

HASHGACHAH PRATIS

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



Parshas Ki Tisa - Vayakhel 5786 ■ Issue 183

HEART TO HEART

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

Strengthen Yourself and Have Courage in Every Situation

Introducing *tocheles*. This is one of the words Rabbenu Bachyai brings at the end of *Shaar Habitachon*, and it expresses *bitachon* in Hashem. To be *meyachel* is to long for Hashem, to await salvation, to hope for the best. To be in this posture means to long and wait for the light to come, for joy to appear, for *shefa* to arrive — to trust in Hashem, Who is Good and Who does good.

The only time the *passuk* "Be strong and fortify your heart, all those who long for Hashem" (*Tehillim* 31:25) appears in *sefer Chovos Halevavos* is in *Shaar Cheshbon Hanefesh*, (ch. 3), in an essay about *bitachon*. In this *perek* of *Tehillim* Dovid Hamelech speaks about all his troubles. "I am pained"; "My life has ended in pain"; "I have been an embarrassment"; "They plotted to take my soul...." He was chased, forced to flee and to deal with very difficult situations, and in the midst of these great difficulties he composed this song of *Tehillim*.

Dovid Hamelech directed his words to apply to all situations, for all Jews throughout their lives. His advice is like the faithful words of a man who tells his friend, "Learn from my experience. I also went through such difficulties. Do what I did!"

His advice does not come from someone who is sitting at the heights of success and throwing pithy statements into the air; this advice represents his way of life. He went through dark times and yet never succumbed to the darkness. He was certain that the darkness was only a temporary situation. He was pursued, yet he still believed that he would return to his royal throne. He knew that difficulties are sent from the All-Merciful Hashem, Who sent them to him for his good, and he was sure that Hashem would extract him from his troubles. Hashem is always present, and He whispers into the ear of every Jew, wherever he might be: "Be strong and fortify your hearts, all those who long for Hashem!"

To whom do we say, "Be strong"? Have you ever seen a young, spry man who runs up six flights of steps, puts up all the boards of his sukkah with his own hands while perched on a ladder, and does not become at all exhausted? You would not tell him, "Be strong." Only when you see a person who can barely walk on his own would you say, "Be strong! Encourage yourself!" This is Dovid Hamelech's intent in this *passuk*. He was speaking to someone who is weak, to one for whom the day did not light the way, to one who is wandering

and confused, one who does not know where to turn, which yeshivah will accept his son after three yeshivos gave him a negative response. He was talking to one who is wondering what will be with a *shidduch* after the latest proposals came to nothing, to one who is longing for good news about his future generations...

How many Yidden are in the darkness and need *chizuk*! Dovid Hamelech says these holy words to them. He instructs us: Do not give up, do not think this situation will go on forever, *challah*. As *Iyov*, the greatest *baal yissurim* in *Tanach*, said (*Iyov* 28:3), "He set a limit to the darkness." Good days will yet come; you will yet see a tremendous *yeshuah*; you will yet dance a dance of thanksgiving, and it is worth your while to plan it already now. Strengthen and fortify your hearts! Be strong with courage and strength. Don't pay attention to the temporary difficulty, but rather, join all the good Yidden who are *meyachalim*, longing for Hashem and hoping for good. Hashem wants us to eagerly await the good that He will shower upon us in the future.

What can help as we wait is the thought that all the ways of Hashem are truth. The Chafetz Chaim compares this to someone's personal stamp. If you look at it, you see letters that are backward, and only when you stamp the seal to the paper do you see letters that appear properly. That is how we can understand that Hakadosh Baruch Hu's "seal" is truth. In the beginning we don't see how everything will work out. Everything seems so messy and confusing. But in the end it all becomes clear, and we'll see that all of this is truth and *emunah*.

