

HASHGACHA PRATIS

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



Pesach 5782 ■ Issue 87

HEART TO HEART

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

Erev Pesach Challenges and Rewards

Rabbenu Bachaye writes at the end of chapter 3: **"And he should have intention, when his mind and body is occupied with one of the means of earning a living, to fulfill the commandment of the Creator to pursue the means of the world."** Hashem wants us to engage in This World: to buy and sell, bring, move, take, build, clean, fix, prepare, and cook – all using the blessings we were given by Hashem. One who deals with the world for this reason: **"He will be rewarded for his intentions in heart and mind to serve G-d whether or not his desire is accomplished, as written 'If you eat from the toil of your hands, you are praiseworthy, and it is good for you' (Tehilim 128:2), and our Sages of blessed memory said 'Let all your actions be for the sake of Heaven.'"** (Avot 2:12) Chazal explain that (Brachos 8a) "One who enjoys the fruit of his labor is greater than a G-d fearing individual." What does this mean? There is a G-d fearing man who spends his life praying and learning Torah, receiving all his needs on a silver platter. But a Yid who works hard to bring parnassah, deal in business honestly, and withstands all the challenges Hashem sends him, is praiseworthy. Therefore, "Praiseworthy is the man who fears the Lord," (Tehilim 128:1) but one who eats the fruits of his labor is, "praiseworthy, and it is good for you." When we understand that making a living is Hashem's will, our everyday dealings become a mitzvah, and then: **"He will be rewarded for his intentions in heart and mind to serve G-d."** These days of Erev Pesach, when we all work so hard in body and soul to eradicate every trace of chametz from our lives and bring in the matzah: we carry and fix, clean and dust, throw out and wash, buy and buy and buy... and buy some more. Then we schlep here and there, getting tired and sweaty. Then cooking, peeling, frying, and freezing... and everything for the mitzvah of Pesach and simchas Yom Tov. And we get a reward for it. For the work! The reward is not for the result, explains Rabbenu Bachaye. The reward is coming to us, **"whether or not his desire is accomplished."** How many times did we do something, hoping for a certain outcome and not achieving the desired results? You dial, but nobody answers; you send a child to buy something, and he comes home with

the wrong item. You plan, schedule, make up menus, and then everything gets messed up. While things do go according to a plan, they don't necessarily follow our own plan – they follow Hashem's plan, "Because Hashem had a reason for it, for our benefit."

The Gemara (Psachim 113b) tells us: "Three are beloved by Hashem – one who does not get angry..." Rav Ashi, the compiler of the Gemara, deemed it an appropriate comment in the perek that discusses Erev Pesach: to remind us how important it is to keep our calm.

In Yerushalayim, there was a Yid who went out and bought twelve kilos of fish for Yom Tov. He cleaned them, ground them with onions, eggs, sugar, salt, and pepper and put it all in the refrigerator. The next day, the fish was all in the garbage and the hungry Jerusalem cats had a feast. What had happened? Turns out, his refrigerator hadn't recovered after the vigorous cleaning it received, and the fish spoiled. What does a Yid who works on his bitachon do? He knows he will be rewarded for his effort, so he joyfully goes out to buy another case of fish. While certainly not enjoyable or easy, the loss is certainly a kaparah, and when you think that Hashem arranged it all for the best, everything looks different. You don't say, "What a shame the fish went bad!" because there is nothing to feel bad about rotten fish -- the work didn't go down the drain. The action that was done l'kavod Yom Tov will be rewarded, and if you make two batches of fish for Yom Tov, you get rewarded double. And even more, because there's also the reward for the emunah and accepting Hashem's will joyfully.

And this is true for everything we do, all year round, not just on erev Pesach. Whether or not we succeed, we will certainly be rewarded.

And since most of our cooking doesn't usually go bad, and most things we do – are successful, let's thank Hashem for those things that don't – they aren't expected, suspected, or desired. Let's make them at least respected.

Wishing everyone an Erev Pesach filled with emunah and hatzlachah in everything we do, a Chag Kasher V'Sameiach to all of Am Yisroel.

(An excerpt from lesson 77 on Sha'ar Habitachon)

FROM THE EDITOR

Rav Chaim

It was a day I'll never forget.

Three years ago, on Wednesday the twenty-first of Adar Rishon, 5779, I was privileged to have an audience with Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt"l. I walked in bearing one of our newsletters.

The Sar HaTorah was in the middle of learning Choshen Mishpat *hilchos arev*. We stood there waiting. It took a while before he noticed us standing there.

