

HASHGACHA PRATIS

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



Parshiyos Korach - Chukat 5782 ■ Issue 92

HEART TO HEART

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

The Value of Suffering

There was once a Jew who rented a house on the Polish countryside from the local *portiz* for 300 rubles a year. One day, the *portiz* went on a long journey, leaving his estate management to his manager. The manager hated the Jew, and gleefully grabbed the opportunity to raise his rent to 500 rubles a year.

The Jew worked long and hard but came up with only 480 rubles, which he presented to the manager. "That's it. That's the best I could do," he told the manager.

Now the could not only take the Jew's money but whip him as well. He called in the strongest, most violent servant in the manor, and ordered him to whip the Jew one lash for every missing ruble, twenty lashes in total.

Eventually, the *portiz* returned. The Jew ran over to complain about the evil manager. The *portiz* was angry at the manager and called him in. "How many lashes did you get?" he asked the Jew. "Twenty? For every lash you got, you'll get 100 rubles. This manager owns a field worth 4000 rubles. Half of it is yours."

The *portiz* expected the Jew to thank him for his benevolence, but the Jew felt depressed. What a shame! He'd missed an opportunity! The whip lashes were gone, his back was healed. If he'd have gotten forty lashes, the entire field would have been his own!

This parable teaches us about the value of the trials and tribulations Hashem sends us. If one lash is worth a lot, wouldn't you rather get more?

Yitzchak Avinu knew how exacting Hashem's judgement was and wanted to save his descendants the pain, so he asked for *yissurim*. Hashem answered him, "In that case, I will begin with you." Immediately thereafter, "...And his eyes were too dim to see." (Bereshis 27:1) Yitzchak Avinu was the first to suffer *yissurim* in this world.

The Chafetz Chaim in his sefer *Shem Olam*, quotes Rabbi Yaakov Moshe who heard from his illustrious grandfather, the Vilna Gaon: "Were it not for *yissurim*, we would not find our hands and feet in the Upper World!"

When a person dies, his soul ascends to the Upper Tribunal where he is met by a large scale. All his merits are weighed

against his obligations. If his merits weigh down the scale, he is a tzaddik. And this is how the proceedings go:

An announcement is heard: "All the merits of the newcomer should appear." Immediately, thousands of mitzvos make their appearance: Torah, tefilla, brachos, Shabbos, tzedakah...

Then the voice announces again: "The prosecutors should come and stand witness!" They all come marching in, and the poor soul sees how those black angels gather. 'Oh no,' it thinks, 'the negative side is getting heavier and heavier...'

The soul is in pain but can do nothing at all to change his status. Up there, it's too late.

Then the announcement is heard: "Bring in all the challenges he suffered. All the pain and inconvenience." And in they come marching: losses, threats, disappointments, viruses, injuries, illnesses, pain, poverty, insomnia, fights, falling, traffic jams, fines, doctors, payments... and all these stand on the side of merit, which begins tilting down, heavier and heavier...

Then the voice announces: "All the ordeals he suffered and accepted with the words *gam zu le'tova* should come!"

And in they come, standing according to the date when the person accepted what happened to him with emunah. It is easy to spot exactly when this tzaddik was connected to the Hashgacha Pratis hotline...

It starts looking better, but it's still not enough.

Then, with a great thundering voice, the announcement is heard again: "Now let all the suffering he endured at the hands of another human being- and he nonetheless strengthened himself in his belief that it is all from Hashem and his enemies have no power to harm him or benefit him in any way without Hashem's permission- and instead of getting angry or complaining he said *Mizmor Le'Toda* with joy- let all this suffering come forth!"

These occasions are worth far more than anything else he ever had. Now the scale is tipped all the way to the right, and he merits Gan Eden with the tzaddikim. Welcome!

(Excerpted from lesson 154 on Sha'ar Habitachon)

FROM THE EDITOR

A Half Hour for Aleinu

R' Mordechai lives in Beit Shemesh and learns in Beitar. He told the following story:

"Yesterday I davened Minchah after morning seder in my Beitar kollel. As I was saying Aleinu, I saw the 128 bus to Beit Shemesh pull up to the bus stop, twenty seconds from the Beis Midrash.