The *peirush Matnas Kehunah* on the Midrash teaches regarding the Torah's opening words, "In the beginning Elokim created": The final letters of those words spell the word *emes*, but they appear in the opposite order. The *Zohar Hakadosh* notes this, but it adds that the letters do appear in the correct order in the second, third and fourth words of the *passuk* — *bara Elokim es*. This is to show us that at first the *emes* already exists but it is hidden — the letters are out of order. Only later, after we develop greater *emunah*, are we *zocheh* to see how everything is *emes*, exactly as it should be. May Hashem enable us to always be *meyachel* for Him and to see His *yeshuah* and the *geulah* speedily; *amen*.

FROM THE EDITOR

Iran, 3404 ... 5786

Adar 5786. Once again, a wicked Haman in Iran is seeking to kill and destroy us.

In 3404 the ancient Haman sat in Iran and plotted, investing his time and money in the hope of killing all the Jews. His wicked plans were foiled, and we celebrate this victory every year in ways that exceed the celebration of any other Yom Tov — we read the Megillah, we eat and drink, we exchange gifts with one another, and we give *tzedakah* freely.

We are so happy on this day. How is Purim different from all other times?

The Alshich Hakadosh explains that there are two types of miracles. The first is a miracle such as the Splitting of the Sea, and such as when Chananya, Mishael, and Azarya were saved from the fiery furnace. With these miracles Hakadosh Baruch Hu changed nature.

The second type is a much greater miracle: when Hakadosh Baruch Hu takes the plans of a human being, who has free will, and upends them from one extreme to the other. That is a greater miracle, because "one of Hashem *yisbarach's middos* is that He does not remove a person's free will and render him unable to do what he wishes, for if so, there would be no place for reward and punishment" (*Alshich, Megillas Esther* 8:16).

Hakadosh Baruch Hu created the world and gave human beings free will. When Achashveirosh decreed his desire to destroy Am Yisrael, we needed a huge miracle, one that would be greater than a miracle involving changing the nature of the world.

On Purim we are happier than at other times. Throughout the month of Adar we increase our *simchah*, because Hashem showed us that we are always in His Hands. It doesn't matter what this person is planning or what another is thinking. Only Hashem's plan is what will actually occur.

And not only can the plots of the enemy be canceled, they are upended completely, from all directions.

What we need to do in order to bring the *yeshuah* is to have *emunah*.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu showed us on Purim that the *yeshuah* comes specifically in the merit of pure *emunah*.

Mordechai HaYehudi did not bow down to Haman; he always stood at his full height. When Haman left Esther's feast, the Megillah tells us, Mordechai "did not rise and did not show any fear of him." The Alshich explains (5:9) that at that time Mordechai decided that now he could go with *emunah* to the end, without any fear, and that he would not relate to Haman at all. This angered Haman so much that he decided to erect the gallows...upon which he himself was ultimately hung.

Blind faith — this is what has always brought the *yeshuah*, and this will bring our *hatzalah* from the Haman of this generation as well.

Guest 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

Falling “on the Ground”

The ceiling in our laundry room showed signs of peeling. At first, bits of paint fell off, then a little more, and then there was a huge green, ugly stain. All this led me to the conclusion that something was not right in the floor above mine. I called a professional, and he confirmed my conclusion. It seemed there was a burst pipe, which could be fixed only by removing the tiles in the apartment above mine.

An elderly woman who is, unfortunately, not religious, but is friendly and willing to help out, lives in the apartment above mine. When she heard about the problem she said she would be happy to help us, but she wanted to call someone on her own.

I agreed. An Arab worker came to her house and claimed that the problem was just a matter of properly sealing the pipe. He would take care of it. It was strange, because at the time when the stain on our ceiling was beginning to get darker, the woman was hospitalized and had not even been home. There was no water running in her home at the time, so how could this be a problem that just needed sealing?! But she accepted what he said and gave him permission to do the work. In order to avoid problems, she told him he could take a key from the neighbor and enter her home in case he came at a time when she wasn't home.

Several days passed, and this woman had many mishaps. She kept falling. Every time this happened, she called one of the neighbors to help her get up. She is an older woman, and falls are quite common at her age, but this seemed like too much. When I heard about it I felt very bad for her, and I also suspected it might have something to do with the mezuzah on her door. I noticed the mezuzah was too small, and who knew if the *klaf* inside it could even be called a “mezuzah”?