Hands shaking, I handed him the newsletter, and described the chizuk people get from reading it. Rav Chaim looked at the newsletter and then said, "Leave it here, I want to read it." His grandson placed the newsletter in the middle of the table, and Rav Chaim continued reading the *kvittlach*. A few minutes later he asked his grandson, "Where is it? I don't want anyone taking it." "Rebbe," said his attending grandson, "we're keeping it right here, nobody is taking it."

We saw how much joy our newsletter gave Rav Chaim – publicizing true stories of emunah just as he himself taught in his sefer Orchos Yosher. (Ma'amar Hashgacha)

In his sefer, Rav Chaim wrote that in previous generations there was no test in emunah. People – even non-Jews – saw clearly how blessings followed those who serve Hashem. He even mentions a story about Rav Eliezer of Pinsk zt"l: the land he walked on would be blessed. Even non-Jews would beg him to walk in their fields so they'd be blessed with produce.

Why is Hashem's Hashgachah so hidden now, you ask? Rav Chaim quotes the Chazon Ish, that the purpose of this generation's hidden Hashgachah is to make the nisayon more difficult. Hashem wants to bring the Geulah, the Final Redemption, sooner rather than later. Just as in Mitzrayim the bitterness of slavery enabled cutting down the number of years of slavery, so too in our generation – Hashem makes the trials more difficult so when we overcome them, He'll be able to bring the Geulah sooner.

The Chazon Ish ends that there are people who see Hashem's Hashgachah in our generation. There's no need to be someone who completes Shas Bavli, Yerushalmi, Zohar, and Kisvei Ha'ari in order to merit it. "Whoever wants to see, sees. Even today." All that's necessary is the desire.

For that we have, Baruch Hashem, organizations that help to arouse all of our desires to see Hashem's Hashgachah in our generation, and see it clearly.

And with the holiday of Pesach let us raise our cup of thanksgiving to Hashem for this gift – the gift of faith, of emunah.

Good Shabbos Pinchas Shafer

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 hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

Pesach La'Hashem

A very sincere father from *chutz la'aretz* called last year just before Pesach to tell me he was getting ready to celebrate Peach for the first time with only his immediate family, and wanted my advice. He had a large family with children of all ages, boys and girls, and desperately wanted to give each a feeling of connection to the Geulah and real simchah this Pesach.

I was inspired by this special father who was spending so much time and thought on his children. We discussed his past experiences, and I helped him think of ideas about how to keep the atmosphere positive, happy, and relaxed.

Since he lives in *chutz la'aretz*, this man had two Sedarim to lead. On the night after the second Seder he called to report how it had gone:

"The first Seder was amazing. Everyone was excited, cooperative, and happy. Despite several mishaps, everything was basically amazing.

"The second Seder, though, was slightly problematic." His eldest was edgy. There were other mini-disasters, and he was afraid he would get mad. He forced himself to remain calm and locked his lips to not say a word of criticism. Hashem had *rachmanus* on him and he was able to overcome the urge to criticize every time. An onlooker wouldn't have been able to discern what inhuman strength it took from him to maintain the peace and calm.

When they reached Tzafun, they all got up to search for the Afikomen. Someone claimed to have stolen it, while another maintained he was the rightful owner. The third announced it was halachically impossible to steal from a thief, and then one of the older children who had been planning to ask for something special, got all upset, put his head down on the table, and burst into tears.

And here was

The Chafetz Chaim's Promise

Reb Dovid tells the following story:

For the first hundred and fifty lesson on Sha'ar Habitachon, I would begin every lesson with a passuk from the corresponding chapter in Tehilim. The first lesson began with a passuk from chapter 1; the second – chapter 2, and so on. After the first 150 lessons passed, I began quoting from corresponding chapters in the Shulchan Aruch. When I was working on lesson 246 I searched for a quote from chapter 246 in the Shulchan Aruch. I didn't know what the topic was, but I hoped it would yield something I could tie into my lesson. Still thinking about it, I spotted a sign near my apartment building announcing the passing of Rav Yosef Wallberg zt"l, a tzaddik whose son lives in the neighborhood. The sign mentioned the deceased's many virtues, and I went up to visit.

The fact that his son, R' Shmuel was sitting shiva was publicized because of his disposable goods store in the nearby shopping center. Since his store was closed for his week of mourning, shoppers had to frequent another store that had recently opened, and he had to lose the income of one of the most lucrative weeks in the business of disposables – the week before Purim.

