

HASHGACHAH PRATIS

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



Parshas Yitro - Mishpatim 5786 ■ Issue 181

HEART TO HEART

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

Boundless Reward

The people of Klal Yisrael always say, "I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His Name, rewards good to those who keep his mitzvot."

Hashem gives reward for each mitzvah, each good deed, each word of proper speech, and every small act of *hisgabrus*. However, in order to be worthy of receiving reward in the World to Come, it is not enough to do good deeds. There are two things that transform a person into someone worthy of receiving reward. One of them is *zikui harabbim*, as Rabbeinu Bachyai wrote near the end of chapter 4: A person should show others the ways of serving the Creator *yisbarach* and should lead them to do good.

In order to be *mezakeh* the *rabbim*, a person does not have to be an esteemed *mashpia*. While someone who works in *chinuch*, such as a *melamed*, *mashgiach*, *maggid shiur* or *rosh kollel* is certainly *mezakeh* the *rabbim* through his work, even someone whose official job does not fall into this category can do so too – through influencing his family, his children, his neighbors, his friends, and people he meets. When a Yid acts in the proper ways of the Torah wherever he goes, then those in his presence are influenced by him, and he becomes a *mezakeh rabbim*.

A Yid walks down the street on a rainy day with a shopping cart filled with groceries he just bought. Suddenly, a car passes by him and sprays water in all directions. His suit gets dirty, his shopping cart is sprayed with water, some of the things he purchased get wet, and he says, "Gam zo l'tovah." The neighbor who comes over to help him hears: "Did you see how much Hashem loves me? What a *kapparah* for my sins! And look how the sugar and salt are on the other side of the wagon and didn't even get wet!"

What a wonderful perspective! Instead of complaining bitterly about his misfortune, he accepts these blessed rains with *emunah* and *bitachon*. How this influences his neighbor, who later goes home and sees that his family wasted all sorts of things in his absence.... Yesterday he would have asked, "Why don't you all pay attention?!" – and behold, today he thinks to himself in the language that his good neighbor just taught him, "How Hashem loves me..."

This is an example of simple matters, but the reality of *zikui harabbim* affects all different areas of life and all things: dealing with *pamassah*, with health matters, with *nachas*, with *shidduchim*. You

meet a Yid who is struggling, and he smiles and thanks you for everything. This gives you encouragement! And if he also says good words – how great is his reward! Every bit of *chizuk* we give others, every good word, each time we marvel about the goodness of Hashem – all of these bring with them more and more good.

In *Maseches Tamid* (28a) we learn, "Rabi says: What is the path of justice for a man to follow? He should love to be rebuked, for whenever there is rebuke in the world, *nachas ruach* comes to the world, goodness and blessing come to the world." One must know how to give rebuke. Not everyone is capable of giving rebuke. The Nefesh Hachaim teaches that these are instructions to those who give rebuke, that they should do so with pleasantness, "And good blessing shall come upon them." Eliyahu Hanavi explains in *Tanna D'vei Eliyahu* that both the person who rebukes and the one who accepts his rebuke will be blessed with good blessing.

Actual rebuke – to tell a Yid that he did not do well and that he must behave differently – should be given by someone who knows the trade and whose words will be heard. *Chizuk*, however, anyone can give. Anyone can bring more and more soldiers for Hashem: to bring up in conversation the glory of those who learn Torah, and thus to strengthen those who learn and inspire others to go in their path; to tell stories of *chizuk* about the greatness of a mitzvah and about *hashgachas Hashem*; to tell each other good things that were heard about people who gave *tzedakah*, or those who held back from retorting when they were hurt, or who were careful to daven on time, and so much more. A person can never know where his good words will lead, how many Yidden will be strengthened and how many of them will change their way of thinking and even their deeds, all in the merit of his good words.

Each time one is *mezakeh rabbim* in this way, he merits to receive reward in the World to Come, for there are actions that go beyond fulfillment of his personal responsibility: There is deep caring here that increases the honor of the Name of Heaven in the world, and through the *chizuk*, blessing comes to the world and evil leaves the world. With these sorts of actions, a person cannot know what the end will be and how far-reaching his influence is, and he is zocheh to boundless reward. Fortunate is the one who merits to do so, and fortunate is his lot.

