

HASHGACHA PRATIS

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



Parsh Vayechi - Shemot 5785 ■ Issue 155

HEART TO HEART

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

He Is the Guarantor

The story is told of a poor man who came to a village and entered an inn that was unfamiliar to him. The poor man asked the owner of the inn, "I heard that on this street there is place to eat and drink. Where is the place, please?"

"You've come to the right place," the owner of the inn told him. You can get whatever you want, but first you must work, and afterward you'll receive." He made the poor man work for several hours, and then he showed him the building across the street: "There you'll get everything!"

The poor man went inside and saw tables set and people sitting and enjoying themselves. Everything was served generously and graciously. He ate, enjoying every second. At the end he asked the others who were sitting at the table, "What work did you do in exchange for the food?"

"This is a hachnasas orchim belonging to a warmhearted, generous Jew who gives everything for free," they answered him. "Unfortunately, you went into the home of the swindler across the street, an evil man and a liar, who made you work without paying you even a penny. Had you come here to begin with, you would not have had to work at all!"

This is the relationship between work and parnassah: Yes, one needs to do hishtadlus, but it is our obligation to be careful not to fall into the trap of that swindler, the yetzer hara, who forces a person to work without stopping, as though his parnassah is dependent on this. And yet we receive our sustenance as a free gift from the all-merciful Creator, Who prepares sustenance for all His creations, for His kindness never ends.

However, since the tikkun for Adam Harishon's sin was, "by the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread," mankind is instructed by the great Producer, the Creator of the world, to work at something through which sustenance will come. There are people who write or create all sorts of things or objects independently. There are those who deal in business – buying here and selling there; there are hired workers who do their jobs and receive salaries from their bosses.

This is where the real challenge of bitachon begins. When a person does something, he is liable to think that his wisdom stood by him and his diligence is what brought him his salary. He is liable to view his work as the source of bounty, while in truth it is only a means and a decree. On the other hand, a person can think the opposite – that since he does such simple work, his salary is small, and that because of the work he

does, he brings in less, or because his business sense misled him, he lost so much.

All these thoughts are mistaken. Poverty is not a result of one's job, nor is wealth a result of one's job; rather, both come from the Owner of all wealth (Kiddushin 82). Nevertheless, all types of people are commanded to make an effort to seek parnassah, with bitachon in Hashem that their sustenance is in His Hands and that he is the person's Guarantor and pays him via the circumstances that He wants (Shaar Habitachon, beginning of ch. 4).

What poignant words these are! How the heart is warmed by hearing the promise that Hashem is the Guarantor!

When a person asks his friend for a large loan, the friend will demand that a third party serve as an arev, a guarantor, that the loan will indeed be returned to him. And here, when we make proper hishtadlus, we have an Arev that parnassah will be coming to us: The Borei Olam Himself is the Guarantor that we will have all our needs; we will do whatever we can do and we do not have to worry at all. If we have done what we have to do – excellent. Then we can be completely calm.

However, it is not assured that doing a certain type of work will bring us parnassah, and it may be that the great Sustainer will chose some other means through which we are to profit. But if we have done our part and paid up our "tax" of hishtadlus, then Hashem will do His part. The truth is that we were commanded to prepare a "vessel," but we were not told what size that vessel needs to be. There may be someone who prepared a very large vessel; he works for hours upon hours, and this very large vessel gets filled up with pennies. On the other hand, there can be someone who prepares a small vessel and receives in it a check worth tens of thousands.

The main thing is that the vessel should be whole and in accordance with the Shulchan Aruch; that there should be seder to his day, with three tefillos with a minyan, calmly and with yishuv hadaas, learning Torah in quality and quantity, and time for the family and chinuch of the children. It should not be the type of vessel that has many "holes" – all kinds of shortcuts, because then the shefa from on High will come to the vessel, but it will drain out through the holes.

May it be His will that in the merit of strengthening our bitachon we be zocheh to great shefa, brachos and hatzlachos, with physical and emotional health and much simchah; amen.