When I sat with Reb Yosef's son, I questioned his decision. "Couldn't you find a way to keep your store open this week? It's the busiest week of the year. You must be losing an entire month's income by keeping your store closed. And don't the neighbors need your store? They need paper goods for Purim, what should they do now?"

R' Shmuel wasn't impressed. "My father wasn't the type to find solutions to circumvent halachah. He carried out the halachah exactly as Hashem wanted it, without looking for leniencies. In his memory I am trying to do the same."

I looked at him and saw that his father could rejoice, for he had left a son who follows his ways and behaves in the ultimate *temimus* with Hashem.

Since I was already there, I asked for a Mishnah Berurah in order to look up chapter 246. I saw it deals with the halachos of renting things out to a non-Jew for Shabbos, such as a Jew who has an animal and rents it out to a non-Jew who will work it on Shabbos. The Mishnah Berurah mentions various methods of circumventing the prohibitions involved, discussing many concepts and ideas that are irrelevant today. Thinking I would have to find something else for my shiur, I was about to close the sefer, when I spotted the words at the end of the chapter, where the Chafetz Chaim writes: "And one who has faith in Hashem and fulfills the Torah's directives

to rest on Shabbos, himself, his family and his animals, and makes no attempt to allow his animal to work on Shabbos, Hashem will certainly grant him success with his parnassah during the week.”

Amazing. A check, a promise, written and signed by the Chafetz Chaim himself! The Chafetz Chaim promises that any Yid who keeps Shabbos properly without looking for ways to get around the halachah will be blessed by Hashem with plentiful parnassah.

Despite the prohibition to teach mourners Torah, I showed R' Shmuel this passage. “And you, who are fulfilling the halachos of mourning without trying to find ways to keep your store open will surely merit plentiful parnassah this week,” I added. R' Shmuel smiled gratefully, and I got up, comforted him, and left.

Later on, just to make sure, I checked with R' Velvel Deutsch *shlit"á*, a real expert on the Mishnah Berurah, and he confirmed what I had suspected -- this is the **only** place that the Chafetz Chaim promises such a thing.

On Purim night, while things were still quiet in Yerushalayim (our Purim is only the next day), I went in to daven Maariv in one of the *shtiblach* near Yeshivas Mir where I “happened” to meet R' Shmuel. He greeted me with a smile.

“I was thinking of you today,” he said. “I have to tell you, that I saw the Chafetz Chaim’s blessing came true. Today, Ta’anis Esther, was the first day I was able to open my store. At the end of the day, before I came here to daven, I counted the day’s earnings, and unbelievably– today I earned the same amount I would have made in the entire week that the store was closed. A whole week’s earnings in one day!”

I was so inspired by this story that I repeated it to a friend I met on my way home that night. “Seriously?” he exclaimed, “This is totally beyond! You don’t know the business, but I do. People buy disposables and paper goods in the week leading up to Purim. By Ta’anis Esther they’ve finished their shopping, and only need small odds and ends or to add finishing touches to their Mishloach Manos. *Nobody* does major paper good shopping on Ta’anis Esther. And you say he grossed a whole week’s earning. Amazing!”

Now I had a really good message for my listeners on the telephone line and I gave the lesson with the blessing for parnassah. The next day, a talmid chacham came up to me and announced, “I can attest that the story you told on the telephone line was true. We live in the neighborhood, and we were missing some disposables on Ta’anis Esther. My wife asked me to go down and purchase them, but when I reached the store, I saw there was a long line of shoppers snaking around it. Not wanting to wait in line, I decided to go home and come back a little later. To my amazement, the line was only longer when I returned!”

Nobody could explain it. Why did people wait around? How did so many families suddenly need disposables? And why did they come to this store to purchase it? There’s no explanation but the Chafetz Chaim’s promise.

the father, who had worked so hard to maintain peace, biting back criticism and giving everyone a good feeling, watching how it all went down the drain. A crying child can really drown the most uplifting evening.

At that moment, the neighbor knocked on the door. He had nine adults at his table and wanted another to recite Birkas Hamazon in a minyan. He invited the crying boy over. Now, he had to wash his face and put on a Yom Tov’dig expression before going out to the neighbor’s house. He returned looking like Yom Tov, and the rest of the Seder continued with joy. *Hallel, Nirtzah, Leshana haba’a*.

