

HASHGACHA PRATIS

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



Parshiyos Beshalach - Yitro 5782 ■ Issue 81

HEART TO HEART

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

I am Hashem, Your Doctor

Some people suffer slight discomfort, while others have serious medical conditions. Rabbenu Bachaye tells us that one who has faith in His Creator will be alleviated from disease either via a medical cure, or without it, as the passuk reads: "For He brings pain and binds it; He wounds, and His hands heal." (Iyov 5:18) A profound observation of the situation will show that the One Who sends the pain and the One who sends the cure are One and The Same. It is the same "For He" from the passuk "For it is He that gives you strength to make wealth," (Devarim 8:18) and "For He said and it came about." (Tehilim 33:9) Pain doesn't come by mistake, at random. When a faithful doctor causes pain, we know it is for a reason. While one must certainly seek a natural cure, he must remember that the true Ultimate Doctor is One and The Same as the One who sent the illness.

The Netziv, Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, was the Rosh Yeshiva of Volozhin. Once, he fell ill, and his family wanted to send for a doctor. At first the Netziv would not let them, but when several days passed without any improvement, he agreed. The doctor came, examined him, and wrote out a prescription. After the doctor left, the Netziv asked to see the prescription. He read it out loud and then ripped it to shreds. The family was surprised. They had already called the doctor, paid for his service, and gotten the prescription. Why not take the medicine?

The Netziv explained, "You don't understand. I wanted to read the prescription so I could know which limb in my body was ill. Then, when I recite the Shema, I will concentrate better on that limb so it'll be cured. This idea is explicitly mentioned in the Tur (OC 61) where the Beis Yosef quotes the Midrash Hane'elam (Zohar, Ruth 95a): "Rabbi Nehori said: There 248 words in the Shema which correspond to the 248 limbs in the body. After reciting the Shema properly, each limb takes one word and is cured by it." And he adds there: "It is known that whoever recites the Shema as Chazal instituted will not be harmed for the entire day."

The Netziv continued with a story:
When I was a little boy, I heard a middle-

aged man come up and complain to the Rav of pain in his back and sides. The Rav told him to come back and discuss it again after Maariv. And he added, 'I will pray for an answer for you in the words 'Direct us well with good counsel from before Your Presence.'

"When the congregation stood up to recite the Shemone Esrei, the Rav stood and looked at the man, how he bowed for the first blessing. He saw that the man simply lowered his head, just as one nods his head in greeting. After Maariv, the Rav asked the man: 'Do you always bow like that?' and the man nodded. 'I've been doing that since I was a child.'

"The Rav opened a Gemara Brachos (28b) and taught the man the following passage: "Rabbi Tanchum said that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: In those blessings where one is required to bow, one who prays must bow until all the vertebrae in the spine protrude." One must bow at once and rise slowly so it shouldn't seem like bowing to Hashem is a burden for him.

"The Shulchan Aruch (130) writes that everyone must fulfill this halachah except two – the ill and elderly. Are you old?" asked the Rav. "Oh, no," the man answered. "I am only forty."

"In that case you belong to the second category: you must be sick. Since you told me that you've been doing this since you were a young boy when you were still healthy, I'll tell you what happened. Four times in every Shemone Esrei you acted like you were sick. From your Bar Mitzvah you've reached a hundred and fifty thousand times of acting like a sick person. No wonder you became ill! Now, if you'll be careful to bow properly from now on, you'll merit Hashem's cure."

From then on, the man was careful to bow properly. He was immediately cured from his pain and merited living until the ripe old age of 90. Till the final day of his life, he davened Shemone Esrei standing up and was able to bow properly like a young healthy man.

In the next lesson, we will discuss the special segulos the Shema contains, as discussed in lesson 104.

(Excerpt from the five lessons on medical issues 100-104)

FROM THE EDITOR

Unfair Taxes

A customer in the disposable goods store comes in to pick up some things. As he fills his wagon, he emits a stream of complaints that gets louder and sharper with every additional item. "We should protest! This is unbelievable! Atrocious! More than double the cost! Had I shopped for these items two months ago I'd have paid less than half!"

When the cashier presents him with the bill, 1300 NIS, he just loses it.

As he packs up his purchases, he cannot stop grumbling. The next customer has a wagon filled with similar products. He turns to the cashier with a smile, "We know it's all from Hashem. What difference does it make how much it costs? It isn't easy, shelling out so much for taxes, but I believe Hashem has only our best interest in mind."

