

HASHGACHA PRATIS

Incredible stories of Hashgacha Pratis in our times. Words of *chizuk* heard on the Hashgacha Pratis phone-line.

השגחה פרטית

A World of Emunah
A Life of Bitachon

Parshiyos Matos-Masei, 5786 × 198

Only with Hashem's Hashgacha

First, Rid Yourself of Harmful Substances

"Doctor, I can't take it anymore," the patient cried.

Calmly, methodically, the doctor examined the patient, noting that he was suffering from various illnesses.

"More than anything else," the doctor said as he concluded his thorough examination, "I suspect that there is a problem with your liquid intake. How much do you drink every day?"

"Three liters," was the surprising response, but then the patient named a strongly caffeinated and sugary soft drink that was his primary liquid intake, and instantly the doctor understood everything.

"Instead of drinking water that would make you healthy, you're drinking something that is bringing all these illnesses upon you," he said.

We want to come close to Hashem, we want a good life, and we want to go through life in this world in the best way possible. Our spiritual doctors are our tzaddikim, and just like the doctor in the *mashal*, they exhort us, first and foremost, to rid ourselves of harmful substances.

Rav Shlomo of Karlin zy"א would tell *Yidden* who sought his advice, "First you have to throw all your intellectual reasoning away, to live and act only from pure *emunah* in Hashem." The harmful substance he identified, the thing that causes all sorts of spiritual illnesses, was *seichel*.

A person keeps trying to understand intellectually: *Why? Why don't I own a house? Why don't I have nachas? Why don't I have brains like my older brother has? Why? Why? Why?* Rav Shlomo understood that this need for intellectual understanding is the most harmful substance for our spiritual health. To achieve good spiritual health, we must first rid ourselves of this need. Then we can live with *emunah* that Hashem is running His world with precision, and that everything He does is for our best.

Good Shabbos, Pinchas Shafer

They Show Us the Way

Stories of Tzaddikim who lived with *emunah* and *bitachon*

To See, To Notice, To React

A huge snake coiled itself around his leg. His friends looked on from a distance in terror, helpless. A cry escaped his lips: Shema Yisrael, Hashem Elokeinu...

The taxi driver literally shook with awe as he related his story to his revered passenger, who was none other than Harav Chatzkel Levenstein zt"l, the famed *mashgiach* from Ponevezh:

We traveled abroad – several of the *chevrah*, after completing our army service. We wanted to let loose, live it up, and take in everything. A hot summer's day found us traipsing through the African jungle with hiker's packs on our backs filled with water, food, supplies, and the requisite first-aid kit. Little did we know how insufficient the first-aid kit would be in the face of the dangers we'd confront.

One of the guys felt a sudden whiplash to his right leg, and when he looked down, a cry of sheer terror escaped his lips.

A huge snake had appeared from the brush and wrapped itself around his leg. As we all looked on in fear, it coiled itself tighter and tighter, coming all the way up to his hips. He froze in place, his face white as a ghost, tremors going through his body. It seemed that within minutes the coil would tighten around his entire body, and then...

The snake hissed, seemingly ready to strike.

Our friend let out a terror-stricken cry: *Shema Yisrael, Hashem Elokeinu, Hashem Echad!*

The cry had just escaped his lips and, for no apparent reason, the snake slithered down his leg, released its victim's body, and disappeared just the way it had come.

It took several long minutes until we calmed down.

That day, my friend became a *baal teshuvah*. Today he is fully observant.

The driver concluded his story, and his revered passenger, Reb Chatzkel, looked wryly at his bare head.

"And what about you?" he asked. "You witnessed an obvious miracle! How is it that you didn't do *teshuvah* too?"

"*Kevod Harav*," he responded, "It happened to him, not to me!"