One time, she fell so hard that she couldn't get up. It was *hashgachah* that the Arab worker arrived soon afterward, and when he discovered her on the floor he called Hatzalah, and she was taken to the hospital.

At this stage, her son from abroad understood the situation and came to Israel to take care of her properly. When he spoke with me I told him, “Your mother needs a *yeshuah!* Her last fall was just part of a series of falls that happened to her. I think you must check the mezuzah at the entrance to her home.”

He agreed, bought a kosher mezuzah, and affixed it to the entrance of her apartment. He took off the old mezuzah and showed it to me. Indeed, it was exactly as I had suspected: Many of the letters were smudged, and the words “on the ground” were missing altogether, which explained her many falls and the problem with her “ground” – the mysterious leakage under her floor tiles.

Her son was quite moved. A mezuzah! Look what a mezuzah can do! I'm sure this did something to his relationship with Torah and mitzvos. He continued to care for her devotedly, and he also called a reliable worker, who lifted her floor tiles and found no reason for the moisture in our ceiling. He suggested that perhaps there was some connection to the water flowing from one of the neighbor's apartments, but

The Contractor Called on His Own

It was summer. The children were in camp, and we used that time to do renovations on our home. We were having an important addition made to the house, and I hoped the extension would not take longer than two months. I planned that when the children got home, the house would be ready and they would not have to deal with the fallout from the construction. That's what I hoped, but the contractor was quite laid back. His workers came and went at their own pace. What *Chazal* said was definitely true for me: “Anyone who wants to lose his money should hire workers and not supervise them as they work”; but one who wants to lose his *menuchas hanefesh* and his health should hire workers and sit around supervising them. It was the week of *Parshas Eikev*, Elul was only a week and a half away, and the renovations needed a real push. I tried to come up with creative solutions. What could I do in order to get the construction moving and the workers to hurry up? If they worked quickly they would definitely make it. There was not so much work to do relative to the time they were taking. Maybe I would bribe them to come on Sunday, their day of rest? Maybe I should offer them bonuses and prizes. Perhaps the same tactics that work for children in kindergarten would work for these lazy workers as well?

Somehow I understood on my own that this thought was not logical and would not be within the range of normal *hishtadlus*; but the feeling of urgency was flowing in my veins. What was I to do?! *What?!*

Then I found what to do: I opened the *sefer Chovos Halevavos*. I turned the pages and somehow found myself at the beginning of the fourth chapter, and then it appeared before my eyes: When a person trusts in Hashem, he will find *menuchah* for his heart and serenity in his soul, and he will not [attempt to force something to come his way] earlier or later than the time that was decreed for him.

I read these words again and again – “not earlier or later than the time....” Why should I attempt to push walls if in any case they would be built only at the time when Hakadosh Baruch Hu decreed? Why should I hurry things up if they are not being hurried up from on High? I had already spoken to the contractor and had done everything there was for me to do. I had undoubtedly done my share of *hishtadlus*. Now was the time for peace of the heart and serenity of the soul.

I had planned on picking up the phone to call the contractor, but now I understood it was time for me to let go. Instead of having that conversation, I repeated the words of the *Chovos Halevavos* again and again – it would happen in its time, no earlier and no later.

I could not anticipate what happened next. The phone rang. What name showed up on the screen? It was the contractor, calling to ask if I would agree to have the workers come on Sunday.

I was amazed. That was exactly what I had wanted to ask of him, and now I had received it through the power of *emunah* alone!

A Personal Conversation at the Right Time

Baruch Hashem, a new grandson was born for us. We were very excited and had much to arrange. My daughter who had given birth came to our home to rest with the baby, who did not yet have a name.

My son-in-law asked for my permission to organize a minyan in our home. I agreed to help him out; he got men for half a minyan and I got men for the other half, so eight Yidden came to our home, besides the two of us, and we davened Maariv.

The next morning, one of the people who had come to be part of the minyan met me and said, “*Yasher koach!*”

“For what?”

“For calling me to come to the minyan.”