The cashier rings up the items and presents the customer with the bill -- 1400 NIS. "You, Reb Yid," he says to his customer, "Pay only 700. The other half, which should go to tax, will go right here into the pushkah. Your tax money will go to tzedakah. What a mitzvah!"

The first customer breaks out in protest. "That's not fair! Why is my money different? Why does my money go to pay ridiculous taxes, while the next guy's money goes for a mitzvah?"

"What can I do?" asks the cashier, "that's the law. Written 800 years ago by the Meiri, one of the holy Rishonim, Rabbi Menachem ben Rabbi Shlomo, in his commentary on Bava Basra 9a:

'If he merited it, his monetary loss goes to the poor. And if he didn't merit it, the nations of the world come and take it forcefully... and some explain that tax is considered tzedakah when it is accepted happily, and they suffer the pain of their exile for Hashem's honor.'

"Now you understand?" asks the cashier. "When you complain and protest, your money goes to the tax authorities. And that's a shame, because if you are already spending the money, it might as well go for good things... spend it on mitzvos. Paying tax with a smile is giving it for Hashem's honor. The second customer's money goes into the tzedakah box, because he accepts Hashem's decisions gladly. His tax is considered tzedakah."

Good Shabbos Pinchas Shafer

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

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THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

Landing to Soar

An elderly Karliner chassid told the following story:

I was once traveling abroad on a plane filled with non-Jews from all over the world. Suddenly, the pilot announced that due to an emergency, we would be landing in the middle of nowhere. We landed in an empty deserted field. There were no stores and shopping malls with all the nonsense that keeps non-Jews busy, so the biggest problem those stranded travelers had was their boredom. I myself had no problem – I had a sefer and I sat there and learned, but those poor gentiles had nothing to do. They each thought of ways to keep themselves busy. They threw around ideas, until one of them suggested that each person would sing a song. I moved away so as not to take part in the “event,” but after everyone sang, they called out, “Hey, you! Now it’s your turn, man! Come sing your song!”

I tried to get out of it. I told them I don’t sing before a mixed crowd, but they desperately wanted to hear me sing (or were dying of boredom), so they changed seats and the women sat on the side. At that point I had no choice but sing. And what do you think a Karliner chassid would sing? Obviously, *Kah Echsof*, the renowned Karliner Shabbos tune. I closed my eyes and started to sing. Surrounded by non-Jews, I felt myself soaring up, away from everything – “*P’sach lahem noam v’eratzon...*” I felt myself filling with the glow of the Beis Midrash, purity, and holiness.

When I finished singing, I opened my eyes and saw an elderly man standing next to me. “Sing again, please,” he said. I couldn’t understand what he found appealing in my song, but I agreed to give them an encore, and myself an uplifting spiritual experience. I sang again, and the elderly gentile stood next to me shaking back and forth as if he were at the Rebbe’s tisch. When I was finished, he had tears in his eyes. “Again,” he said. And again, I sang. “*V’yihiyu rachamecha misgolelim al am kodshecha...*” This time he joined me, tears streaming down his cheeks.

When we finished, he told me his story: “You can’t see it, but I am a Jew. I come from a family of Karliner Chassidim, and this was the song we used to sing at every Shabbos table. Reb Yid, you have no idea what you did to me with your song! You brought me home!” When we re-boarded the plane, I knew I was not the only Jew on that flight. That emergency landing was heavenly coordinated to bring a lost child home.

Like Father, Like Child

I am an avreich from Modiin Ilit. I’ve been living in Kiryat Sefer ever since my wedding, twenty years ago, when it was just a small three-street settlement. Kiryat Sefer was then seen as far-off the beaten track, and people thought that living here took a lot of courage. When I got engaged, I had no idea what the financial agreement was. Although my future wife was an orphan, I didn’t think she was planning on giving any less than the accepted amount. After our engagement, my sister told me that someone from my wife’s family called and asked if we could be considerate of them and settle for an apartment in Kiryat Sefer. Although it had been agreed that we’d buy an apartment in Yerushalayim, my wife was the youngest daughter and her mother had to vacate her apartment just then; buying two apartments in Yerushalayim was just too much for the widow.

I told my sister that I saw no problem with it. Nobody owed me anything, and I appreciated anything they could give.

As long as we’d have where to live,

Route Change

My friend was zoche to a marvelous yeshuah and wanted to travel to kivrei tzaddikim to thank Hashem. He invited me to come along, and I readily agreed. On the itinerary was the kever of Rabbi Yeshayale in Kerestir, Hungary. A travel agent booked us tickets to Vienna with a stopover in Turkey.