✕ The House That Disappeared ✕

During one of his enthralling shiurim on emunah and bitachon, the Rebbe from Koidenov related the following:

I was once on a plane, when a Yid asked if he could sit in the empty seat next to me. We started talking about emunah and bitachon, and I saw that, though he gave the impression of being a simple person, he was in fact a person of deep faith, someone who saw *hashgachah pratis* everywhere. I told him about something that happened to me several days earlier:

A brokenhearted Yid came and told me his woes. He lives in a tiny apartment, and for long months he'd been searching for a larger house. Finally, he found what seemed to be the perfect place. He'd already spoken to the owner, and the direction seemed to be very positive. He was sure that their next conversation would end in closing the deal.

"The house is up for auction," the real estate agent reminded him. "The owner has another good proposal from a non-Jew, but if you bid a price that is higher by even one euro, the house will be yours!"

This Yid was really excited. He was a step away from purchasing the house. All he had to do was put together his formal proposal, write up a draft of it, fax it to the owner, and the rest would be history.

The only problem was that this story took place on a Friday, and the final date for the auction was on Shabbos. The agent urged this Yid to send in his proposal before Shabbos.

The Yid sat and wrote everything up, and then,

as he was about to fax his proposal, the pages got wet and everything smudged. He would have to write it all up again.

He sat down to write, but it was late. Half an hour before Shabbos, he still hadn't completed it. "That's it," said his wife. "Shabbos is very soon, and we can't be preoccupied with this anymore. You'll continue after Shabbos."

He listened to his righteous wife, who wanted a larger house at least as much as he did, but who valued Shabbos even more than the house. They put away the *muktzeh* and prepared to greet the Shabbos queen.

On Sunday he wanted to send in his proposal, but the agent informed him that the house was already sold to the non-Jew.

This Yid told me he was besieged by doubts. "Perhaps I should have continued writing up the proposal on Friday?" he asked.

"Don't you see," I responded, "how Hakadosh Baruch Hu orchestrated that this house should slip out of your hands? It's not natural for the pages to get wet just moments before you send them! While you don't yet see the good in all this, it's certain that this is all for the best!"

I tried to give him *chizuk*, and I *bentched* him from the depths of my heart that he should find the house that was right for him.

The passenger at my side listened intently to my story and then said, "There is real *hashgachah* evident in this story. You should tell this Yid what happened to me; it will give him *chizuk*. We often don't see the happy ending, but we are certain that it is there. He doesn't see his own happy ending yet, but in my saga, I was

>>> continued from page 1

The *mashgiach* related this story to his *talmidim* and concluded, "*Rabbosai!* A Yid witnesses an open miracle with his own eyes. He sees how the cry of *Shema Yisrael* miraculously saves his friend. How could he remain indifferent?! How could he not be moved to change?"

"Sometimes," he continued, "we are just like this driver. Incredible instances of *hashgachah pratis* surround us. Every person sees endless *siyata diShmaya* that accompanies him in his personal life. Everyone can recall dozens of times

that he *davened to Hashem* and his *tefillos* were answered. Let us not remain blind in the face of all this. There is a Creator and a Leader of this world, Who does everything. There is no one but Him!"

Reb Chatzkel would also train his children and grandchildren to notice and think about *Hashem's hashgachah*, and he would constantly challenge them to relate stories of *hashgachah pratis* – to see *Hashem's* providence, to notice it, and to react by strengthening our *emunah* and *bitachon* in Him.

zocheh to see it.”

Then he told me his story:

Seventeen years ago, I wanted to buy an apartment in Eretz Yisrael. An agent offered me an expensive apartment in Herzliya. The owner wanted a million one hundred thousand shekels, which, at the time, was considered a very high price. I had the means to buy something valuable, but not to that extent. I told the agent I was willing to pay up to one million.

Negotiations began. The owner was stubborn, but so was I. There was a lot of back-and-forth, and eventually we both compromised somewhat. I was willing to add fifty thousand, and I told him that was my final word.

The owner was still demanding more, and then the second Lebanese war broke out. The market dropped, and he became pressured. He sent me a message that he was willing to sell for a one million fifty thousand shekels.

