

HASHGACHAH PRATIS

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



ParshasVayikra - Tzav 5786 ■ Issue 184

HEART TO HEART

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

There Is Always Hope

Dovid Hamelech addresses those who place their hopes in Hashem, those who strengthen themselves in *bitachon* and await a *yeshuah*, and he tells us (*Tehillim* 31:25), "Strengthen and give courage to your hearts!" In order to safeguard our hopes and make sure they don't melt away at all times and in all situations, we need strength. We need courage to face what seems to be the visible reality, the logic of doctors with much experience, the succession of black numbers and statistics, and the minus in the bank.

Strengthen and give courage to your hearts, Dovid Hamelech tells us. The heart is the seat of emotions. This is where fear and confusion resound, where pain and loneliness reside, where sadness and despair are prone to settle. Strengthen yourselves and say *no* to all these negative emotions, gird yourself with strength, charge your heart with feelings of happiness and hope, *bitachon* and *emunah*. Have a ready response for situations where you feel completely alone; remind yourself that a Yid is never alone! As the *navi* Yirmeyahu said (17:7), "Hashem is the One in Whom he trusts."

Of course, a person cannot strengthen himself completely at the moment when a *nisyaon* comes upon him. For this, he must prepare himself in advance by always learning about *emunah* and *bitachon* more. Then, in the moment of *nisayon*, he will be able to draw strength and anticipate Hashem's salvation.

In the *gemara* in *Maseches Berachos* (10a), the well-known words are brought: "Even if a sharpened sword is pressed against a person's neck, he should not hold back from praying for [Hashem's] mercy." An example of this is if a person is sentenced to be hanged on the gallows. He is taken up to the scaffold, and it seems that all hope is lost. But no; the rope is still not tied. There have been times when a person suddenly jumped out of the crowd and spoke in defense of the condemned man, mentioned some sort of merit in his favor, and the decree was annulled. It has happened that in a sudden state of confusion the hangman fled, and the condemned man was released.

Even after the rope is tied, there is still a chance it will tear, or the knot will come loose, and there is an international law that if a "mishap" of this sort occurs, the condemned man is declared innocent of all charges and is free to go.

It once happened that Russian soldiers burst into the home of Hagaon Rav Aharon Burstein, and

they caught him red-handed sitting with several *sefarim* and learning Torah with great diligence. This should have meant certain death. Seeing that his end was near, he made his final request: "Allow me a few more moments to understand this difficult *Rambam*."

The soldiers, who were probably shocked to see that a creature of this sort even existed, in defiance of all logic, agreed to wait for him to find an answer to his difficulty in the *Rambam*. While they were waiting, they suddenly received news that German soldiers were attacking Russia, and so they ran away. The Rav was saved; his life was spared.

Another incredible story demonstrates this same principle: Rav Yaffe Zaks, the father of the Chacham Zvi, went through the pogroms in the years of *ta"ch v'ta"t*. When the armies came to his city, a wicked man, may his memory be blotted out, stood before him, took out his sword, and prepared to kill him. Those who were watching from afar were certain that *rasha* had executed his plan. It looked like he actually approached him with the sword and carried out the terrible murder. But that was not what Hashem wanted. At the very moment when the sword lay on Rav Yaffe's neck, incredibly, the wicked man had a change of heart. He decided to leave Rav Yaffe alive and placed his sword back in its sheath. Rav Yaffe's life was saved. This story was publicized, especially because those who had witnessed the incident from afar testified that he had been killed, and on the basis of their testimony the *rabbanim* allowed his wife to remarry. With great *rachamei Shamayim*, Rav Yaffe arrived back in his city at the last possible moment, when his wife was about to marry someone else, to whom she had become engaged.

These stories should strengthen us in our own situations and in our own difficulties and fears. A Yid never reaches the end. One can always get up; there is always hope of renewal, always reason to yearn and to hope. The darkness is temporary, and the light is yet waiting.