In Turkey we were stopped by gentiles who were very scrupulous in fulfilling the halachah of *Eisav sone l’Yaakov*. Every Jew was stopped and questioned for no reason. When we told them that we were traveling to Vienna, they gave us a dirty look. For some reason they didn’t like our destination. The clerks started hemming and hawing about special permission. Although we had all the forms ready, nothing could change their minds. Obviously, they couldn’t miss a chance to harass a Jew.

We stood around waiting and waiting. The minutes ticked by; clerks came and went. They made phone calls. Finally, the original clerk came back and said we could go. We raced out to our gate, but it was a moment too late: our flight was closed. We had missed our connection.

My friend called the travel agent and told him what had happened. He said he would arrange another flight for us. He found us a flight to Frankfurt, Germany, and from there we would travel to Kerestir. As we walked up to the gate, my friend suggested, “If we are going to be in Germany, let’s stop at the kever of the holy Ba’al Shem from Michelstadt.”

Suddenly, he jumped.

“What’s the matter?” I asked.

“I can’t believe it! I just can’t believe it! How could I have forgotten? It’s unbelievable!”

“Last year, when I was davening for this yeshuah, I davened at the kever of the Ba’al Shem and promised that when the yeshuah comes, his would be the first kever I would visit! Hashem caused this whole holdup just so I could keep my word! I wanted to travel to another tzaddik, but Hashem sent that Turkish official and we missed our flight just so I should first travel to the Ba’al Shem’s kever!”

Sidewalk Spillover

I live in Yerushalayim. One Erev Shabbos I was traveling with my family to Ashdod. We were traveling by bus with my children, suitcases, and packages. Having so many people and packages to look after can be nerve wracking – I had to make sure we didn’t forget anyone; no packages got left behind; no children wandering off...

I was standing at the sidewalk bus stop, when a Yid approached me holding a heavy bag of sefarim. “Do you think you could give these to my father in Ashdod?” he asked me.

“You see,” I gestured at my children and luggage, “I have a lot to look after here. Try to find someone else to take it. If you can’t find anyone, ask me again.”

I stood there watching my little ones, making sure they didn’t run out into the street. Out of the corner of my eye I watched the man going from one person

to the next, but no one was traveling to Ashdod. Finally, he approached me again. "Nobody is going to Ashdod here today," he said. "And my father really needs these sefarim. Do you mind?"

I agreed. When a Jew needs a favor, we do it even if it's not so convenient. I laid my large suitcase down on the sidewalk and unzipped it to make room for the man's sefarim. We exchanged phone numbers and he left.

When I got off the bus in Ashdod, the father was there at the bus stop waiting for me. I pulled my suitcase out and unzipped it to get him his sefarim, but they weren't there. My heart fell. It was not my suitcase! I'd never gotten mixed up like that. Baruch Hashem, the bus was still standing at the stop, and I was able to replace the wrong suitcase and pull out another. This time it was the right suitcase, and the sefarim were right there inside.

Had I not taken the sefarim, I'd have no reason to open my suitcase on the sidewalk. I would have reached my hosts, only to find out right before Shabbos that all our things were lost! And then we'd have had to go through a whole hassle of attempting to find our suitcase. We would not necessarily have located it at all...

I thought I was doing a favor to someone else. Turns out, I was doing one for myself.

Sure Cure

I once read a story about the Rebbe from Borosh. And this was the story:

The Rebbe once asked a young father: "What do you do if your child starts running a fever in the middle of the night?"

The father said, "You give him medicine."

"And if that doesn't help, what do you do?"

The father said he would go to the ER.

"I have a better idea. One that always works. You go to the sefarim shelves and pull out the Kedushas Levi. Learn a little, and in that merit the child will be cured."

That week, the young father's child started running a fever in the middle of the night. He was about to head out for the ER when he recalled the Rebbe's advice. He pulled out the Kedushas Levi and within a few minutes, the fever began subsiding.

This was the story.

A short time later, something similar occurred to me. My infant son, just a few months old, woke up with a fever. We were on the verge of running out to the hospital, when I recalled the story. I went over to the sefarim closet and pulled out the Me'or Einayim because I am connected to the Chernobyl chassidus.

The sefer opened to Parshas Chayei Sara, to a passage about illness. It stated how every limb is connected to a mitzvah, and illness occurs because one was not keeping the mitzvos properly. It also said that going to the doctor when one is ill is a mistake – the real reason for illness is spiritual, not physical.