I received his message on the fourth of Av, during the Nine Days. I asked my *rav*, Rav Yosef Cohen of *Yerushalayim*, whether to sign on the deal, and he told me, “Don’t sign during the Nine Days. Wait for the fifteenth of Av.”

I told the agent that I wanted the apartment but that I would not go to contract before the fifteenth of Av. By the time the fifteenth came, however, the war was over, the prices went back up, and the owner was once again demanding one million one hundred thousand. I cut off contact with him completely. It was just not relevant. I flew back abroad, disappointed. I had been in Eretz Yisrael for six months, hoping to buy an apartment, and I was coming home with nothing.

A while passed, and once again I looked into purchasing an apartment in Herzliya. I traveled to Eretz Yisrael and walked the streets of Herzliya with an agent. “I don’t want to go into the street where that house is that I almost bought,” I told him. “It will cause me pain to see that the house I wanted so badly now belongs to someone else.”

The agent really tried. He was careful – though we were walking around the neighborhood looking at houses in all the nearby streets – not to take me to that street. But then he was preoccupied and didn’t notice, and suddenly we



I Trust in You

Words of *Chizuk* shared on the Hashgacha-Pratis phone line

Shiur by Hagoon Rav Yehuda Mandel *shlit”a*

The Boss’s Best Friend

The assembly line operates with perfect order and precision, each worker aware of his specific duty and his important part in the factory’s finished product. The boss’s eyes are everywhere. He demands good work. There have been layoffs, and more than a few – mostly workers who thought they could get by doing the bare minimum, but to whom the boss swiftly showed otherwise.

No worker who values his job dares to slack off, the notable exception being Binyamin. Binyamin is the only one who allows himself to get coffee from the kitchenette while the boss is watching. He’s the only one who doesn’t come exactly on time, and he often leaves early too. Somehow, the threat of layoff skips over him.

The years pass. Older workers leave or are fired, and fresh young employees take their place. Binyamin, however, remains in place, as though he is the most efficient and irreplaceable worker in the factory. Workers much more diligent than he find themselves fired, yet he, “the lazy one,” remains in place.

One day, someone dared broach the question to the boss: “What is it about Binyamin? What quality does he have that others are lacking?”

“Binyamin?” the boss said, and his eyes lit up as mentioned the name. “He is my closest friend. He relies on me, and I on him. He respects and loves me, and I feel close to him. How could I fire him?!”

A person who has *bitachon* is, *kivyachol*, Hashem’s best friend. He relies on Hashem and remains loyal to Him no matter what happens, and it is as though Hashem relies on his loyalty in return. Hashem wants such “friends.” Even a wicked man who relies on Hashem is surrounded by Hashem’s *chesed* in return! Nothing can come in the way of this “friendship.” As the *gaon Harav Yechezkel Abramsky* once said, “I am so close to Hashem that I walk with Him, hand in Hand, all the time.”



were looking at a house on that street – next door, no less, to that house. I determined not to look in that direction, but of course, my eyes strayed, and then I saw that in fact there was no house there at all. Just an empty plot of destroyed land.

“You mean that?” the agent asked me incredulously. “Didn’t you hear what happened there?”

I shook my head dumbly, and he continued.

“The person who bought the house decided to renovate. He hired an architect, who examined the house and was shocked when he saw the state of the walls and foundations. He warned the buyer not to touch anything in the house and called in the municipality. Upon thorough examination, they declared the house a danger zone.

“If you want to live here,” the architect told the buyer, “your only option is to destroy the house and build again from scratch.”

Thus, the “lucky” buyer had paid for a ready home and received an empty plot instead, at, needless to say, a tremendous monetary loss and much *ogmas nefesh*. On the other hand, I, who waited for the fifteenth of Av as per my rav’s instructions, was saved from this lousy deal.

The Rebbe *shlit”a* concluded his shiur: It is such a pleasure and *geshmak* to hear a Yid speak this way! He sees *hashgachah pratis* everywhere!