FROM THE EDITOR

To See a Yeshuah with Your Own Eyes

A Yid told me:

Last Chanukah, my wife asked me to do the following segulah: On the day of Zos Chanukah, you write your requests on a sheet of paper and put it into the glass cups of the menorah. Then a year later you open the notes and see how your requests were fulfilled.

I wasn't excited by the idea. We believe in tefillah and in asking Hakadosh Baruch Hu for all our needs; we have the Tehillim of Dovid Hamelech, which were composed for every Jew who finds himself in times of difficulty. Why did I need notes in the menorah?

After thinking it over, though, I decided that putting a note with a request into the menorah is not a sin, and shalom bayis is a mitzvah. So I sat and wrote down all our recent dilemmas and problems, and I davened that each of these issues would be resolved.

This year I opened the menorah and took out the notes and saw that one request was fulfilled, another request – also fulfilled, and regarding the third request, I had long ago forgotten about this difficulty.

I had always known that Hashem answers our tefillos, but for some reason, a person tends to forget his previous problems. He gets what he asked for long ago, and he forgets to say thank you. When I read all the requests from the previous year, I was able to see how much tefillah helps.

Rav Yehuda Mandel shlit"a speaks a lot about how a Yid should list all the things that he asked Hashem to give him and that he received. Every Yid could write a whole sefer about this.

The Chazon Ish said that there is a special yetzer hara that causes a person to forget the miracles Hakadosh Baruch Hu does for him, because this memory is what most strengthens one's emunah in the Creator of the world. I have a Father who listens to all my tefillos and to every request.

Similarly, we could establish a new segulah every Erev Rosh Chodesh or every Erev Rosh Hashanah. We can write down the requests, hide the paper in a specific place, and open it afterward, to thank Hashem for all His chessed that He does with us when He hears our tefillos.

Gut 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
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THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

A True Hero

I am a melamed in a cheder. One child in my class was scholastically very weak. His memory was not good, he didn't understand basic things, and the more things that were explained to him, the less, it seemed, he understood.

We learned mishnayos Yoma until Pesach, and he didn't understand anything – as if he was groping in the dark. But after Pesach we started learning mishnayos Tamid, and then we discovered that this child understands very well and remembers everything he was taught! He knew and succeeded like one of the better boys!

I was truly amazed, and the boy noticed my amazement. "Is Rebbi surprised?" he asked me, and I answered that I was indeed surprised.

"It really is something special that Hashem opened up my eyes," the child said. "When we were learning mishnayos, Rebbi told us about the holy Tanna Rabi Masya ben Charash and asked who heard about him. A few boys in class said that their mothers lit a candle in the zechus of Rabi Masya ben Charash, but Rebbi explained that Rabi Masya is not candles, he is a great Tanna who withstood a huge nisayon in shemiras einayim and burned his eyes so as not to stumble and see any forbidden sight, and then Hashem made a miracle for him and healed his eyes.

I thought to myself that I also need to safeguard my eyes. Across from the bus stop where I wait for the bus every morning is a school for nonreligious girls. At the exact time when I wait there, they come to school. Since Rebbi spoke about Rabi Masya ben Charash, I started to guard my eyes and not to look at all at the school and at who was walking there. I just started guarding my eyes and not lifting them in that direction at all, and while I do this I daven to Hashem that He should enlighten my eyes in His Torah, that I should understand what we're learning, and that I should be able to be on the same level as the other boys in the class.

"And that's it. Hashem heard my tefillos!"

I was shocked by the child's story, the child who, until the time he stopped looking at what was happening across from the bus stop, was considered weak in learning. This is a child who proved what true strength is all about, and he was zocheh to see tangibly Hashem's yeshuah.

How much strength is there in the words we say to our talmidim in class, and how much strength does a Yid have!

We Work with Bitachon

Baruch Hashem, we moved. It was not easy to move all our things, all our furniture, suitcases, boxes and bags. It was also not easy to move ourselves and to leave behind the familiar and beloved for a new place, which we very much hope will turn into the familiar and beloved.