I thought he was confused. It would have been appropriate for me to thank *him*; it was nice of him to agree to come. I expressed my amazement and told him, “I think it is I who needs to thank you.”

“No, no, I'm not confused. Listen: I had a very hard day yesterday. Several things got com-

On the giving end

The donation that opened the Gates of Shamayim

For two long months I was suffering intensely. I was desperately looking for a job, and when I finally arrived for an interview for a job that seemed suitable, it didn't seem to pan out. The employer never called back. I tried everything: I connected with anyone who might help. I begged for an opportunity – but I came up against a stone wall. Despair percolated within me. Then I decided to take a daring step: I set up a monthly donation toward the dissemination of the *Hashgachah Pratis* newsletter in an entire neighborhood. What happened afterward was simply unbelievable: On the very day that the newsletter was distributed, my cellphone vibrated. It was the news I had been waiting for – the positive response! I was accepted for work and was promised all the conditions I had dared to ask for! *Hodu laHashem ki tov!* May you continue to increase *kevod Shamayim*.

On the receiving end

The day began with a long-to-do list: to buy a suit, to go to a dentist appointment, to pick up my children from *gan*, and to do a little shopping on the way home. In reality, however, nothing went according to plan. After half an hour of trying on suits in the store, I left empty-handed. At the dentist there was a serious delay, which caused me to miss picking up the children from *gan*. To top it off, when I went out to buy what I needed, as I was paying I discovered that I did not have enough money. In the past I would have come home from such a day feeling miserable, and I would have labeled it a “black,” frustrating day. But in the *zechus* of listening constantly to the wonderful *shuirim* on the *Hashgachah Pratis* phone line, something fundamental shifted within me. I came home relaxed and in excellent spirits, with the simple knowledge that I had done my *hishtadlus* and that whatever I did not accomplish was just not meant to happen today. Thank you for the amazing content that simply transforms a person!

plicated at work, and several other difficulties caught me on the way; I had one mishap after another. I was really feeling beaten, and in the evening I had no strength left. Thoughts of despair filled me: *What am I doing in this world? Who remembers me at all? And how am I supposed to deal with all my peckelach?*

"And then, as I was sitting down to eat supper, you called and asked if I wanted to complete a minyan.

"Can you even imagine what that call did for me?! Suddenly, I felt new blood flowing through my veins. At that moment I received 'regards' from the Ribbono shel Olam – the message that I am needed; in the *zechus* of my coming to your home the *Shechinah* will rest there, and they'll be able to say *Kaddish* and *Barchu*. I could truly hear the message: 'You're not alone in the world!'

"Your call was like refreshing water on a weary soul."

See how even a short, routine phone call contains wondrous *hashgachah pratis*, to revive a Yid with good thoughts!

The Moment the Battery Died

I was called to a large school building to repair something in a specific room. This was on a Friday, when there was no school and only the secretaries were there. I entered the room and made the repair. When I wanted to leave I got confused. Instead of going back out the way I had entered, I noticed a different door that was labeled "EXIT." I pressed down on the handle and opened the door. I went out, and the door closed behind me, leaving me stuck in a small hallway with no other way out.

The simplest thing would have been to retrace my steps, but the door had locked automatically, and in order to go out I would have to call someone to open it from inside the room. There was no one to call.

I called the secretary, but all I got was an answering machine. I disconnected the call quickly, because my battery was close to dying. I told myself to remain calm and to think logically: What would be the shortest call that could be of most benefit to me now, using the little bit of battery I had left? So I called my wife, told her I was stuck, and asked her to hurry to the secretaries to ask them to get me out.

She didn't manage to answer me, because at that moment my phone's battery died.

Baruch Hashem, the message was delivered, my wife came to the school to tell the secretaries, and they opened the door for me. I came out and breathed freely. "If the battery had died before I spoke to you," I told my wife, "I would have remained stuck there all Shabbos." But she, with her strength of *emunah*, answered with a statement that was worth everything I had endured: "If the battery had died Hashem would not have brought you to this place, because He wanted you home for Shabbos."