✕ The Mitzvah Protected Me ✕

A few years ago I was sitting on a bus, traveling from *Beitar* to *Yerushalayim*. Someone from the area who was vaguely familiar to me sat down on the seat next to me. I had seen him occasionally in shul, or waiting on line in the grocery. Now Hashem had brought us together, sitting side by side for the half-hour bus ride from *Beitar* to *Yerushalayim*.

Several moments into the ride, I knew quite a bit about my newfound acquaintance. He was traveling to *mekomos hakedoshim* in a desperate plea to Hashem for relief from his financial woes. He was deeply in debt and had no idea how to get out of it. His accumulated debts to banks, *gemachim*, organizations, and

friends came to 100,000 shekels.

“What do you do?” I asked.

“I work as a *sofer sta”m*,” he responded. “The best thing that could happen to me,” he continued, “would be if someone asked me to write a *Sefer Torah* and paid me 100,000 shekels up front. Then I would pay off all my debts and make a fresh start financially.” He held up his hands in a gesture that combined near-despair with earnest supplication. “*Halevai...*”

At the end of the trip, I wished him success and we parted. As the day wore on, I thought to myself that his *tefillos* were probably answered, because I began to seriously consider the idea of investing in a *Sefer Torah* of my own. Baruch Hashem, I had a good source of *parnassah*. I had recently received money from a combined inheritance, which was divided among myself all my brothers-in-law. I knew the significance of the mitzvah and the *zechus* of writing a *Sefer Torah*. I was also moved by the plight of this Yid and realized it would be a great *chessed* to help put him back on his feet. He would benefit, and so would I.

I thought about it a bit more and came to a decision. When I called my new friend and told him I wanted to order a *Sefer Torah*, he was touched to the core. We got together and wrote up a contract, and then I transferred 100,000 shekels – all the inheritance money I’d received – into his account.

“I am currently working on several smaller projects,” he told me, “but I will try to fit in work on the *Sefer Torah* as well.”

In retrospect, I wonder how I closed on this deal so quickly. I didn’t ask the man for a sample of his work. I didn’t ask him for recommendations. I just felt this type of inner drive pushing me to go ahead, and I did.

The months passed by. From time to time I called him to ask how the *Sefer Torah* was coming along, and I understood from his responses that he hadn’t really gotten around to it yet; but I had patience. It would come in due time.

In the meantime, my brothers-in-law were looking into various options for investments, each of them hoping that their share of the inheritance would reap huge dividends. They kept bringing up new ideas, but I, knowing the money was all invested in the *Sefer Torah*,

stayed out of it. Each of my brothers-in-law, in his own words, told me it was a pity I hadn't asked him before closing on a *Sefer Torah*. They had high hopes that a wise investment would help cover all their current and future expenses. Eventually, they decided together to invest the money in a specific deal.

Still, I didn't regret what I'd done. I knew it was a good thing.

Three years passed. From time to time I checked up on the sofer and the *Sefer Torah*, but I understood that he hadn't done anything other than take the money, return all his debts, and go on with his life.

I made a note to myself that he owed me 100,000 shekels. It was obvious that he was in deep distress when we closed on the deal and that he was no thief. I had the legally binding contract that he'd signed. I didn't need the money urgently. I decided to put the whole matter off, and when the time came, I would decide whether to ask him for the *Sefer Torah* or to return the money.

Life went on. My oldest daughter got engaged, and now I needed 100,000 shekels. For the first time in three years, I called the sofer directly. As soon as he realized who was calling, he became

completely flustered and began stammering apologetically.

"It's all good," I told him reassuringly. "I just need the money back now."

The sofer suggested that I take a loan from a *gemach* for 100,000 shekels, and he would repay it in installments to the *gemach*. That's how, with relative ease, I got my money back.

A while later, I realized with sudden, astounding clarity what a *chessed* Hashem had done for me. My brothers-in-law, who had invested their money after so much deliberation, had gotten involved in a sour deal. They lost everything. I was the only one in the family left with my share of the inheritance, and I was *zocheh* to put it to good use and marry off my daughter.