There were two things we could not move, no matter what, and they are my kollel and my wife's workplace. We knew we were going to have to start all over again. More than anything else, the monthly expenses in the bank actually moved along with us, easy as can be.

I still hadn't found a kollel, and my wife continued looking for work. The days leading up to the tenth of the month passed, and I had no idea from where my help would come, not the foggiest notion from where I would get the money, when both of us had no income whatsoever!

I knew that I had to try, and I even did something about it, but in the meantime, I understood that the main hishtadlus for me now was to daven. One day after Shacharis I started thinking about how to get hold of the sum I needed to cover the next expense, and once again I reached the conclusion that I had no idea what I could do. It's not that I'm not prepared to do what I have to do. I simply did not know what to do.

I said to myself: First, I will sit and learn as I did when I had a kollel.

I remained in shul to sit and learn until 1 p.m. What did it matter whether I had gotten into a kollel or not? I am commanded to learn Torah either way. I would do my part, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu would do His. In the meantime, my wife decided to check out the situation in our bank account. Although there was no chance that there had been any change in recent days, one does what one can, and this is what she was able to do. And what did she hear? That a very sizable sum had been deposited!

"Did you take a loan?" she asked me. "A large sum was deposited into our account!"

"I didn't take any loan," I told her. "We need to check if someone deposited the money in error."

We checked, and it turned out that after my wife informed her workplace that she was leaving, they calculated the vacation days that she had not utilized and then deposited the sum that had accumulated, a sum that equaled one month's salary!

Another small sum was missing from that deposit, but it was also available to us. It was a sum of money I had put aside as maaser, but at the end I had given the maaser in a different way, so I was able to use the money.

Another month passed. We were still looking for sources of income, checking out our new place, but feeling much less pressured. After the previous month, when Hakadosh Baruch Hu showed us in His open and merciful Hand, we were simply fascinated to know how He was going to arrange everything for us this month.

I am continuing to learn as though I am in kollel, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu continues to give. In the beginning of the month, Bituach Leumi sent us a letter informing me that there had been an error in calculating the money my wife received after giving birth, and they were now returning the difference – an amount equal to a full month's salary! Several more days passed, and Social Security funding came in and covered the rest of the month's expenses, without any extraneous effort or the need to take a loan. We are grateful to Hashem for all His kindness and His miracles that are with us each day. Ein od milvado!

Until After 9 p.m.

An avreich from Beitar relates:

I want to thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu's messengers who organize, from time to time, a discounted sale of men's suits. Without them, who knows when I would replace my good old suit which, with time, has become older and older.

On the day of the sale, I forgot about it completely. This was the sale slated to take place over two days; they were selling suits at a discounted price of 800 shekels less than the regular price. It was almost a giveaway. I told myself, Tomorrow I'll go early, because the entire city is supposed to be coming. Baruch Hashem, my size is standard and regular, and it is reasonable to assume that suits of that size would be sold out very quickly.

After some thought, I asked myself, Is it possible for me to leave kollel early in order to get to the sale?! The hours I spend in kollel are dedicated for limud haTorah!

I strengthened myself in emunah that the suit that was meant for me would be only mine, and I learned peacefully during kollel hours. At 7 p.m. kollel was over, and I started my personal daily seder of two straight hours of learning. Once again I said to myself, This is my set seder. Does emunah work only until 7 p.m.?! Hashem can continue watching my suit until 9 p.m.

After those two hours, I came to the sale. There were very few buyers left, and the stands were mostly empty. I searched through the section of suits in my size and did

On the giving end

For years I dreamed of having my own apartment, and I registered again and again to be approved to receive a discounted apartment for a first-time homeowner.

Recently, I donated 216 shekels, the numerical equivalent of "dirah," to Hashgachah Pratis, for the dissemination of this newsletter. To my surprise and joy, in the last drawing, I won the right to buy the apartment of my dreams!

On the receiving end

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the amazing shiurim delivered on the Hashgachah Pratis phone line. They are filled with important content and words of chizuk in emunah and bitachon. In our generation, with all the difficulties and nisyonos, I don't know how I would cope without these shiurim. Listening to the shiurim simply ingrained in me joy and happiness, and my life has become filled with emunah and bitachon.

not find anything.