The Doctor Nearby Has No Problem Helping

Baruch Hashem, my wife gave birth to a baby boy. The doctors made a routine examination and then informed us that they wanted to speak to us.

This put us under pressure, but I knew that Hashem was with us, and whatever the doctors would say, He was at my side.

Their diagnosis was not pleasant at all: They claimed our baby would not be able to see!

My wife was very tense. What does that mean? Does such a small baby see?! Had they discerned some sort of blemish in his eye that indicated that he would not be able to see in the future?! The doctors answered her questions and agreed that at this stage it was impossible to know for certain what would be, but the way they saw it, the direction was not very positive.

We left the meeting with the doctors, shocked. I knew the doctors were only human beings. They could diagnose something according to their understanding and the tools they had, but even if they were right, and even if they had experience, I had a connection with the One Who opens the eyes of the blind.

I told my wife, "Wait and see. This is not the end of the story. I have a relative Who is a great Doctor. He knows the diagnosis and has no problem helping out. We'll wait and see what He says."

We waited, we davened, we believed. Indeed, the next time the doctors examined the baby, they were very surprised. The baby's eyes reacted to the light, and the meaning of this was clear: Our baby could see.

For us this was no surprise. We had known that our great Doctor would come to our aid.

we couldn't get hold of that neighbor.

Some time passed, and I no longer needed the neighbor's help. The problem of the dampness disappeared on its own.

And the kosher mezuzah hangs in its place, safeguarding the woman's home.

The Box Was Kept Safe

An *avreich* from Bnei Brak relates: I wanted to buy things for Pesach at a discounted price, and I made a large order at a *chessed* sale. When I ordered, I was informed that the products would come to a specific place on a certain day, and we could come to collect them between 6 and 9 p.m. After 9 p.m., they said, they would take no responsibility for any products left at the site.

On the designated day I came to the place and loaded all my things onto our shopping cart. Back at home I reviewed my list to make sure that I had taken everything I ordered and that I didn't mistakenly take something I hadn't ordered. That's how I discovered that I had taken a type of Pesach cookies that I hadn't ordered.

Although it was already after 9, I knew there were still some products out there, so I hurried back out, put down the box of cookies, and took the type that I had actually ordered.

The minute I put down the box of cookies I had mistakenly taken, a young man arrived, looked at the list in his hands, and took the box. It was the only box of cookies of its kind that was there.

I asked him, "Why did you come after the designated time?" I knew that there were few products left at this hour.

"I regularly learn until 9," he responded, "and I didn't want to miss my learning time because of the sale. I told myself that I would learn as always, and Hashem would arrange for whatever was mine to wait for me."

I was amazed. Now I understood why I had made the mistake. When I returned the cookies after 9 p.m., there were none of that type left, and it was logical to assume that if I hadn't taken them, someone else would have taken them. Hashem arranged that for a full hour I safeguarded the cookies for this *avreich* so that he ultimately got exactly what he ordered, in his own time.

Tefillah and Yeshuah

A Yid from Tzfas relates: There was a strange, very unpleasant smell in our kitchen. I searched for the source of it and found nothing. Knowing that Hashem does everything, I davened to the Creator of all sorts of *besamim* to send me a *yeshuah*, and I gave *tzedakah*. Afterward, I called a plumber and he told me, "There is probably a certain type of pipe you have there. Switch it, and the smell will pass."

I did as he said and the smell disappeared, but several days later it came back.

I davened to Hashem to help me, and immediately afterward I had the idea to call a professional whom I hadn't thought of previously. He heard about the problem and told me, "Before I come and take money from you, try to see what happens after the water in the sink runs for several minutes."

I opened the faucet. Soon clean water flowed through the pipe, and the smell passed, never to return.

Thank you, Hashem, Who hears our prayers.