“Look how Hashem loves your efforts!” I told the man. “He saw how much you tried to give everyone a good feeling, how hard you worked on yourself. He saw you did your best, and showed you how much He appreciates your effort. Then, when you were in a situation that was out of your control, He showed you that He is with you. You did your best, and Hashem helped you where you couldn’t do any more.”

One Equals Five

Hashem answered our prayers, and my wife got a job she really wanted. At the interview she was told she would not have to work on Chol Hamoed, but in actuality, when Succos rolled around, her boss informed her she would have to come in on Chol Hamoed. “Business doesn’t stop on the holiday, and we need you here.”

My wife wanted to know my opinion, and I told her that since it was not *davar ha’aved*, there was no halachic permit to work on Chol Hamoed. In any case, whatever we are supposed to get we would get, and what was not ours, we would not.

My wife decided to stay home. On her first day of work after Yom Tov, as soon as the workday was over, she called me, amazed. It usually takes her two full workdays to bring in a new client, and here she had brought in five new clients in one day! And that’s besides the generous bonus she gets for every new client. Five bonuses are far more than what she would have made working on Chol Hamoed.

We don’t lose out from listening to Hashem.

Q's & A's

Q's & A's about emunah and bitachon

I fail. All the time. For example, I plan on getting up early, and find myself waking up early but having no energy to get out of bed. Then I turn over and go back to sleep. Do I tell myself everything is min hashomayim, or should I criticize myself for not trying hard enough, because I have the power of free-choice and failed?

Q #38

S. A., Yerushalayim

Disclaimer: All opinions mentioned here are presented for discussion only. For practical ruling, please consult with your Rav.

Rabbi Yitzhok Sternfeld from Elad: Every person has free choice and only he is responsible for his actions, both good and bad. One certainly has to repent after failing, and saying it was *min haShomayim* is counterproductive, because it prevents you from changing.

Rabbi Eliezer Willman from Modiin Ilit; Rabbi Aharon Beifuss from Rechasim: "Everything is from heaven except for fear of Heaven." (Brachos 33b) The Yetzer Hara gets us to think in the exact opposite way. In regard to spiritual matters, he gets us to think that they are heavenly ordained and not in our control, while for material things, he convinces us to invest effort, as the results are in our hands. The truth is that if you want to wake up early, you have to go to sleep earlier the night before.

Rabbi Chaim Tzvi Glander from Bnei Brak: At times we do see people are faced with a challenge they feel is impossible to overcome, as we find in Tzidkas Hatzadik (43): "At times one is faced with a challenge so great it is impossible not to sin." However, Rav Tzadok Hakohen ends: "But one can never say so about himself, because perhaps he still had the ability to overcome the inclination."

Rabbi Avraham Branwood from Bnei Brak: If it is or isn't from Hashem is an irrelevant question. One must work on his spiritual pursuits even if he feels he is being held back *min haShomayim*. Chovos Halevavos (Sha'ar Cheshbon Hanefesh, cheshbon 21) explains: "One should try to add over what he can and yearn in his heart and imagine it in his mind, and ask Hashem to help him and strengthen him beyond what he is capable... and when he is consistent in this, Hashem will give him what he asks for, and open for him gates of understanding."

Rabbi Yosef Shlomo Golombek from Yerushlayaim; Rabbi Shimon Rotman from Beit Shemesh: As long as there is something you haven't yet tried, you can't say your failure is *min haShomayim*. Rav Asher Fruend was once trying to purchase land, and before he completed the transaction someone jumped in and preempted him. Rav Asher was very upset. When asked how a man who preached emunah could be upset over a missed opportunity, he answered, "As long as I myself have not done everything humanly possible, I cannot say it is *min haShomayim*." In general, it is recommended to daven for heavenly assistance

before setting out to do anything.

Yesterday is History, Tomorrow's a Mystery

Rabbi Yosef Dushinsky from Haifa; Rabbi Dovid Leifer from Yerushalayim: The Yetzer Hara only looks at the past while the Good Inclination looks ahead into the future. Ruminations take us nowhere positive, causing only depression and anxiety. Positive thoughts focus on the future: How do I make sure this doesn't happen again? And **Rabbi Yehuda Gweirtzman from Beit Shemesh** adds practical advice: You only learn when you fail. Failing will teach you that in order to pray properly you have to sleep well. It's up to you, so don't waste your time the night before. **Rabbi Dovid Yisroel from Beit Shemesh; Rabbi Binyomin Karpil from Yerushalayim:** I heard from my Rebbis that in life one should basically focus on the future – what will help you change. If thinking something is *min haShomayim* relieves you of guilt, take that route. But if it makes you depressed, you should take responsibility. The main thing is to go forward and continue working on yourself.