"Come see a suit from another company," the salesman suggested. "Don't look at the size that's marked. Try it on and decide."

I tried it on. It was good that I hadn't looked at the size, because if I had decided only based on the size that was marked, I wouldn't have gotten a suit. Baruch Hashem, I got a great, well-made suit easily, at a good price and without taking any time off from my regular learning schedule.

A Moment Before I Left the Bank

Sometimes the word mortgage can drill a hole in your head, not only in your pocket. The bank's complicated process of applying for a mortgage demanded much more than I was able to deal with. The agent at the mortgage-broker company did everything he could to help, but he too came up against a brick wall. I tried really hard, but approval was delayed repeatedly, and this caused many other things to be delayed. I was literally awaiting a yeshuah.

That day, I came to the bank again about the mortgage, and once again the clerk informed me that there were problems and that there was no approval yet. My legs felt heavy, but what did I have to do at the bank? I decided to go out and buy what I needed from the grocery store.

And while I was turning in the direction of the door, I met a friend who is an askan in tzedakah matters, and I asked him, "What are you doing here?"

"I came to deposit \$800 for a Yid who has no money in his account. Can you help me with this?"

I saw this as an opportunity, and I told my friend the askan, "Take \$500 from me, and because you deal with tzedakah and chessed, and especially now, when you're involved in a mitzvah, I am asking you to daven for me that the bank should approve my mortgage."

He took the money gratefully and promised to daven for me. I continued in the direction of the door, but turned around in the direction of the clerk. And then the clerk motioned to me that he had something to tell me; and he finally let me know the long awaited news: My mortgage was approved!

I immediately called the askan, who told me, "As soon as you gave me the money, I stood up to daven for you." The power of tefillah and tzedakah!

In the Zechus of the Mitzvah of Maaser

On Wednesday afternoon I received a large sum of money in payment for a job I'd done: 2,000 shekels! The money was in an envelope, and the envelope was on the table. After the meal, we mistakenly wrapped up the plastic tablecloth, along with the envelope, and threw it out.

The kitchen was cleaned very quickly. The dishes and dirt were cleared away, and the garbage bag joined the larger garbage can and then was transported to the large canister outside.

On that day I received another envelope, and in the evening I sat down to calculate the amount of maaser from the two envelopes. We took all the maaser money out of the second envelope, and afterward I asked my family, "Have you seen the first envelope?"

My wife answered what she had assumed to be the case until that moment: "The envelope is in the garbage, but the money is with you."

"No," I answered, "the money is in the envelope; and that's why, if the envelope is in the garbage, the money is there as well."

We went outside to the large garbage canister, and baruch Hashem, we immediately identified our bag and found the envelope! I saw clearly how the fact that I wanted to take maaser is what enabled me to find the missing money before the garbage truck came the following morning to take it away.

Right Here, Really Close

A Yid from Yerushalayim relates: One day I noticed a sefer Tehillim in the street. I picked it up and saw there was a name and number written inside. I called the phone number and asked, "Did you lose a sefer Tehillim?"

On the other end of the line, a woman answered excitedly, "Yes."
"Where do you live?"

"On Rechov Techeiles Mordechai."

Techeiles Mordechai is very far from where I live. I gave her my address, and we made up that whoever would come to the other one's area first would take or return the sefer. Just few moments later my phone rang. "You lost a wallet," a confident voice told me. "What do you mean?" I asked.

"I just found a wallet with your wife's identifying details and credit card."

I thanked the person and told him I would check it out. I called my wife and asked her to check whether she had her wallet. The honest finder had found the wallet even before she noticed it was missing.

I asked the man for his address, and I told him where I live. "In the afternoon I learn in a beis medrash very close to you," he said, "and I'll bring you the wallet!"

This was very moving. I felt that in the zechus of my mitzvah of hashavas aveidah, calling the person who lost the sefer Tehillim, my own lost item was returned to me without any ogmas nefesh.