Strengthen yourselves, my brothers, strengthen and fortify yourself. *L'chaim, Yidden, l'chaim!* We are now in the months of *geulah* – Adar and Nissan. Just as Hakadosh Baruch Hu made miracles for our forefathers and took them from slavery to redemption and from mourning to Yom Tov, may we too merit and sing a new song *al geulaseinu v'al pedus nafsheinu*, speedily in our days; *amen*.

FROM THE EDITOR

He Is First and He Is Last

There is a great principle within the thirteen principles of *emunah*:

"*He is first and He is last.*"

Nothing existed before Hashem, and nothing can exist after Him. Anything that begins comes through Him, and it continues thanks to His power. Whatever comes to an end is part of His master plan.

As we are about to print "the final newsletter" in its current format, it is natural to feel that we are reaching an end of sorts.

184 newsletters.

Close to 30 million printouts.

Eight years of activity.

But the truth is that there is no ending here. This newsletter, which we are calling the "last," reminds us of the great principle that "He is first and He is last."

When we opened the phone line eight years ago, there were those who said, both bluntly and lovingly, "It will last no more than three months." This is the way of the world; initiatives rise and fall. Ideas light up the world for a short time and then burn out. And indeed, based on the natural way of things, perhaps that is how it should have been. But this initiative never relied on natural processes. It relied on He Who is first, Who existed before this idea; and it is He Who will be the last One after it.

A half a year after the phone line opened, this newsletter was born – without a primary sponsor, without a stable support system, without a "business model" that would promise a future; only with *emunah*.

And this newsletter, which perhaps should have had a short lifespan, turned into a means of lighting up hearts, strengthening homes, and reminding thousands of Yidden that, day after day, there is a First and a Last.

There is *hashgachah*; there is a Leader of this world.

We conclude with the final printing in this format, with the understanding that this is not the end, but rather the beginning of something higher.

If to date we disseminated millions of copies, with tens of thousands of stories, then it is our obligation to do even more.

More *chizuk*. The generation today needs even more *emunah*, more simple reminders that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the First and the Last – even in times of confusion, even in times of constant change.

And thus we are not narrowing down, but expanding; not ending, but going deeper; not saying goodbye, but moving forward.

This final newsletter in its present format is the beginning of a new stage.

We thank Hashem for what was, and we daven that we be trustworthy messengers to disseminate ever more light, until everyone sees with their eyes and understands with their hearts that He is first – and He is last.

Guest Shabbat
Pinchas Shefer

The shiur is aired on Mon. and Thurs. - menu 4 (Yiddish and Hebrew)

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• Kav Hashgacha Pratis for women
(Yiddish and Hebrew) - Menu 4

THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgachah pratis, as told on the hotline

Full Pay with a Bonus

My son needed to visit a doctor in Rechavia. The area is very far from where I live, and I knew that to get there we would have to pass through areas with tremendous stumbling blocks in *shemiras einayim*, so I decided to go by taxi rather than by bus.

Taking a taxi would mean about 70 shekels each way – not a small sum, but the more I thought about it, the more I came to the conclusion that it was worth spending this amount of money to safeguard my eyes and my son's eyes.

Ultimately, the cost of travel both ways came to 130 shekels, and I thought that was the end of the story.

The next day I got a call from an insurance company. They claimed that I deserved compensation. For what? It seems that six years ago there was an accident on a bus I had been on, and now it was decided that I deserved compensation of 500 shekels for the accident.

As much as I tried to recall the story, I did not remember being involved in any accident six years earlier, and the whole idea that my name was listed among those who were on the bus at the time seemed really strange to me. I asked a *rav* whether I was allowed to take the money, and he said it was completely fine.

The money came at the perfect time, a day after I had spent money on *shemiras einayim*. I have no doubt that there is a connection between the two.

If There Is No Way, There Is Another Way

In our neighborhood, each person learns in the place that suits him, as there are many different *kollelim* in the area, and each person has his part in Torah.

But in the evening something wonderful happens: Everyone gathers in the evening *kollel* in one large *beis midrash*. One hundred *avreichim* invest themselves in the holy Torah, sitting and learning at one time and in one place enthusiastically. Learning in such a large and united group is a special experience.