FROM THE EDITOR

L'haskilcha Binah – Emunah in Times of Nisayon and Pain

I write these words with a pained and trembling heart in the wake of the terrible tragedies that befell *Am Yisrael* in recent weeks. Pure *neshamos*, young and clean of sin or blemish, were taken from us.

And I am wondering: How can we strengthen ourselves? What can we hold onto in times of such pain, confusion, and helplessness?

In my thoughts emerges the sight of a special Yid whom I knew personally. This exalted person became gravely ill, and whenever his *yissurim* grew too difficult to bear he would remind himself, "*L'haskilcha binah!*" This was a wonder medication that soon brought his smile back to his face.

This medication is written in *Tanya* (*Igeres Hakodesh*, ch. 11). We will bring several excerpts from it, and this will be our medication as well – to strengthen ourselves, to be encouraged, and to hold on to *emunah* in the difficult situation in which we find ourselves today.

L'haskilcha binah means to totally ignore one's desires in the face of whatever situation one is forced to bear, and regarding all matters of this world, one should have no preferences at all.

...Hashem *yisbarach* is the Source of life, goodness, and pleasure; He is the Eden that is beyond the World to Come. Since it is impossible to reach Him, it seems to us that there is evil or suffering, but in truth, no evil comes down from Above, and all is good. This is because it is impossible to gain any real knowledge of Hashem's greatness and goodness.

And this *emunah* is the main goal for which a person was created – to believe that there is no place where Hashem is not present, and that [we walk] in the light of the Countenance of the living King. Therefore, we find strength and joy in His place, being that He is only good all the time.

With this faith, a person will be happy at all times and will live with true *emunah* in Hashem, infusing him with life and goodness every moment.

This is why wise men have dispelled feelings of sadness. Because of their strong faith, they never feel any suffering regarding any matters of this world – whatever the person receives is equally good to him."

He adds:

The main reason man is placed in this world is for him to experience these tests, so that he will know what is really in his heart.

And he concludes:

And he should believe that in truth, man's steps are pre-planned, and if so, all is essentially good, though he may not always be able to comprehend it. With this *emunah*, everything eventually becomes clear to him – that it is good.

Let us strengthen ourselves, and with Hashem's help, may all of *Am Yisrael* see the hidden good in all the difficulties.

Gut Shabbat
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THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgachah pratis, as told on the hotline

Pocket Money

Someone gave me 790 shekels as a gift, to be used to buy a specific product in a specific store. This was after I had already found out about the price, and the amount was exact. I thought about the fact that I now had a sum that had come to me from an external source, and I could not ignore the fact that this was simply an income, and incoming money requires *ma'aser*. On the other hand, I thought, this was an exact sum that I had received for a specific purpose. Did I really have to take off a tenth of it?

I did not ask a Rav; I decided for myself to go beyond the letter of the law, and I took out 80 shekels and gave them to *tzedakah* as *ma'aser* money.

I went to the store, took the item I wanted, and went over to the counter to pay. "Seven hundred!" the seller said.

"Seven hundred? Are you sure?!" I asked, simultaneously checking whether I had chosen the right item.

"How much do you think it's supposed to cost?" the seller asked with a smile.

"I recall the price being 790," I told him.

"And what do you care if you get a discount?" he asked, his smile widening even more.

Indeed, I did not mind. I paid the amount and thanked Hashem for the special *hashgachah pratis*. I went beyond the letter of the law to give *ma'aser*, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu responded in kind, giving me a discount, and even ten shekels change.

He Wants a Part in the Learning

An *avreich* relates: I got up early today and went to *kollel* even though I knew my *chavrusa* would not be there. Learning alone is completely different from learning with a *chavrusa*. While there are certain advantages to this happening from time to time, regarding a sense of obligation, you really need to be strong in order to come on time and learn through the entire *seder* when you have no *chavrusa*.