Shabbos – the Source of Brachah

One hundred and fifty-thousand shekels; that was the entire sum I needed before entering my new apartment in Bnei Brak. This sum created a huge amount of anxiety for me. Where would I get hold of so much money? How would the money get to me, to be given over to the seller on the designated day? This is a small sum relative to the full price of the apartment, but this was the hole; this was what was missing and standing in the way of our purchasing the apartment.

Until I moved into my own apartment, I had rented. I'd already informed my landlord that I was leaving. We were already preparing excitedly for the move, and there was nothing left to do other than daven to Hashem that He be mashpiah all the good upon us.

On Erev Shabbos I called the phone line for chizuk from one of the mashpi'im of our generation shlit"א, and he started to speak about the power of Shabbos Hamalkah, and our zechus to keep Shabbos K'halachah. "Foolish is the person who thinks about money on Shabbos," he said, "because Shabbos is the source of brachah, and Shabbos is mashpiah on the whole week. It is specifically when one disconnects from all his weekday needs that he can accomplish much more."

Upon hearing these poignant words, I accepted upon myself that, bli neder, on Shabbos I would act as though "all my work has been finished" and I would think that I was a great gevir and lacking for nothing. That is indeed what I tried to do. Then, immediately on Motza'ei Shabbos, I said, "Ribbono shel Olam, on Shabbos I was lacking for nothing, so I'm asking You that I should continue lacking for nothing!" Indeed, in the beginning of the week Hashem sent me the first third of the sum: 50,000 shekels.

Another week passed, and once again I strengthened myself in this kaballah, and I acted and thought like someone who is lacking for nothing on the day of rest and joy and light for Yidden.

On Motza'ei Shabbos again I asked of Hashem that I would lack for nothing during the week as well...and that Monday I succeeded in getting hold of another 75,000 shekels, baruch Hashem!

This week was not easy. I continued trying to get hold of the rest of money, traveling here and there, but it did not come. Once again I was zocheh, and Shabbos kodesh came two days before I needed to hand over the final installment and get the key to the apartment!

Once again I reminded myself and said, "This Shabbos we are not thinking about anything having to do with the apartment!" That Shabbos I totally relaxed and refrained from talking or thinking about anything related to money matters. I had an exalted Shabbos without a shadow of worry, with joy and good-heartedness. And once again, when three stars appeared in the sky, I asked Hashem that just like on Shabbos I was lacking for nothing, so too I should lack for nothing during the rest of the week.

I must tell you that, believe it or not, when the time came that I had to leave my rented apartment and move into my permanent apartment, Hashem sent me the entire sum, down to the last shekel! Shabbos is the source of brachah, and with Shabbos one can accomplish everything!

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Hashgachah Pratis in Sifrei Kodesh Hashgachah Pratis in the Sefarim Hakedoshim

No One Can Touch That Which Belongs to Someone Else

No one should worry that someone else will take away his *parnassah*. Ben Azai said: They will call your name to receive what is yours, and they will seat you in the place that is meant for you, and they will give you your portion. Whatever others might give you was never meant to be theirs; it was always meant to be yours. It is what was decreed in *Shamayim* to become yours. No one can touch the *parnassah* that is decreed to belong to someone else. Whatever is decreed for a person from *Shamayim*, no one can take from him.

(Based on Maseches Yoma 38)

There Is No Greater Middah than This

Ben Azai said, based on this, that if a person wants to be loyal and to trust in Hashem, then these words should be always on his mind: A tzaddik lives through his *emunah*. My sons, this *middah* should be drilled into you and strongly internalized, for there is no greater *middah* than this.

(Oros Eilim, by the Baal Peleh Yo'etz)

They Don't Even Touch

The fact that it says that another person "cannot touch," rather than "cannot take," can be explained through the following story: There was a box filled with precious gems, which was buried underground. Every summer, people would come to these grounds to enjoy the cool air and pitch their tents in close proximity to the box, with only a small space between their tents and the box. They did this year after year. Once, a person came to pitch his tent there, and he pitched it exactly where the box was hidden. He felt something hard and took it.