I thought about the areas where I needed improvement in my performance of mitzvos. Just a few minutes later, the baby started getting better.

A while later, the same thing happened. This time it was on Shabbos. One of the children didn't feel well, and we didn't know what to do. Again, I recalled the miracle cure and I pulled out the Me'or Einayim. The sefer opened to Chumash Devarim, to a paragraph that discusses how Shabbos brings cures and salvation. I learned that paragraph, and sure enough, the child soon began feeling better.

it was fine. And so, our parents bought us an apartment in Modiin Illit which was then called Kiryat Sefer.

A short time after our wedding, we moved into our apartment in Kiryat Sefer and all our relatives raised their eyebrows. "What do you think you're doing?" my friend asked. "There's nothing out there. How are you ever going to make a living?"

I told him that to the best of my knowledge, Hashem is in Kiryat Sefer just like He is in Yerushalayim, and these worries should not be the reason for us to cause our parents financial worries, especially not my widowed mother-in-law.

As soon as we moved in, my wife got a phone call from a school telling her they were looking to hire her as a teacher. At the interview, she asked how she'd gotten the job offer. It turned out that her teacher from high-school had become the supervisor, and when she'd heard that new classes would be opening, she suggested they take my wife. The problem was that she only remembered my wife's maiden name. The principal called his niece who had the same name, and she turned out to be my wife's cousin. She knew my wife and gave a warm recommendation. My wife got the job, and since then, Baruch Hashem, she has a regular job and we have a wonderful parnassah.

Although we were living in a community with so many young women seeking jobs as teachers, my wife got a great job before she even had a chance to look for one. I could see how Hashem eased our way in, in the merit of my willingness to accommodate my mother in law's change in plans.

Today, no one sees an apartment in Kiryat Sefer as second rate, and when my daughter got engaged, their first housing choice was Kiryat Sefer. It would be very difficult for me financially, but I was prepared to keep my promise. Nevertheless, I couldn't help wondering: where would I get the money for what these apartments cost today?

A few weeks into the engagement, my future son-in-law called and asked if I would agree for them to go live in a faraway community where a few of his friends were buying. There were plans for schools and a shul there, and the cost of living was significantly lower. I was obviously overjoyed. I felt that Hashem was paying me back for what I had done then, when I was a young newlywed myself.

Fifty Becomes a Hundred

My name is Elchonon Schreiber. One Friday morning, on my walk to Kollel, I checked in on my bank account and heard a deposit of 500 NIS into my account. I didn't know what it was, so I said thank you to Hashem and continued on my way.

At the entrance of the shul, I saw a young man looking for something. "Did you see where they placed the challos for the cheap challah sale?" he asked.

"I don't think there were any left," I told him. He looked up, and sighed. I understood that he didn't have money. I told him that just this morning some unknown person had deposited 500 NIS in my account, so he could take my credit card and buy what he needed for Shabbos.

He jumped away. "I don't want tzedakah," he said.

"It's not tzedakah," I assured him, "It's ma'aser. Take it and enjoy."

"How much can I use?" he asked.

"Fifty."

He went to the nearby grocery and bought Shabbos food for fifty shekels, then came back and returned my credit card.

At the end of the seder I opened the Kedushas Levi because that Friday was the author's *yahrzeit*. The passage I opened discussed "*Hanistaros l'Hashem Elokeinu*" – those things that are hidden are the future, and "*haniglos*" – what is apparent is the present, when we see clearly how Hashem looks after us.

I got up to leave when someone walked up to me and stuck a hundred-shekel bill in my hand. "For Shabbos," he said, and walked off.

I was amazed. I had given a friend 50 NIS, and gotten back double. Thank You Hashem, for the open miracles and the hidden ones.

Q's & A's

Q's & A's about emunah and bitachon

We know that matches are made in Heaven and are announced forty days before a child's conception. On the other hand, halachah dictates that one is allowed to finalize an engagement even on Tisha B'Av, in order to ensure that no one else intercepts and takes away the match from him. How do the two concepts coincide?

Q #33

A.A. from Beit Shemesh

This question was discussed in the Gemara (Moed Katan 18b):

Shmuel said: "It is permitted to betroth a woman on Chol Hamoad, lest another come and betroth her first." In another place Shmuel said: "Every day a Divine Voice issues forth and says: The daughter of so-and-so is destined to be the wife of so-and-so; the field of so-and-so will belong to so-and-so." If this is the case, why should one be concerned lest another betroth his destined wife first?