Binyan Adei Ad

From the moment the tractor arrived at our building, it was no longer completely our building. I felt that the tractor, which had come to dig into my brain, to make noise like the fly that attacked Titus, and to take away both our *menuchas haguf* and our *menuchas hanefesh*.

While at the time I gave my agreement to his expansion, I gave it on condition that the building be done in the most solid way possible, with consideration for our rest hours, with cleaning up after each day's work, and with taking responsibility to ensure that no harm would be caused. None of these conditions were met in the difficult months that followed, during which we endured our neighbor's efforts to expand his apartment.

This is an older neighbor, and I am obligated to respect him. I tried to be nice, and I even wished him all the best. I imagined that he wanted to host his sons and his grandchildren expansively and that this would probably bring additional noise to the building, but I kept quiet. I had no reason to hold back his expansion, I just wanted to hold on to my part, meaning my own apartment and the way up the stairs to reach it — which goes through our building's hallway and stairwell.

During those difficult weeks, a good cloud of dust would meet me even before I'd enter the building. My daughter, who has sensitive airways, coughed excessively. Tiles that were precariously placed would suddenly slip, and we were saved by miracles. The elevator worked for additional hours and as a result would be closed off to our use for full days at a time. More than any of the other neighbors, my apartment got a full blast because of the angle at which it was in relation to the neighbor's apartment.

There were additional damages — better not to speak of them. I only mentioned a bit of it here, so that those of your readers who are building or expanding would pay attention and see that even after the neighbors have signed their consent, one should be considerate of them and see how one can avoid causing them any *ogmas nefesh* or damages.

I did not hide within the four walls of my home until the difficulties passed. I tried to speak up and to do something. Several times, I initiated conversations with my neighbor, and several times when I chanced to meet him I brought up my complaints as well. He heard, but it seemed the dust was clouding his vision, and he could not see beyond his own concerns and pressures regarding the building and expansion.

Ultimately, his expansion caused an explosion, and the relationship between us was ruined completely. While we used to have a pleasant, caring relationship, it became a difficult one. We refrained from even meeting each other by chance, and when we did cross paths, each of us would avert his eyes and hurry to pass by and end the meeting.

That's how the time passed. Long after the workers had left, the excited cries of grandchildren filled the expanded apartment. In our home as well, the family grew and it seemed we could have forgotten that difficult time. But I could not forget. The enlarged apartment itself did not bother me, but the severed relationship remained.

One day I made a *cheshbon hanefesh*, and I came to the conclusion that we had to put an end to this story. We would continue to be neighbors for many more years, and we could not leave the relationship as it was. I began to say hello to the neighbor whenever I met him. At first he would look at me in wonder and answer quickly, but after it happened several times, he understood my intention. One day I caught him in conversation and explained that he was my neighbor, I respected him greatly, and it was a pity about what happened — but what would be was still ahead of us, and it was worthwhile for us to live in peace.

Several years passed. *B'shaah tovah* I was *zocheh*, and my daughter became engaged to an excellent *chassan* after several years of searching for her *zivug*.

When we closed on the *vort*, the news spread throughout the neighborhood and the joy reached the heavens. Our dear neighbor, too, entered our home to wish us *mazal tov*. As soon as he arrived, the *mechutan* walked over to him and said, "You have a big part in this *simchah*. *Yasher koach!*" And to me he explained, "When they suggested the *shidduch* to us, we did not succeed in getting enough information, and we were in doubt as to whether to get involved in the *shidduch*. But then I asked him for information, and he told me that it was rare to find people with good *middos* such as yours. He literally said the whole *hallel* about you. This *shidduch* — is in his *zechus!*"

We saw with heavenly mercies how bringing shalom to our building caused the building of a home in Am Yisrael.

The World Was Created for Me!

We planned a Shabbos together in a city in Europe. This was a Shabbos arranged by the Institute where I work, and I realized it would be of great benefit to me to join.

On the giving end

Despite all odds: What overpowered the difficult illness?