"If I run, I'll make it," I thought. But then I recalled the story about Leizer which I had heard on the telephone line (look it up in the story section of this newsletter). I decided to stay and complete my Minchah peacefully.

"Do you think I experienced a miracle? No. Baruch Hashem, I waited almost a half an hour for the next bus home. No Mercedes stopped to pick me up, no stray bus pulled up to take me home in half the time. I travelled just as I expected to, the bus stops were packed as usual, and I am sure that I didn't miss anything. When Hashem says, 'You cannot listen to me and lose out,' this is true. I don't care exactly how, I didn't see it myself, but I'm sure it's true."

When I heard this story I recalled the famous *Mate Moshe*, mentioned in the Mishna Berurah (132:8): "And we have received that the praise of Aleinu must be recited in awe, fear, and terror, with a bowed head, because the entire heavenly retinue is listening and Hashem stands with them and all respond: 'Praiseworthy is He who has it so, and praised is the nation that Hashem is their G-d.'"

R' Mordechai stands there in shul, and the entire heavenly retinue stands and watches him struggle and overcome himself. "No!" he says to the yetzer hara. "I won't walk out of shul before davening is over, before completing the wondrous praise of Aleinu. The bus makes no difference to me now. All I want is to give my Creator *nachas ruach*." I'm sure Hashem and all the angels rejoiced. There's no doubt about it.

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

Timely Bris

I rarely travel to the Kosel, but I did so two weeks ago. That occasion was a true display of Hashgacha Pratis.

At the Kosel, I met a not-fully observant Jew who expressed interest in learning Torah. We made up to learn together once a week. A few days later, he called me up all excited – his wife had given birth to a baby boy. I was invited to the bris.

The following week, I called him to hear how the preparations for the bris were coming along, but he said the bris was postponed.

I hung up with a strange feeling. Something didn't make sense. Why was the bris postponed? I suspected the reason wasn't halachically acceptable and called him again in the afternoon.

"It's good that you called," he said, "I hired a mohel for tomorrow, but I'm not sure he's good enough."

"Let me look into it," I told him, and called the rabbi of his shul.

When the rabbi heard I was calling about that man's bris he was audibly upset. "The mohel's not the problem. The baby is healthy. He only has very slight jaundice, at a perfectly healthy level, but the father wants to postpone the bris."

Today was the eighth day. The bris had to take place *today*. But what could I do? I first looked into the mohel. He turned out to be a well-known expert who had performed thousands of brissim.

I called the man back and told him his mohel was an expert and the bris could take place that day, explaining what a big mitzvah it was to make the bris on the proper day, but he wasn't excited. "What should I do?" he said, "I ordered the caterer for tomorrow, I ordered the sandek and I can't cancel. Besides, did you ever hear of a bris without the baby's grandmother?"

I applauded his *kibud av va'eim*, but explained it was paramount to give the baby his bris today. Still he couldn't be convinced.

"Listen," I told him, "for a bris, all you need is a mohel and ten people. Come to shul and everything will be OK." He wouldn't budge. He needed his family at the event. I called the shul rabbi, and he suggested a great idea. "The family can be there. Make the bris tomorrow. Call the caterer and the photographer and everyone for tomorrow. Today we'll just make a small pre-bris, and everything will be alright."

The man agreed to this idea. The mohel appeared a short time later, and the rabbi of the shul was the sandek. Finally the man arrived with his baby, and the mohel gave him his bris on the eighth day, one hour before sunset.

The next day, there was a wonderful party. The baby was passed around and photographed at every angle.

The "sandek", who was not

Minchah Merits

Leizer from Beitar Ilit told us the following story:

Our community was organizing a trip for bachurim who would maintain certain stringencies for a full zman. This trip sounded very exciting, and I worked very hard to keep up. It wasn't easy, and I can't say I was fully successful, but I hoped to be allowed to join the trip.

On the big day, I packed my bag and got ready to travel to Yerushalayim where the trip would start out. Since I had not yet davened Minchah, I walked over to a nearby shul and waited for a minyan, but there was none. I called passers-by, "a *tzenter*, a *tzenter*," but nobody stopped. I had only three people.