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Hashgochah Pratis in Sifrei Kodesh Hashgachahh Pratis in the Sefarim Hakedoshim

The More You Do, the More You Will Receive

It's a simple fact that Hashem rewards a person measure for measure, in accordance with his deeds. Hashem forgives those who forgive others, and one who does not want to forgo his own honor or is not capable of doing *chessed*, logically deserves to be treated strictly as well, without Hashem's *chessed* (see *Rosh Hashanah* 17a and *Megillah* 28a). And who would survive if Hashem would deal with him only according to strict justice?! Dovid Hamelech asked, "Do not come in judgment with Your servant, for no living being will be found deserving before You." On the other hand, a person who does *chessed* will receive *chessed*, and the more he does, the more he'll receive.

Who Has Mercy on His Creations

Rabban Gamliel says in the name of Rebbi: It is written (*Devarim* 13:18), "And He will give you mercy, and He will have mercy on you and will increase you." Whoever has mercy on others will be treated with mercy from *Shamayim*, and whoever fails to have mercy on others will not be treated with mercy from *Shamayim*. He explained the *passuk* as follows: "And He will give you mercy" — the ability to have mercy on others, then, "and He will have mercy" — you will be treated with mercy from *Shamayim*.

(*Shabbos* 151b)

(*Mesillas Yesharim* ch. 19)

How to Save Oneself from Troubles

And now that *middas hadin* is prominent all over the world, and there is no natural way to save oneself from the troubles that come each day, we need to strengthen ourselves in *chessed*, so that the *chessed* from Above will be aroused.... *Chazal* teach that Hashem says, "If human beings, who need *chessed* themselves, do *chessed* with each other, then how much more do I, Whose essence is *chessed* and mercy, need to do *chessed* with those whom I created."

(*Ahavos Chessed*, part 2 ch. 5)

The Whole World Is One Entity

If someone tells himself, "Why should I have mercy on someone else? He has nothing to do with me!" then he will be treated in the same way from *Shamayim*...but if he has mercy on others, then Hashem will respond to him in kind. Hashem hears the cry of the poor man, for He knows his pain. This is because the whole world is one entity, and every facet of creation is part of Hashem. One who chooses to see others as part of himself will merit to receive the same

treatment from Hashem.

(*Iyei Hayam*)

Hashem Mirrors a Person's Behavior

When a person gives *tzedakah* and envelops himself in *middas hachessed*, he causes Hashem *yisbarach* to do *chessed* with all the upper worlds, all the way down to our own world.... As Am Yisrael behave in this world, that is how they arouse the *middos* on High.... As the Baal Shem Tov explained, "Hashem is your Shadow" (*Tehillim* 121:5) implies that just as a shadow mirrors anything one does, so Hashem responds to a person's behavior by acting in the same way to him and to the entire world....

(*Kedushas Levi, Purim*)

A Thought on Bitachon

From the shiurim on Kav Hashgachah

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

The Avodah of Purim Day: Seeking the Good of His Nation

On the day of Purim we give *mishloach manos* and *matanos la'evyonim*, and through these mitzvos we increase love and friendship in Am Yisrael. The common denominator behind these deeds is the exalted *middah* of "seeking the good of His nation."

Being *doresh tov*, seeking the good in others, is a high level on the ladder of *middos*. To reach that level, one must work on oneself. The basis for this *middah* is having an *ayin tovah*, for whoever sees the good in the other person can also seek and wholeheartedly desire his benefit.

How do we acquire an *ayin tovah*?

The answer is hidden deep within us. Most of the time, a person who tends to criticize and blame others does so as a result of his own bitterness and dissatisfaction with himself.

Critique about oneself is very destructive and can be worse than critique against others. Therefore, work-

ing on the *middah* of *ayin tovah* starts with looking at oneself positively. We need to learn to judge ourselves favorably, even for mistakes we've made and even for our failures. When we grow accustomed to seeing the good in ourselves, we will automatically develop an *ayin tovah* toward others as well.

An *ayin ra'ah* is the root of Amalek's power to destroy, whereas an *ayin tovah* is the power to build and establish goodness. This is what we saw in Mordechai and Esther, who always wanted to build and to do good to others.

This is our main *tafkid* on Purim: to increase our *ayin tovah* toward ourselves and toward others, and to seek good for as many people as we can. Every step we take toward positivity is priceless. With this approach, the days of Purim will make us greater and better in so many ways.



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