The long time during which my son dealt with a difficult illness was not a simple *nisayon* for us. When a complex treatment was suggested — one whose chances of success were low and whose side effects were threatening — I felt that I had to do something that would add merits for us. I decided to participate in the dissemination of *emunah* and *bitachon* and signed on a set significant monthly donations for a full year. It seems this was the right thing to do. My son underwent the treatment with success, and contrary to all the predictions, he was completely healed without suffering from the side effects.

Hodu laHashem ki tov!

On the receiving end

The family feud that broke out regarding Saba's inheritance was difficult for all of us. As a grandson, I found myself involved against my will: Saba wrote in his will that each grandson would receive a significant sum. The tension between the *yorshim* was tangible. At the time, I sought support from Rav Mandel's *shuirim* on the *Hashgachah Pratis* phone line. The sentence I repeated over and over again to myself was, "Whatever is coming to me will come, and whatever is not — is simply not meant to be mine." Not only did this belief remain with me, it was shared with everyone around me. This was what gave me the inner serenity and the strength to avoid getting involved in extraneous arguments. The amazing thing occurred when this chapter came to a close: Without my asking, demanding, or arguing, I was the first person to receive his part of the *yerushah*.

Nonetheless, I called the secretary and said: "I would be happy to join you, but I don't know whether I'll have a *mikveh* there. I am *makpid* to *tovel* every day, so joining won't work for me. Don't include me on the list."

A few minutes later the boss called me. "Do you mean to tell me you're not coming?! Do you know how much thought and work went into this Shabbos so that everything would succeed?! You're part of our staff, and the event would not be the same without you. I'm not prepared to forgo having you with us!"

"And I am not prepared to forgo the *mikveh*," I explained.

"No problem. I'll make sure they arrange a *mikveh* for you. I promise you, everything will be fine. You won't have to forgo your *minhag*."

Maybe he thought that just as he leads the Institute with a strong hand and has always moved walls and found solutions, he would find a solution there in the hotel as well.

I believed him. I packed my things and joined the trip.

On Friday we arrived at the hotel. When we entered, the lights turned on automatically. "What's this?!" we asked each other. "There's an automatic sensor here. How will we walk in on Shabbos?!" So the boss was totally preoccupied with the question of how we would turn off the automatic sensors for Shabbos. He got all the clerks in the hotel involved, trying to solve the problem. There were urgent calls to technicians, and at 12:30 p.m., just three hours before Shabbos, he came to the inconceivable conclusion that we could not spend Shabbos in this hotel.

During this emergency, tremendous *hashgachah pratis* was revealed: The boss had the phone number of the person who led a refugee camp set up three years ago at the beginning of the war for orphans from Ukraine. Now he called him, and it turned out that the camp — with its kosher kitchen, dining room, and sleeping rooms — was prepared to take us in immediately!

During all these hours, while the boss was preoccupied with this huge problem, I did not have the courage to remind him about my small problem. But now, while everyone was excitedly preparing for the move, I approached him with my question: Is there a *mikveh* in the camp?

The boss, overwhelmed as he was — and I understand him very well — told me, "I have no idea."

"There's no choice," I told the boss. "If there is no *mikveh*, I cannot be there on Shabbos. Give me the phone number of someone from the Jewish community, and I'll find out whether he can arrange a place for me to sleep in the community, where there will definitely be a *mikveh* in the area."

"You can get such a number after we reach the camp, too," my boss replied. "Come with us and check out the place, and then see what you can do."

After another few moments of deliberation, with a heavy heart, I agreed.

We arrived and began immediately investigating the situation. We left no stone unturned in seeking information about a *mikveh*, but we came up with nothing. No one knew about a *mikveh* in the area.

A half hour later — an hour and a half before Shabbos! — while I was on *shpilkes*, I got the information that there was a matzah bakery in the area that was owned by a Yid from Eretz Yisrael, and he had spoken about wanting a *mikveh* built near the factory so that he could use it when he came. Someone said that perhaps it was worth it to check out what had happened with his plans.

We started asking workers in the factory if anyone knew about anything, and everyone knew to tell me that the owner had been talking for several years about wanting to build a *mikveh* on premises, but if I wanted to know anything more, I would have to ask Daniel, the manager.