I thought that in this a case I would be permitted to pray alone because I had to set out on a journey, but Baruch Hashem I was able to withstand the temptation. I decided to set out to Yerushalayim hoping to find a minyan there.

When I got to Yerushalayim, I found that all the bachurim had already davened. Again, I was in the same situation. No minyan. I could no longer postpone davening. Sunset was fast approaching. Could I pray alone without a minyan? The yetzer hara offered me a string of excuses. It was *sha'as hadchak*. I was about to set out on a journey. My mind was unsettled. The trip was so important for both my body and soul, it was impossible to miss... Amazing what a scholar the yetzer hara can be.

I didn't listen to his excuses and, leaving my bags in a corner, I went to search for a minyan. Baruch Hashem, there was a minyan and I joined. The yetzer hara, though, didn't leave me alone. He told me I didn't have to stay for *chazaras hashatz*, but I stayed on for *tachnun*, *kaddish*, *kedusha*, *aleinu*. I stayed until the final kaddish had been recited. Then I went back to the gathering point.

All the boys had disappeared. No busses were anywhere in sight, and only my backpack was left. Me, myself, and my backpack. Baruch Hashem, I felt my heart fill with amazing joy for withstanding the temptation. I had done what Hashem wanted, and no doubt, it was all for the best. I wouldn't sell the mitzvah of davening with a minyan for anything in the world.

Standing there with my bag wondering how to proceed, I heard a voice calling my name. "Eliezer, Eliezer! What are you doing here?" Looking up, I saw one of the organizers loading his car. "If you're here already," he told me, "why don't you help me pack everything in and we'll drive together to join everyone else?" I helped him. He was glad to find a pair of hands and I was glad to be traveling with full permission – not because I had fulfilled all the conditions for the trip, (which I hadn't) but in the capacity of assisting the organizer. I felt much better about myself.

Extinguishing Fire With Fire

I live in a city with both Torah observant and secular families. Many young boys from these secular homes are thirsting for a bit of Yiddishkeit. Whoever can give of his time to bring these poor souls closer to Hashem is grabbed up. I deliver a Gemara shiur every Monday to a group of those youngsters between eight and nine in the evening. Brauch Hashem, this shiur has been going on for years.

Four years ago, on the first day of Cheshvan, which was a Monday, I set out for a shopping trip with my wife in Bnei Brak. Our city doesn't have the full variety of items we need, so every so often we have to travel to Bnei Brak to stock up on essentials. My wife called her sister in to babysit for our five little ones who are between the ages of two to seven, and we set out.

Everything takes time – driving takes time, finding parking spots takes time. Nothing happens fast except one thing – the speeding clock. Seven o'clock came faster than we expected, long before we had completed our list.

'I must find a way to get back by eight,' I thought, trying to figure out who I could call to fill my place if I wouldn't make it, but my wife said, "Why call someone else?" Helping me get to the shiur was her personal mission. Indeed, we quickly finished up, and by ten to eight I pulled up in our parking lot.

My wife went home, and I continued on to the shul where the shiur takes place, two blocks from my house.

The boys had no idea how much effort I had made to get there on time that night. I started teaching.

A few minutes into the shiur, I heard sirens wailing outside. Since the shul is near a large intersection I thought nothing of it, but then, twenty minutes into the shiur, someone ran in breathless, "Harav, Harav, your house is in flames!" I closed the gemara and ran.

The police were already there, and they refused to let me in. "Who's the owner here?" they asked. "I am," I said. "Where is my family?"

"They all got out," the policeman told me. "The fire's out now," he added.

I found my wife and pajama-clad children sitting, barefoot, on the sidewalk across the street. My wife told me, "I got to the house at ten to eight. I sent my sister home and then realized there was white smoke wafting in from under the closed door to the living room. I left the door closed and got everyone out, then I called the fire department and informed the neighbors."

Had I stayed out shopping and left my children with the babysitter a little bit longer, my wife's sister would have spotted the smoke and opened the living room door to try to figure out where it was coming from. The smoke would have filled her lungs and she would have been injured badly; then, who knows if she'd have had the energy to get the children out. We'd experienced a miracle. Simple as that.