I told all this to my newfound friend, the sofer. I actually went up to his home with a bottle of liquor, and we thanked Hashem together with the words *Shehakol niheyah bidvaro* – yes, everything that happens to us is according to His will and His word. Thank you, Hashem!

Did you see Hashem's *hashgacha* clearly in your own life? Let us know!

Your story can spread *emunah* to thousands.

Email your story to: hashgachaprutis@gmail.com



Your Say

Mailbox

Thank you for your amazing newsletter; it brings me, and thousands of other Yidden, so much *chizuk*!

I want to share a story of *hashgachah pratis* that happened to me. It seems like a simple story about a hat that was lost and then returned to its owner, but in truth, the whole story was orchestrated from Above in order to bring a lost Jew back to his Source.

Here's what happened:

About a year and a half ago, I placed my hat on top of my car while taking care of something, and I promptly forgot that I had put it there. I got into the car and drove off, and the hat flew off the car. Afterward, I retraced the route I had taken and searched for it, but it was nowhere to be found. I bought a new hat.

Half a year later, someone left a message on my home line on the night of Yom Kippur. "I found your hat," he said. "I know you're not able to talk, because it's Yom Kippur now, so call me back when you can."

He rattled off his number and hung up.

We played phone tag for a while, until, on Hoshana Rabbah, no less, he left me another message, wishing me a *gemar chashimah tovah*. Now I knew for certain that he was Jewish.

Hashem gave me a good idea. I sent a friend who is involved in kiruv to pick up my hat, in the hope that they would get to talking. Indeed, that is exactly what happened. My friend suggested that he put on tefillin, which he did for the first time in his life. Afterward, he expressed an interest in keeping touch.

That's how my lost hat became a vehicle to call a lost child of Hashem back home. May the retelling of this story be a *zechus* for him, and may he be *zocheh* to do complete *teshuvah*.

Respectfully yours,

Aharon Yaakov Frank, Montreal, Canada

We'd love to hear from you! Send us your comments on this letter by email.



A Timely Reminder

My name is Chaim, and I live in *Beitar*. I am always very careful about *bentching* immediately after I finish a sandwich or a meal for which I washed and ate bread, but last night was different.



We were in the midst of a regular weeknight light dinner of bread, omelets, cheese, and vegetables. Just as I was about to take the last bite of my sandwich, someone knocked on the door. Seeing that everyone was busy, I put down the last piece of bread and hurried to answer the door.

Standing there was our eight-year-old neighbor, and he was holding a fascinating electronic toy in his hands. He had the battery compartment open, and he showed it to me, asking whether we had the four batteries he needed. Would he be able to borrow them from us and buy us new ones the following day?

I went to ask my mother if it was okay to lend batteries, and when I had her permission, I rummaged through the storage closet for a long time until I found them. When I finally discovered the package, all the way in back of the closet, and gave them to the neighbor, he asked if I wanted to see how the toy worked. Now we spent twenty minutes experimenting with his toy right at the entrance to my house. The time slipped by.

The neighbor went home and I walked into my house, completely forgetting that I had been in middle of a meal. But then I went into the kitchen. I looked at the table and noticed the dried-out last piece of my forgotten sandwich, and in a flash it all came back to me. I was eating a meal, and I hadn't *bentched*. I hurried to wash my hands, sat down, and *bentched* properly.

Though that last piece of bread was not really edible, it served an important purpose. It reminded me that I still had to fulfill the *mitzvah mid'Oraisa* of *bentching*. Thank you, Hashem, for the reminder!

Longer but Better

My name is Yisrael Menachem, and I live in *Beit Shemesh*.

One day my father asked me to bring an important package to a family that lives on a street not far from ours. My brother joined me for the short walk in the crisp evening air. After we delivered the package, we were somewhat tired and decided to take a shortcut home through a parking lot, coming up to our apartment building from the back entrance. The only disadvantage of taking this shortcut is that it involves an uphill climb that is quite steep.

We started walking, and then, for some reason, the climb felt too difficult.