Despite the distance from my home, I always preferred learning in the evening specifically in this *kollel*. The extra distance I had to go was totally worth my while. But with time, things changed, and the road that had been quiet became filled with passersby. It became difficult to refrain from seeing forbidden sights.

At that point I understood that Hashem wanted something else from me. He wanted me to refrain from walking this path and to learn in a *kollel* closer to home. While this would mean joining a small, quiet group, it would come after a short walk on a route that was free of forbidden sights.

Two months passed after I had switched to learning in the *beis midrash* near my home, when one evening

He Didn't Know That He Was Investing in His Own Needs

With I married, I joined a very special family. My in-laws truly live the words of *Pirkei Avos*, "And poor people shall be members of your household." When I was first married there were several such *bnei bayis* there, and they felt so comfortable that they literally "accepted me into the family" and advised me to "feel at home."

I quickly learned that "feeling at home" in my father-in-law's family was a very easy task. The warmth and the constant heartfelt acts of giving have powerful effects. *Yidden* from all over the area come and find a listening ear, help, and a good word. I met all sorts of people there: those who asked for help for lack of choice and apologized for the fact that they asked; those who understood the situation and accepted what was given to them with appreciation and blessings; and those who seemed to assume that everything was coming to them. They went in and out of the house as though it was their own home, not asking for a meal but rather demanding it, and there were those who always had complaints.

Like Zerach. He was a *bachur* with a difficult background, who found in my in-law's home a corner to rest from the storms of the world. He would show up at odd times and situations, morning, afternoon, and evening, and make requests and demands. He was literally like a reincarnation of that nuisance who tested Hillel Hazakein's patience at inappropriate times with senseless questions.

My father-in-law girded himself with all the patience in the world in order to relate kindly to Zerach. He saw the *neshamah* within him, the indisputable fact that he was a son of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and for a long while, he hosted him and bestowed much good upon him despite the great difficulty it involved.

At a certain point, Zerach got caught up in difficult money matters and escaped abroad. That was the end of chapter one.

At the beginning of chapter two, I'll tell you that my father-in-law's home is based not only on the pillar of *chesed*; they also invest much in the pillar of Torah. My father-in-law is a *ros h kollel*, and he needs to collect two million shekels each year. To this end, from time to time he travels abroad to fundraise for the *kollel*. If in the early years each trip was an exhausting hardship involving trial and error, over the past eighteen years these journeys have become focused and productive. My father-in-law knows exactly where to go, and *b'chasdei Hashem*, his trips always yield respectable sums of money.

How did the change occur? Nineteen years ago, after Zerach fled the country in a rush, he left behind a Yid who cared about him very much. My *shver* did not forget him, and at the first opportunity when he traveled abroad, he decided to visit Zerach. He found out where he was staying and arrived at the home of Reb Yehuda, a warm, hospitable Yid who provided Zerach with a home.

Zerach was very excited to meet my father-in-law. He introduced him to Reb Yehuda, and all the good words that my father-in-law should have received in his own home, he received in third person in front of Reb Yehuda. "Do you know who this person is?!" Zerach began, and it seemed he did not want to end. "He saved my life! He was the only person who noticed me. He brought me into his home and allowed me to eat there and sleep there, even when it was very difficult. They never chased me away." He continued his recitation of "the whole *Hallel*" for my father-in-law, and then he did even more when he added, "Reb Yehuda, you have to help him. He has a large *kollel*."

The more Reb Yehuda, a precious Yid who loves Torah, got to know my father-in-law, the more impressed he was with him. He decided to support his *kollel* on a steady basis. The largest sums that come in are always through him. Aside from his own generous donation, he asks his customers in the clothing store he owns to make a donation to the *kupah* of the *kollel*. Once a year he makes a large dinner to which he invites my *shver*, and together they raise the necessary funds.

When my father-in-law brought Zerach into his home, he didn't dream of how much good would come of it. He didn't know that along with the help he was giving without any hope of reward in this world, he was acquiring a highly successful P.R. person for his *kollel*!