The house, and everything inside it, was gone. What was left from the fire was damaged by the smoke. That evening, we stood in the street, bereft of everything we had, but healthy and whole. A whole family saved from fire thanks to the Torah's fire.

yet mitzvah observant had the baby laid on his lap. They recited "*borei pri hagafen*", drank wine, and ate a grand meal.

In the pictures, you can see a beautiful newborn in a white bris suit. He was given a kosher bris on the eighth day, with a tzaddik of a sandek holding him on his lap. I am forever grateful to Hashem for allowing me to be part in this amazing revelation of Hashgacha.

Called To The Tzaddik

R' Berel Frankel *shlit"a* edited the siddur of the famed sofer, Rabbi Shabsai of Rakshov -- the Ba'al Shem Tov's disciple. This siddur has the Ari's *kavanos* inserted in various parts of the davening, as well as the Ba'al Shem Tov's opinion on various parts and novel thoughts in kabbalah that the author heard from the Ba'al Shem Tov himself.

This siddur is used mainly by rebbes and ba'alei tefillah, especially for the shofar blowing on Rosh Hashana and the *na'anuim* on Succos.

For many years, R' Berel had a deep desire to pray at this particular tzaddik's gravesite, but he didn't even know where the city of Rakshov was located. Four years ago, he discovered the location of the gravesite and decided to visit the city. He spent Shabbos, the 19th of Sivan, in Mezibuz at the holy Ba'al Shem Tov's grave, and on Sunday he travelled to Moldova, where the city of Rakshov is located. Early Monday morning, he reached the old synagogue of Rakshov, still standing in all its glory, whispering of long gone Yidden, heartfelt prayers, and nightly Torah study by candlelight.

Directly opposite the shul was a large grassy hill where the old cemetery of Rokshov had been. Somewhere in that hill was the gravesite of the holy tzaddik whose work he had spent so many hours editing.

"I stood there praying," R' Berel relates. "Somehow, I knew the tzaddik was listening to me. I believed that this tzaddik, whose words I worked so hard to edit and who assisted all the prayers of those who prayed from his siddur, would help bring my tefillos to the Heavenly Throne."

After four hours of prayer, he left the city and travelled back to Odessa, and from there – back home, to Israel. Four years later, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Gabbai, chairman of the Ohalei Tzaddikim organization dedicated to discovering and renovating holy gravesites around the world, discovered the tombstone covering Rabbi Shabsai's grave. Thanks to Rabbi Pinchas Zaltsman, Chief Rabbi of Moldova, it was possible to uncover the cemetery.

Thirty truckloads of earth were removed before the tombstones were uncovered. Most were in terrible disrepair, but Reb Shabsai's gravestone was intact.

"Until that day, nobody had known his *yahrzeit*. Now that his grave was unearthed, his *yahrzeit* became known – the 21st of Sivan, exactly the day I stood in that old shul and prayed before that hill. How did I know it was the right day? Who was it that put in my mind the desire to go there? It must have been none other than the great tzaddik himself. He must have called me to come on his *yahrzeit*."

Q's & A's

Q's & A's about emunah and bitachon

I have been in shidduchim for years, and I am still searching for my match. Could the reason for this be linked to something in my interpersonal relationships or my mitzvah obligations to Hashem? How can I figure this out?

Q #44

Y. S., Yerushalayim

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

Meriting Heavenly Mercy

Rabbi Yaakov Yosef Rosenberg from Modiin Ilit: There are many reasons one's match might be delayed, many of which are hidden from us. You must ask Hashem to send you your destined match. I heard from rabbanim that thinking about possible personal hindrances to shidduchim is only appropriate for people with a bad temper who hurt others consistently. Regular people who generally speak calmly to others do not have to follow this line of thought.

Rabbi Tzvi Reuven Davidovitch from Yerushalayim: Trials and hardships are meant to bring us closer to Hashem, but searching for faults and blaming ourselves only makes us depressed and despondent, which distances us from Hashem. If you know you have what to correct in his field, you should certainly do so, but dwelling on these thoughts is not recommended.