The Gemara answers that Shmuel's statement should be understood as follows: Another man can come and betroth her first -- by means of praying for Divine mercy. The rival may beseech G-d to cancel the decree of the Divine Voice, and therefore the first man needs to hurry and betroth the woman before the other has a chance to pray she should be his wife.

The Gemara in Sota (2a) writes that this refers only to *zivug rishon* – the first match.

The following answers we received will illuminate various aspects of this discussion.

And, as usual we must stress that all opinions mentioned here are presented for discussion only. For practical ruling, please consult with your Rav.

We Don't Understand Everything

Rabbi Mordechai Barzel from Beit Arif: The Sefer *Ata Imadi* (p. 213) quotes the elderly Rabbi Mordechai Tzeinworeth *shlita* who has a tradition dating back directly to the Baal Shem Tov Hakadosh: The words of our Sages "No one touches what is destined for another" (Yoma 38b) also apply to matches. While the above-mentioned Gemara (Moed Katan) is certainly true and remains to be explained, a person cannot take that which is destined for another.

Doesn't Last

Rabbi Yitzchak Sirota from Beit Shemesh; Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb from Petach Tikva: The Yerushalmi mentions that through prayer one can merit a match that was not announced in heaven. However, this sort of match will not last. The commentaries (Ran, Ri from Lunel, Nimukei Yosef, Pnei Moshe, Korban Ha'Eida) explain that in this case, either one of the partners may die, or the couple will divorce, so the match announced in heaven pans out.

Hishtadlus

Rabbi Avigdor Aaronson from Beit Shemesh; Rabbi Yeshaya Choshov from Modiin Illit; Rabbi Gamliel Hakohen Rabinowitz from Bnei Brak: While it is true that one's match has already been announced in heaven 40 days before conception, the world Hashem created runs according to the natural course of events. Therefore, we are obligated to fulfill our duty of hishtadlus, and without it, one can forfeit his predestined match. If a match was suggested, even on Tisha'a B'Av, one should (if appropriate) announce the engagement immediately, because postponing it may result in a lost chance. **Rabbi Aharon Beifus from Rechasim** adds that this explanation is also attributed to the Steipler Gaon – one must be careful not to lose what was destined for him.

Explanation of Chazal

Rabbi Yechiel Oman from Modiin Illit: Rashi explains that the above-mentioned Gemara (Moed Katan 18b) "Perhaps another will betroth her first by means of mercy" means that someone else may come by and pray that the woman should die so he should not suffer. Here, it seems, Rashi is indicating that it is impossible to really "take" a match that was not announced in Heaven. However, the Rashba opposes

Rashi's understanding, explaining that through prayer one can change a Heavenly decree.

Rabbi Shlomo Halevi Glick from Yerushalayim: The Zohar Hakadosh (I, 93a) explains this concept according to kabbalah.

Rabbi Nachman Goldberg from Yerushalayim; Rabbi Avraham Sternberg from Haifa: Of Leah Imenu we learn that "Leah's eyes were tender" (Bereshis 9:17) – she davened not be married to Eisav and her prayers were answered. Hence, prayer can change a predestined match. And **Rabbi Yehuda Gweirtzman from Beit Shemesh** reiterates: Here we see the tremendous power of prayer. One should certainly employ it in the area of finding a match, to help eliminate unnecessary errors and confusing suggestions.

Rabbi Yehuda Deshen from Tel Tzion: The Ari Hakadosh says that nowadays there are no new souls, and everyone is a reincarnation. Therefore, everyone is considered *zivug sheini*, for which no Divine announcement applies.

Rabbi Yaakov Yosef Rosenberg from Modiin Illit: The Pele Yoetz writes that sometimes the heavenly declaration is positive and sometimes negative, and nothing can change it. And, at times, it is announced that one should receive that which he prays and works towards.

Rabbi Aharon Shoshitzky from Bnei Brak; Olelos Efraim (ma'amar 378) writes that the Divine announcement can be canceled for certain reasons. Thus prayer for finding a match is certainly appropriate.

Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu Shafir: Reshis Chochma (Sha'ar Hakedusha, chapter 16) examines this question. He suggests that in order to merit a good wife, one must do teshuvah for his misdeeds. To support his opinion, he quotes from the Zohar (Parasha Vayechi, p. 229a) where the passuk in Mishlei "An intelligent wife is from the Lord" (19:14) is explained. The "intelligent wife" is from Hashem, but meriting it depends upon human actions. One who is close to Hashem, receives his wife from Hashem. Along the same lines, Rabbi Aharon of Karlin explains (Birkas Aharon, p. 132) the concept of "And it is as difficult to match a couple together as was the splitting of the Red Sea" (Sota 2a); if one's match is a result of a Heavenly announcement, how is it similar to the splitting of the Sea? He answers that when the sea was created, Hashem stipulated it would maintain its natural course only until the Jewish people would need it to split. Then, when Bnei Yisroel left Egypt and needed the sea to split, it didn't recognize them because they were idol worshippers, mired in every kind of impurity. Similarly, when one is ready to marry, he does not always recognize his destined mate as a result of his own spiritual faults.

Rabbi Matisyahu Kitay from Yerushalayim presents a similar idea: the Ya'avetz explains that the "second match" (*zivug sheni*) mentioned in the Gemara (Sota 2a) does not refer to a second marriage in the conventional sense but to a second-rate option, or Plan B – the destined match of an improperly behaving person may marry someone else. Then, if the first repents, the second option is cancelled, and she returns to the first.

Question for Issue #83

Many people publicize miracles that happen to them in fulfillment of the passuk: "Speak of all His wonders" (Tehilim 105:2). On the other hand, tzaddikim tell us not to advertise Hashem's miracles in line with Rashi (Melachim II, 4:4): "It affords respect to the miracle if it comes about in secret." Which miracles should be publicized, and which would benefit from secrecy?
Y.D., Ashdod

To send in questions or answers: Leave a message on the Hotline at 02-301-1300 menu 3 ext. 5 (Yiddish or Hebrew)

Email: s023011300@gmail.com | Fax: 02-659-9189 - Until Sunday Parashat Mishpatim

Replies must include your full name and city Names of questioners are printed with initials and city

A Thought on Bitachon

From the shiurim on Kav Hashgacha Pratis

The current weekly Torah readings tell the story of our Exodus from Egypt.

In the process, Moshe Rabbeinu comes to Pharaoh with Hashem's request to set His people free. Pharaoh refuses, suffers a plague, gives his consent, and then changes his mind again. Imagine an impudent two-year-old blocking your way. You ask him politely to please move over. If he refuses, what do you do? You simply lift him up and move him, right? Here, Hashem tells us "I made a mockery of the Egyptians." (Shemos 10:2) The whole story was a game.

The Torah here wishes to teach us, simple people, a lesson in emunah. We think we decide, we choose the course of action. It seems like someone is asking for our input on how to run the world. But the truth is, it's all a game. A puppet show. Only Hashem decides. "Come" – Hashem calls us, inviting us to learn from Pharaoh, and "you will know that I am the Lord." (Shemos 10:2) Just like Pharaoh thought he was a

Excerpts from the popular shiur by Harav Hatzaddik R' Beirish Shneebalg shlita" a Parshiyos of Emunah

player while in reality he was just a puppet, so, too, is the world. Pharaoh thought he was making the decisions; we think we choose our course of action. But in truth, it is the Grand Puppeteer Who runs the world. The Or Hachayim Hakadosh explains the passuk: "In order that I may place these signs of Mine in his midst" as follows:

Chazal tell us that the Egyptian Exodus proclaimed that Hashem is the Lord and Ruler, and because He wished to bring Am Yisrael closer to Him and teach them, he proved to them, so they saw with their own eyes that there is no other faith but Him. This explains the above passuk. And the next passuk clearly states: "And you will know that I am the Lord." They will reach knowledge only accessible by eyesight, that which nobody else was able to achieve before."

This is the purpose of learning these parshiyos. We don't decide anything. Only Hashem decides.

The shiurim of Harav Shneebalg are delivered weekly in Yiddish and Hebrew alternatively. Dial 2 then 3 (after language preference)

Effects on Two Ends

On the receiving end

I've been listening to your telephone line for a number of years now. I've been through some rough times – I had to move, and I struggled through other challenges, and it was always with the telephone in my ear – the hotline became part of my life. My family members also find encouragement from the messages you spread. It is impossible to imagine how Klal Yisrael would look without your lifeline. Especially after the recent horrible occurrences -- people would be dejected, depressed and downfallen without the encouragement and chizuk they receive on your line.

On the giving end

Our baby required surgery. In the middle of the process some complications arose, and the baby developed a life-threatening situation. We promised to donate newsletters in forty shuls and his sudden recovery was miraculous.

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