On the giving end

I want to express my deep thanks for the wonderful content that you make available on your phone line, especially the choice of inspiring songs that you upload from time to time throughout the day. These songs are true *chizuk* and uplifting for the *refesh*. My life is not easy; I struggle with many difficulties. Through my struggles, hearing the content and the wonderful songs gives me valuable moments of contentment, serenity, and renewed strength.

On the receiving end

After I got off the bus, I discovered I had left my suitcase behind. I tried unsuccessfully to catch up with the bus. I was very upset, as that suitcase contained items of value and very vital necessities for day-to-day life. A few days later I found out that the suitcase was in the lost-and-found office of the bus company in a distant city that would be very difficult for me to get to. I decided to donate 250 shekels toward the dissemination of *emunah*. The (un) surprising ending was that moments later I got a call from the bus company informing me that they were transferring the suitcase to their office in my city, and a short while later I had the suitcase in my hands.

It Was Worth Waiting

I own a car, and I like to help. I'm sure you'll agree that this is a winning combination that anyone would be happy to find. I noticed that many times there are cars stuck at the side of the road in need of help, and I got hold of two batteries to charge cars that need it.

One day I came across a delivery truck that was stuck. This type of vehicle needs a stronger jump than a regular car, and it was doubtful that my batteries could get him started. Nonetheless, I went over to see what happened, because I can't see a Yid in trouble without at least trying to help him.

I discovered that the driver had no idea what to do. I connected my booster cables to his engine, but with no result. I connected the second battery as well, but still it would not start. I told the driver, "Sometimes it takes time before the car responds to power from an external source. Let's wait a bit. Hashem can do anything."

We waited a long time, and in the meantime we strengthened ourselves in *emunah*. I told the irreligious driver stories of *hashgachah pratit*, and together we hoped for Hashem's salvation. When an hour had passed, I understood that, logically, there was no further point in waiting. I thought to myself, *What else can I possibly do that I haven't yet done?* I went to my car and looked around inside, and I discovered candies.

I told the driver, "You know what? Take a candy, make a *berachah Shehakol nihyeh bidvaro* out loud, and I'll answer *amen*." After the words of *emunah* we had spoken, this was not an untenable idea. The man took me seriously and made the *berachah*, and I responded *amen*. Ten seconds later, a young *avreich* stopped his car and asked how he could help out. I showed him the starters, which hadn't helped at all, and he said, "I have a starter in my car. Let's try mine."

He took out his battery and connected it, and within a minute everything was working.

It was amazing that it happened just seconds after "*Shehakol*."

"It was worth getting stuck here for so long in order to see the power of one *berachah*," the driver told me.

I did not need anything more. That moving sentence was worth more to me than any thanks. I had received full compensation .

Hashem Gave Me the Strength to Handle a Difficult Loss

Chaim from Ashdod relates: In the morning I learn in *kollel*, and in the evening I write *STa"m*. After having invested a lot of time in my writing, I sent a package of mezuzos and tefillin for review by an expert proofreader who is known to be a *yarei Shamayim*.

A few days later he called and told me that there was a pair of *parshiyos* for tefillin *shel yad* and *rosh* in the package I had sent him, and there was a question regarding them that he needed to ask a *rav*. He was very doubtful about their *kashrus*, and he was sending them to a *rav* to determine their status.

I had worked very hard writing those *parshiyos*. I'd invested so much in every single letter. I spent a lot of time, bent over my table for hours writing them – hours of work for which I hoped to receive fair payment, and now it seemed that all that time had been for naught.

One small hope remained, that perhaps the proofreader had made a mistake and the *rav* would say there was no problem and the *parshiyos* were kosher.

This was a futile hope, because I knew the proofreader to be someone who did his work faithfully. But nonetheless, so long as there was no final decision, all my work had not yet gone to *genizah*.

During *Minchah*, in *Shemoneh Esrei*, I asked Hashem to help me so that if the *rav* would say that the tefillin were *pasul*, I should have the strength to accept this loss. I asked Hashem to strengthen me. I did not ask for the *parshiyos* to be kosher, since it was too late for that. I asked for the strength to accept the *rav's* decision with peace and serenity, *emunah* and joy, for the "*gam zu l'toval*" to leave my mouth easily, without any inner complaints on my part, *chalilah*.