My boss called Daniel, who answered, and when he heard my boss's story, which concluded with the simple question — "Tell me, did the owner of the factory in fact build a *mikveh* on premises?" — he responded with obvious excitement, "How did you know?! This is hot off the press. There is a kosher *mikveh* in the factory! And I can come by tomorrow and accompany whoever wants to use it. He should wait for me at 6 a.m. Shabbos morning."

Of course, I was overjoyed. With thanks to Hashem, I began to prepare for the elevated Shabbos, which was fast approaching.

On Shabbos morning, at 6 a.m., Daniel and I were walking through the still-dark streets of Romania. My heart could not stop beating with thanks to Hashem for the wondrous acts of *chesed* He had done for me.

But here is where the big surprise came...

Daniel broke the silence and asked, "Tell me, do you know when they built this *mikveh*?"

"No," I responded. Then he told me that the bakery had been in existence for three years already, and from the start the owner did not stop saying how he wanted to build a *mikveh*. But until now nothing had happened.

Daniel stopped, while my body started shaking. "This past Monday, *Parshas Beshalach* 5785, in the afternoon, they concluded the last stage of the *mikveh*'s construction, and on Tuesday afternoon they opened the roof to allow rain water in. Then, last night, there was such a *mabul* that the entire pool filled with water! And now, on Shabbos *Parshas Beshalach* in the morning, you will be the first person to use the *mikveh*!!"

Because who really notices

that I came? The *chavrusa*. Who

waits for me and cannot begin without

me? The *chavrusa*. Who recalls what we ar-

gued about yesterday and demands that we rehash

it further? The *chavrusa*. And now, I would have to do the

whole back-and-forth in learning myself.

On the way to *kollel*, I called a repairman whom I had spoken

to several days earlier and asked when he could come to fix

my roof. At the time, I could not have imagined the amount of

rain that would fall this year with such bounty, but recalling the

wetness from last year, I wanted to get this done in a hurry. "I

can come right now," he told me, "or in the afternoon."

I almost answered, "Come now," because one never knows

what the day will bring, and in any case, I had no *chavrusa*

and I could easily have made an about-face and gone home.

But I overcame this instinct, *b'siyata d'Shmaya*, and I told him,

"Come in the afternoon."

I arrived in *kollel*, and I continued thinking about what I had to

accomplish. I recalled that I had to speak to another repairman,

who would have to finish a job I had ordered, and this was truly

urgent. The lack of a *chavrusa* was threatening to upend my

shikul ha'da'as, and I almost called him. Almost — for a moment

later I opened my Gemara and dove into the *sugya*. Thus, I

was *zocheh* to center myself and to learn during the hours set

aside for learning.

I know that Torah learning is precious in Hashem's Eyes and I

don't need any proof of this, but Hashem, in His mercy, sent me

a wondrous *he'arah* to encourage me.

After completing the hours of morning learning, I wanted to call

that other repairman to ask him what was going on with the job

I had ordered from him, but when I opened my phone I discov-

ered that he had called me several times while I was in *seder*

learning. I called him immediately, and he said he had been

trying to reach me to let me know that he'd finished the job,

but I hadn't answered him. When he called my house, my wife

told him I was learning in *kollel* and my phone was unavailable

while I was learning.

"I was moved," he told me, "and I decided I want a part of your

Torah learning. Remember we spoke about 2,000 shekels?

Well, I will take only 1,800 from you. A 200-shekel discount for

the honor of Torah!"

More than the actual money, I rejoiced at the encouragement

sent my way by the *Melamed Torah l'amo Yisrael*.

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Hashgochah Pratis in Sifrei Kodesh Hashgachahh Pratis in the Sefarim Hakedoshim

Man's Bad Deeds Make It Necessary for a Miracle to Provide Him with Sustenance

How can we even say that providing sustenance or a *zivug* is "difficult" for Hashem, who is *Kol Yachol*?!

It is because a person's bad deeds count against him, obstructing his way to find his *parnassah* or his *zivug*, but Hashem performs a miracle to circumvent that obstruction.