This is what it means when it says that another person "cannot touch" – all those who came before him did not even touch the place where the box was, because it was prepared for him.

(As explained by Ben Yehoyada)

To Refrain from Speaking Lashon Hara

A person should constantly strengthen himself in *bitachon*, because aside from the fact that this is a holy *middah* and vital for *avodas Hashem*, it is also very necessary for *shemiras halashon*... Sometimes a person is very upset at his friend, and his *yetzer* instigates him to go and publicize that this friend

is a bad person because of something that in his opinion affected his business or diminished his honor. It is very difficult to overcome the *yetzer* in this matter. But when a person intellectually processes what *Chazal* say – that no one can touch even a tiny bit of what was decreed to belong to someone else, and every person will get that which has been decreed for him from *Shamayim*, both regarding *kavod* and regarding *parnassah*... then his *yetzer* will leave him alone.

(Chafetz Chaim, *Shemiras Halashon* ch. 9)

They Turn Their Eyes Toward Heaven

Rabi Chanan of Tzipori said in the name of Rabi Shmuel bar Nachman: For four reasons, Hashem made the earth get its moisture from above...so that all should turn their eyes upward. As it says (lyov 5), "He brings rain upon the earth...to bring lowly ones up high."

(*Bereishis Rabbah*, 13:9)

There Is No Reason to Be Upset

Some people are so foolish that they are seriously pained by another person's good fortune, so much so that they cannot enjoy the good that they have. This is what the wisest of men meant when he said, "...and jealousy rots a person's bones." There are others who are not so deeply pained or concerned, but they do feel some twinge of pain. Their mood will be dampened when

they see someone else enjoying success, unless it is one of their most beloved friends; and it will bother them even more if they do not feel any particular affinity for him, and especially if he is a foreigner. They might speak as though they're happy for him, but in their hearts they begrudge his good fortune. This is something that can happen to most people, because even though they are not truly jealous people, they have not cleansed themselves completely of jealousy. Moreover, they will be envious of the success of someone who works in the same profession as they do, for every skilled craftsman hates those who work in the same field as he does, and even more so if the other is more successful than he is.

These people don't know and understand that no one can touch, even slightly, that which is decreed for someone else, and everything comes from Hashem, through His incredible, unfathomable wisdom, and so there is no reason to feel upset because of the good fortune of anyone else.

(*Mesillas Yesharim*, ch. 11)

A Thought on Bitachon

From the shiurim on Kav Hashgacha Pratis

In Parshas Vayechi, Yaakov Avinu blesses his twelve sons. However, his three oldest sons, Reuvein, Shimon and Levi, receive not only brachos but also a hefty dose of harsh rebuke. Yaakov even curses Shimon and Levi's propensity for anger.

The question arises whether this aroused jealousy among the Shevatim. Did Reuvein, Shimon and Levi envy their brothers, who received more generous brachos – especially Yehuda, who was chosen to be the progenitor of malchus, to the point that the name Yehudi has turned into a synonym for a Jew?

The truth is that Hakadosh Baruch Hu created a world filled with shades and contrasts: There are rich people and poor people, healthy people and sick people, wise people and those who are less wise, people who have the means to talk and the strong need to communicate, and others who prefer quiet and solitude. Each Shevet and each person was granted unique abilities, with a personal life-journey and a specific goal that

Excerpts from the popular shiur by
Harav Yehuda Mandel shlita from Lakewood

Each Person and His Goal

he needs to fulfill. Each person comes to the world in order to fulfill his unique potential and to contribute his part. There are no two people who are completely identical, and no two have the same tafkaid or the same journey in life.

Both those who are considered "successful" and those who are considered less successful must work on their middos and strengthen their middah of bitachon. Those who are considered less successful need to internalize that their situation is also for the best and try to find the positive in everything that seems negative to them.

If they could change their perspective, they would very possibly discover that the difficulties they experience are a power that leads to their development and success. The plan that was set for them from on High is exactly in accordance with their needs and their middos, and it is specifically they who are most suited for this task. When a person recognizes this, he will grow and flourish until he attains great things.



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