"Maybe it's a better idea for us to go the regular way instead of mountain climbing like this?!" my brother said, huffing and puffing.

"You're right," I told him, and just like that, we turned around and went the regular, longer way, that would lead us to the front entrance of our building.

As we approached our building we saw a boy who davens in our shul, walking around, looking confused.

"What happened?" we asked him. "Can we help you with anything?"

"Oh!" His eyes lit up when he saw us. "I was looking just for you! My bar mitzvah is in two weeks, and I was looking for your house..." his voice trailed off.



"Really, how nice!" I said. "Are we invited?"

"Of course," he responded. "I was searching for your mailbox for a long time and couldn't find it. So I put the invitation into family Cohen's mailbox in this building, because I didn't know what to do. But now, here you are! I'll take it out and deliver it to you by hand."

"You should just know," I told him as we took the invitation, smiling, "that you almost didn't meet us. We were planning on coming home from the back entrance, but at the last moment, for "some reason," we took the longer route and came in from here. Now I understand why!"

Dear kids!

There are amazing stories just for you on our kid's phone-line.

Call 1-518-613-0140, ext. 0/2

Notices

Did you see Hashem's *hashgacha* clearly in your own life?

Call the *Hashgacha Pratis* phone-line for kids and tell Am Yisrael your story! 1-518-613-0140, ext. 0/4



It All Adds Up

Chapter 2

Last week: Our story began in the year 1941, and it ends recently. In Romania, seven-year-old Refael'ke's father is searching for a place to hide him from the Nazis.



Soon someone will come and take you to that building. You'll stay there until, with Hashem's help, we'll come get you.



But Tatte, I don't want to stay here alone with all the goyim. I want to stay with you and Mama!



There's no choice, my dear son. Remember that you're a Yid and that Hashem is with you everywhere!



From now on your name is Yanush Papushkush, and you're a Romanian peasant boy whose parents were killed by the bombings. Do you understand?

Yes



After the war...

Wonderfull! No one is coming to ask for Yanush Papushkush. His Jewish parents were probably murdered.

It's too early to celebrate, especially because...



Where is the manager here?

How dare he enter my room without permission?

Oh, no, these are Russian soldiers! The new rulers around here...we mustn't upset them!

They look pretty scared. This uniform Moshe got hold of is doing its job well...



Are there Jewish children here?

I've invested so much in Yanush. Why would I give him up?!

What a fool. He's just revealed that we have a Jewish child here.



That's how Yanush Refael'ke was saved from the monastery, but sadly, he was taken in by a secular group.

Come on Rafil! Why are you dreaming?

I'm coming!

I don't know why I'm so sad when we're finally on our way to Israel.



Many years later, in Zichron Yaakov:

Maybe because I'm leaving the place where Tatte and Mama were murdered by the Nazis...I barely remember them, but I'm sure they looked very different from the adults around here.

Lately I've been thinking more and more about Tatte and Mama. If only I could recall more about them and do something to bring them joy...

Reb Shlom'ke of Zhville zy" a said it
80 years ago.

YOU are the one
who can make it
happen now!



The tzaddik Reb Shlom'ke asked his
close disciple, Reb Eliyahu Roth zt"l:
Find a sponsor to set up a "Hashgacha
Pratis Kollel" for ten Yidden.

Reb Shlom'ke said:

A person who talks a lot about
Hashem's hashgacha will constantly
experience Hashem's hashgacha.
Back then, it didn't happen ...

Reb Yaakov Meir Shechter shlit" a said:

I wondered how it was possible that the tzaddik's hopes didn't come to fruition.
But when I heard about the Hashgacha Pratis Initiative, I saw that a tzaddik's word
always comes to be.

**It's in YOUR hands to continue
making this great dream a reality.**

**You can be a Rosh Kollel for "Kollel Hashgacha Pratis",
and strengthen tens of Yidden in emunah and bitachon.**

**השגחה
פרטית**

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will bring your
bakashos to Reb
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