge if I could switch to the other track, but he reminded me of the rules: The answer was *no*.

I continued learning in *kollel* each day, knowing that Hashem had sent me a *nisayon* to continue learning His Torah even when it is difficult, even when the *sugya* was not smiling at me and the style of learning did not suit my heart's desire. At the same time, I tried again and again to switch tracks.

I told one of my friends about my problem, and he asked me, "Did you daven about it? I would suggest that you invest *tefillah* in the *kollel* of choice."

I accepted his proposal and started putting aside time each day to say a few *perakim* of *Tehillim*, and several times each day I asked Hashem that I be *zocheh* to learn in the place where my heart desired and to move to the other track.

One day, the opportunity came. Several *avreichim* switched to the track that I wanted, but when I went over to ask for myself, the person in charge pushed me off.

I continued davening, knowing that there was no reason to blame the man in charge; he was only a messenger. When Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted, then this man too would want to help me.

One morning on my way to *kollel*, someone offered me a ride, and we spoke a bit on the way. "What are you learning?" he asked. I told him, and I also told him about my desire to switch and to learn something else, and about the supervisor's answer.

"Do you mean Rav S.?" he asked.

I replied in the affirmative.

"I know him. I'll try and speak to him."

The conversation ended, and so did the short ride. I experienced the continuation of the story when, finally, my *yeshuah* came and my move was approved.

I saw tangibly how Hakadosh Baruch Hu answered my *tefillah*.

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Hashgachah Pratis in Sifrei Kodesh

Hashgachah Pratis in the Sefarim Hakedoshim

One Should Exert Oneself for *Parnassah*

When a person sees how the ant, a tiny creature, prepares food in summertime for the winter, he can learn diligence from it. Hashem prepares sustenance for all His creations by giving them the instinctive means to seek appropriate sustenance at the right time. Therefore, a person, who was given intellect, should make efforts to sustain himself and not to be lazy. Hashem's blessings bring wealth "in all the deeds of your hands that you shall do," and not for one who sits and does nothing.

(Based on *Sefer Ha'ikarim* by Rav Yosef Albo, *ma'amar* 3, ch. 1)

Every Person Has His Sustenance

It is true that whether someone will be wealthy or poor depends on his *mazal*, and that *mazal* cannot withhold his basic

Sustenance for Animals

When Rav Yochanan would see the kind of bird that catches fish from the water, he would say, "*Mish-patecha tehom rabbah* – Your judgments are as deep as an abyss" (*Tehillim* 36:7). When Hashem judges someone, the person needs to exert himself to great depths.

When he would see an ant, whose sustenance is available to it without any effort, he would say, "*Tzidkas'cha kehareirei kel* – Your righteousness is like the greatest of mountains," Even for a creature as small as an ant – its sustenance is available to it just as for large creatures.

(*Chullin* 63a)

parnassah. If a person would be satisfied with having only what he really needed and didn't pursue more and more, it would be impossible for him to be lacking his basic sustenance. "Hashem made mankind straight, but they sought many calculations." That is to say, the person himself causes his problems with *parnassah* by pursuing more than the bare minimum.

(Based on *Lechem Shlomo*, Rav Shlomo Halevi Hazakein, *siman* 366)

Man Caused Himself to Lose Out

Man's *parnassah* is what keeps him alive. If man would have been created without the means of providing his own *parnassah*, that would have been an imperfection in the Creation. That is why our Sages said, "Did you ever see a lion that had to find a job working for someone else?" Instead, each creature finds its sustenance without undue exertion on its part. Mankind, who is the jewel of creation, certainly should have his *parnassah* easily accessible. Indeed, this is how it was before Adam Harishon sinned. After his sin, however, he lost easy access to his *parnassah*. And if someone is wicked, he brings even more curses upon himself.

(Based on Maharal, *Agadas Hashas Kiddushin* ch. 2)

We Need to Exert Ourselves for *Parnassah* in Order to Merit Doing Mitzvos

It is a wonder that man, who is the purpose of creation, needs to work hard to sustain himself, and his *parnassah* does not come right to his door. But we see the goodness of Hashem here, because if we did not have to work for *parnassah*, the fulfillment of many mitzvos would never take place. There would be no rich and poor and thus no need for the mitzvah of *tzedakah*, no need for *emunah* regarding loans and repayment of loans, and no need for *tefillah*, for man would be sure that his needs would be fulfilled and would not feel the need to speak to his Creator.

(Based on *Beis Yitzchak al HaTorah*, Hagoon Rav Yitzchak Shmelkes z"l, *Be-shalach*, *ma'amar* 67)

A Thought on Bitachon

From the shiurim on Kav Hashgachah

Excerpts from the popular shiur by

Harav Hatzaddik R' Beirish Shneebalg shlit"a

Making Do – the Foundation of *Brachah* and *Shefa*

The *middah* of making do with what one has is the basis for a life of peace and serenity.

When we choose to focus only on our true needs and make clear boundaries that do not allow for us to spend on extras, life becomes easier, calmer, and free of worries.

We can see, for example, that after eating an adequate meal we feel comfortable and calm. This comfort is achieved only if we ate the exact amount of food necessary for our bodies, and if we ate slowly. This applies to every other aspect of life as well: Setting proper boundaries leads to a good and serene life.

Many people are dealing with a lack of *parnassah*. They don't have enough money to cover their daily expenses, which causes a great deal of pressure and stress.

In this matter as well, making do with what one has will not only save money but will also bring bounty and *brachah* to whatever amount of money one has.

In *Maseches Shabbos* (22a) it is brought that it is forbidden to count money by the light of the Chanukah candles. We need to understand why only this exam-

ple of counting money is given. Clearly the intention is that it is forbidden to use the Chanukah lights for any purpose, so why is counting money used as the chosen example?

There is a wonderful explanation of this brought in the *sefer Me'ir Einei Chachamim* (*Sha'ar* 17, ch. 1): People pursue money because they feel they are lacking the desires of their hearts, and some because they want luxuries. But in truth, if we fully believed in Hashem's *hashgachah*, then "we would certainly not need any strategies at all." Therefore, he continues, when it comes to the Chanukah lights, we want to draw down upon ourselves a new light, without "any strategies," so it is certainly forbidden to count money.

Hashem gives every person that which he truly needs. When a person believes this, he makes do with what he has and does not feel any lack, and therefore he does not need "any reason or act" but rather brings upon himself a "new light." There is great *shefa* available for him and for the whole world.



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