Rabbi Gamliel Hakohen Rabinovich from Bnei Brak: While we certainly have free choice, after you tried getting up and fell back asleep it's a sign you have to wake up spiritually and not let your guard down. Alacrity is a virtue in mitzvah observance.

Rabbi Yosef Ben Ezra from Beit Shemesh: Both are actually true – everything is *min haShomayim*, and we have free choice. While it is impossible for us to fathom this apparent contradiction, we, as humans must focus on our part – free choice. Therefore, prepare and work towards your goal, and if you fail, do teshuvah and try again!

Question for Issue #89

I've been working at a business for a long time. I invested energy and much of my life here. Recently, my boss hired a new supervisor, skipping over me despite all my experience and dedication. I try to tell myself that it is *min haShomayim* and what's coming to me will come in any case, but it still breaks my heart, seeing another person get what should have rightfully been mine. Please give me some insight on this.

A.N., Petach Tikva

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 Kedoshim

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

On Seder night, even the poorest of men acts like a king, leaning on his left. On Pesach, we can reach this lofty state of freedom in its truest sense -- freedom from the constraints of the physical world. In an attempt to prevent us from this joy, the Yetzer Hara does everything he can to keep us preoccupied.

Jews buy new clothing for Yom Tov. That's a given, right? The whole family needs new clothing for Yom Tov and Chol Hamoed, weekday and Shabbos. Some are *machmir* to also buy new furniture and do home repairs. Everywhere you turn, everyone you see seems to be shopping, buying, and spending. How can you just stand by and ignore the pre-Yom Tov sales, keeping your wallet zipped shut?

Hilchos Pesach makes no mention of the obligation to buy all these extras. Even one who has the means would do better than spend his money on unnecessary things. Nonetheless, we put ourselves our unnecessarily by taking loans and enslaving ourselves for months thereafter, accruing debt and paying interest, all for the seemingly sacred goal of feeling like royalty on Pesach. Ironically, this is the polar opposite of freedom and royalty.

Every person should take a good hard look at his mounting expenses and ask himself – is this what Hashem wants from me? Does Hashem really want me to enslave myself to those matching outfits, the perfect shoes, expensive cuts of meat, and exclusive desserts? Let's hear what the Torah says about this:

In Chumash Vayikra we learn about the Korban Ole V'Yored (Vayikra 5, 6-7). This is a sacrifice that is subject to change according to one's financial situation.

Excerpts from the popular shiur by Harav Hatzaddik R' Beirish Shneebalg shlit"א

True Freedom

A person of means can bring a sheep or goat, while one of lesser means brings two doves. The poorest of men offers only a meal sacrifice.

But it doesn't end with that. What's interesting here is that the poor man is not permitted to express his zealotry by offering a sacrifice of higher quality. If he does so, then he has not fulfilled his obligation! Money one needs for his living expenses cannot be used to purchase a sacrifice.

The Sefer Hachinuch explains that being that Hashem had mercy on him and acquitted him, it is improper for him to push himself to bring more than his means. A wise person will understand that in general, it is never a good idea to spend beyond his means. This habit can ultimately lead a person to steal from others in order to attain what he is accustomed to having but cannot afford. (mitzvah 121)

What an incredible lesson. While we may want to spend more on mitzvos – who doesn't?! we must take a good hard look at our expenses and ask ourselves: Is this what Hashem wants? Does Hashem really want me to spend so much on *kavod* and *simchas* Yom Tov? The answer is simple: If Hashem didn't give us the money it's a sure sign He doesn't want us to spend it. We are never obligated to take on debt, especially not for mitzvos.

Yes, it is possible to make Pesach without debt. Rejoice simply with what you have, and enjoy whatever Hashem gave you. Leave what He didn't give you for those who did get it. Yes, we can rejoice on Pesach like free people, free of This World's needs and wants. This is freedom in its truest, purest form.

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

Seeing people who really care about emunah and do so much to inspire us is a real inspiration! The stories, shiurim, and newsletters are saturated with emunah and bitachon. You have no idea what it does for me. I find it difficult to describe, only Hashem knows how much good you are doing. Your reward is truly endless!

I promised to donate distribution of the bitachon newsletters in eighty shuls if I'd be hired for a job I really wanted. Baruch Hashem I was hired and now I am sending in my monthly payment order for distribution.

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