(Alshich, *Shemos* 17:8)

Parnassah Is Sent to Each Individual with Perfect Hashgachah

It says that Hashem gives each person his sustenance exactly when he needs it. Each person has a different trade and succeeds in gaining his sustenance when *he* needs it, with precise *hashgachah pratis*.

When Hashem split the Yam Suf, each *Shevet* had its own individual pathway, with the fruits and treats that its people needed; this is how Hashem still provides *parnassah* to each individual as well.

(Ksav Sofer, *Vayechi*)

No One Can Guess from Where His Sustenance Will Come

Man's Sustenance

Rav Shizvi said in the name of Rabi Elazar ben Azaryah: The miracles that Hashem performs to bring people their sustenance are as great as that of the splitting of the sea. Therefore, it is necessary to pray for one's sustenance.

From where do we know this? It says (*Tehillim* 136:25), "He gives bread to all living flesh." This immediately follows the *passuk* (ibid, verse 13), "To He who tears the sea into strips." This tells us that the miracle of providing sustenance is similar to the miracle of the Splitting of the Sea.

(*Pesachim* 118a)

Reb Simcha Bunim of Peshis'cha explains that at the Yam Suf, every person probably imagined how Hashem would save them, but none of them imagined that the sea would split and turn into dry land! Hashem saved them specifically in a way that they could not have imagined. This is how Hashem provides a person with *parnassah* as well, in ways he could not have dreamed of.

(*Yismach Yisrael, Chol Hamoed Pesach*)

We Must Realize That Nature Is a Miracle

What will bring a person to realize that Hashem is the only Power in the world Who can provide for him? It is prayer. He should realize that the words "man's sustenance is as difficult as the Splitting of the Sea" do not mean that it is difficult for Hakadosh Baruch Hu, Who can do anything and everything. Rather, it is about him – for each individual to realize the great miracles that bring him his livelihood, and that the only thing he can do is to daven and plead for mercy.

(*Michtav Me'Eliyahu* Vol. I, p. 179)

A Thought on Bitachon

From the shiurim on Kav Hashgachah

It is a principle of *avodas Hashem* to always be serene and calm, and one achieves this through *emunah* and *bitachon*. A person achieves serenity when he is happy with his lot and is always thanking Hashem both for what he has and for what he does not have – for someone who always focuses on what he is lacking and keeps running after more and more – his soul is not at peace, and he does not have *menuchas hanefesh*.

When a person knows that he is always in Hashem's Hands, then he always feels like a baby in his mother's arms. He does not have pressure or worries, and nothing agitates him. Through this, he succeeds much more, both in quantity and in quality.

In *Parshas Beshalach* (*Shemos* 15:25) we learn: "There He issued statutes and laws." Rashi explains that in *Marah*, Hashem gave them some of the *parshiyos* of the Torah, specifically *Shabbos*, *parah adumah*, and other laws. The *Sefer Hachinuch* explains (*mitzvah* 24) the *mitzvah* of *techum Shabbos*: One of the aspects of *Shabbos* is for us to rest in one place just as Hashem, so to speak, rests on the seventh day.

Excerpts from the popular shiur by Harav Yehuda Mandel shlit"a from Lakewood

Serenity Through Bitachon

In *Marah*, just after the sea split for them, Bnei Yisrael received the *mitzvah* of *Shabbos*, and we can find a connection between the two things: Water is always in motion, without any rest. Maharal (*Gevuros Hashem* ch. 18) explains that water is a substance that has no shape or form, and only someone who has separated himself from material desires and rules over them merits *tzurah* – form. Moshe Rabbenu is called Moshe for he was "pulled out of the waters" – he left behind the inherent trait of water, and he was *zocheh* to the greatest *tzurah* possible.

It is possible that because of this the Egyptians were punished specifically with water, in order to show that they chased after their desires, and they are compared to water, which has no rest and has no form. And thus, after Am Yisrael saw the Egyptians' punishment at the Yam Suf, they were given the day of *Shabbos*, a day of rest and *bitachon*, a day of healing from the pursuit of one's desires.



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