The next morning, the manager of the institution where my wife works called us. He apologized briefly and explained that there had been an error in the accounting of my wife's salary throughout the year, and he needed to correct it and transfer to our account the amount he owed us.

The amount owed was 30,000 shekels!

I received this message on the day when I was preparing to hear about a big loss. Indeed, later on, I heard the *rav's* decision that the *parshiyos* were *pasul*, but then I already knew that it was not so terrible. There was a large sum in the bank, and we would deal with the loss easily. I accepted the decision with serenity because I had the strength I had received from my Father in *Shamayim*.

I entered and discovered that the whole *chaburah* — one hundred *avreichim* — were sitting and learning there enthusiastically. When I asked what happened, the *rosh kollel* told me that due to certain considerations they had decided to move here, and from now on they would learn in the *beis midrash* near my home. I alone knew why Hakadosh Baruch Hu had caused him to decide this!

Hashem Brought the Doctor to Me

Chaim from Kiryat Sefer relates: One morning I got up from my bed and discovered that I had never known how to have proper *kavanah* when saying the words "Who prepares the steps of man." I had always gotten up and walked without any problems, and I had not appreciated the fact that walking was such a simple activity for me. But today I could not step down on the floor. Every light touch of my feet brought on an attack of piercing pain as though someone had lit a small bonfire on the floor. I went to the doctor, who diagnosed me with an infection and gave me two creams to apply several times a day. *Baruch Hashem*, after several days of treatment the infection passed, and I returned to normal functioning, praised be the Creator. Several weeks passed, during which I walked miles with healthy feet. One night, while I was resting after a busy day, I felt sudden piercing pain in the soles of my feet. I immediately understood what had caused it; the infection had returned. I was happy that at least I knew what the problem was and what I needed to do, and all that was left was to make an appointment so my doctor could give me prescriptions for the same two creams once again.

I called the clinic and asked for an appointment with my regular doctor, but the receptionist told me he was not in and that he would return to work only in two days' time.

It didn't occur to me to ask for another doctor; I thought that this was all I could do – I would accept my suffering with love and wait patiently – or impatiently – until the doctor returned.

An hour later I got a call from the clinic. A doctor asked what I needed, and I told him that I had an infection and about the creams that my regular doctor had prescribed previously. He understood, prepared the prescriptions, and informed me that the prescriptions were waiting for me in the pharmacy.

I completed the call and wondered what was going on. I hadn't scheduled a telephone appointment with another doctor. Why had he called me at the exact time I needed, asking how I was feeling?!

The timing was incredible; only Hashem could do this, for He wants to arrange for the healing even before the illness. Later, I learned that my daughter had made an appointment for herself, and for some reason it had been registered in the system as a phone appointment. The doctor called me for this appointment, and that's how we got to talking as we did, and he prepared the prescriptions for me.

My daughter did not lose out at all, because when she arrived at the clinic they took her, and not only that, but the mere fact that she was in the clinic then was a big favor from Hashem, for she went in to the pharmacy there and purchased the creams for me.

Thank you, Hashem, for Your precise planning of these events. May we all be healthy!

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Hashgochah Pratis in Sifrei Kodesh Hashgachahh Pratis in the Sefarim Hakedoshim

Hashem Helps Him

Someone who pushes himself to give *tzedakah* even when it is hard for him is very different from someone who refrains from giving *tzedakah* until he has lots of money. Hashem rewards such a person and makes money readily available to him. Anyone who works on improving himself is assisted from Heaven. One who pursues the mitzvah of *tzedakah* is helped from on High to be able to give it, while someone who does not push himself for this mitzvah will receive only the amount that was decreed for him on Rosh Hashanah.

(Rav Yeshaya Pinto, *Me'or Einayim*)

Hashem Gives to Him so That He Will Be Able to Give to Others

Tzedakah is a unique mitzvah, for one emulates Hashem by providing for others. When someone makes this his goal, Hashem helps him from on High. Anyone who bestows good on others is like a flowing wellspring. Just as a wellspring of water is constantly replenished from its source, Hashem,

Who is the Source of all *tzedakah*, constantly bestows and

replenishes those who choose to be wellsprings of giving.

This is a deep concept.

(Maharal on *Agados Hashas*)

Pursuing *Tzedakah* and *Chessed*

Rav Yitzchak said: Why does it say (*Mishlei* 21:21), "He who pursues charity and kindness will find life, charity, and honor"? Does this mean that someone who pursues *tzedakah* will afterward find himself in need of *tzedakah*?! The real meaning is regarding anyone who pursues *tzedakah* in order to give it to the poor – meaning that although he does not have any money to give to the poor, if he persists and persuades others to give it, then Hakadosh Baruch Hu will give him money so that he will be able to give *tzedakah* himself.

(*Bava Basra* 9a)

and *chedsed* and other good deeds. These holy *malachim* do whatever is necessary to enable a person to perform his mitzvah as well as he desires.

This happens because our mitzvos and *maasim tovim* benefit the *malachim*, and they want us to do the mitzvos for their own benefit. This is what *Chazal* mean when they say that if someone pursues *tzedakah*, the *malachim* will ensure that he has everything he needs to be able to carry out his heart's desire and give to another Yid.

(*Ahavas Shalom*)

The *Malachim* Take Care of Him

The Ari taught that there is a group of *malachim* who give each Jew what he needs for Shabbos and Yom Tov expenses. The same applies to all mitzvos, including *tzedakah*



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A Thought on Bitachon

From the shiurim on Kav Hashgachah

Excerpts from the popular shiur by

Harav Hatzaddik R' Beirish Shneebalg shlit"ta

The Power of Humility

In *Parshas Pikudei* we learn about the building of the *Mishkan*. Betzalel ben Uri ben Chur and Ohaliav ben Achisamach were appointed to lead this work. On the other hand, the actual assembly of the *Mishkan* was done by Moshe Rabbenu. Rashi (*Vayikra* 39:33) explains the reason for this: "Since Moshe Rabbenu did not do any *melachah* in the *Mishkan*, Hashem gave him the task of assembling it."

The boards of the *Mishkan* were very heavy, and no person had the physical strength to lift them up. Rashi goes on to explain that Moshe Rabbenu told Hashem, "How could a person assemble the *Mishkan*?" Hashem answered him, "You do what you can do." Rashi continues: "It looked as though Moshe was lifting the board, but in truth the board lifted itself upright."

So it seems that Moshe Rabbenu was *zocheh* to assemble the *Mishkan* as appeasement for the fact that he did not do any of the actual construction.

But we need to understand: Even what he actually "did," he did not really do on his own. He only touched the boards and the *Mishkan* stood upright on its own. What sort of appeasement is this, if he did not actually do anything?

Rav Chanoch Zvi of Bendin *zy"ta* asked Rav Meir Shapiro of Lublin *zy"ta* this question. Rav Meir Shapiro responded with a story about the *heiligh* Baal Shem Tov:

Once, when the Baal Shem Tov was davening with great devotion and enthusiasm with a group of his disciples, his *talmidim* approached him after davening and told him they did not feel that the *tefillah* made an impression on them at all.

"Indeed," the Baal Shem Tov told them, "the whole *tefillah* was as it should be, but one thing was lacking – a broken heart; humility. Specifically because *now* you are brokenhearted, it turns out that you achieved a lot with your *tefillah*."

Based on this principle, Rav Meir Shapiro explained: Moshe Rabbenu assembled the *Mishkan* with the power of his broken heart and humility. While physically he did nothing, as the *Mishkan* stood on its own, spiritually Moshe did a tremendous thing, an act of humility and *shiflus*. This spiritual act is what actually enabled the *Mishkan* to stand.

We learn from here the importance of humility and a broken heart. This is essential for everything we do. When a person humbles his heart, he merits help and assistance from Above.

May Hashem help that we be *zocheh* to serve Him with true humility, and may we be *zocheh* soon to the complete *geulah* and the rebuilding of the *Beis Hamikdash* in its full glory; *amen*.