Hashem Will Reveal It

Rabbi Yehuda Gweirtzman from Beit Shemesh; Rabbi Nechemia Goldberg from Yerushalayim; Rabbi Yitzchak Weinberg from Bnei Brak; Rabbi Aryeh Mordechai Greenwald from Beit Shemesh; Rabbi Yosef Dushinsky from Haifa; Rabbi Shimon Rotman from Beit Shemesh: We are used to davening for the *yeshua*, but sometimes we forget that we can also daven that Hashem open our eyes and show us the right way. This kind of prayer is sure to be accepted, and from now on, all you have to do is be open to perceiving the divine hints sent your way. Hashem is always glad to accept those returning to him, and one who wishes to correct himself will be aided from heaven, as Rabbenu Yona writes in Sha'arei Teshuva: "Hashem helps those who return

when their nature does not allow it, and renews in them a purity of spirit..."

Discovering The Hidden

Rabbi Aharon Beifuss from Rechasim; Rabbi Michael Boyer from Modiin Ilit; Rabbi Efraim Fischel Rabinovitch from Yerushalayim: While in the past there were prophets to tell us what we had to correct, today there are gedolim who can be approached for guidance. Conversely, you can also try to listen to your soul, which tells you in which area you need to change yourself. Every person knows what he needs to correct and what is his mission in the world.

Thank Hashem and Reconcile with Your Friend

Rabbi Dovid Leifer from Yerushalayim: With your interactions with Hashem, take the route of thanking Him – a truly amazing segula to save us from all hardships. And **Rabbi Shmuel Mendelssohn from Yerushalayim** said: You should only think about it if you suspect it is true. Then, try to ask your friend if you have harmed him in any way, and if so, try to ask his forgiveness.

Rabbi Yishai Mazalomian from Holon: There are many reasons for not finding one's match. While Gedolei Yisroel have told certain people to try to make amends in this field, it is certainly not the only thing you can do. The sefer Simcha L'Ish has many other things you can do to find your match.

Question for newsletter 94

My financial situation is not so great. Can I take on extra expenses for a mitzvah or stringency, such as a generator for kosher Shabbos electricity or an exceptional esrog, or would this only be acceptable for people on high level of emunah and bitachon?

A.B., Rechasim

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 Balak

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

Appreciating yourself is very important. Lack of self-esteem stunts our spiritual growth and inhibits our ability to affect others. One who doesn't appreciate himself suffers a lot, needlessly.

Interestingly, this appears to be a rampant malady. And as we know, when you see so many people suffering from the same thing, you know the yetzer hara is putting in overtime. The yetzer hara really wants people to feel lack of self-esteem. And the *ba'alei mussar* write: Think good things about yourself, even if they're not true. It's not a lie – the thought itself will eventually make it become reality.

A sweet, talented young man came to me, such a gentle amazing person! Smart and learned, full of potential to do good things for the world. He, though, thought much less of himself. He thought the middah of humility meant to see himself as 'less than'. "I don't agree with you," I told him. "You have to value yourself and your abilities." He was so invested in his so-called 'humility' that he couldn't appreciate himself at all! I told him that as a first step, he had to tell his wife and children his virtues. After doing so for a while, his appreciation of himself increased. Shortly afterwards, some twenty *yungeliet* from the yeshiva where he learns approached him and

Excerpts from the popular shiur by Harav Yehuda Mandel shlit"a from Lakewood Self Esteem - The Key to Growth

requested that he serve as their *rosh chabura*.

I can also tell you about myself. I am a rebbe in cheder. Once, when I had been feeling burnout for a while, I thought I was a goner. No more rebbe. This was, by the way, thirteen years ago. Today, I am still a rebbe.

I was walking out of class that day, when a rebbe from across the hall walked out and smiled, "Oh," he said, "you look like you are at the end of your career."

How did he know?! Was I wearing my heart on my sleeve? Apparently, yes. And this is really the secret – one who doesn't appreciate himself projects his feelings on others, and they don't appreciate him either. And the opposite too, is true! Rabbi Yaakov Galinsky once told me, "Feelings cannot be hidden." This is so true. You project your feelings to all, and whatever you feel about yourself is exactly what others will feel about you.

This is also a good idea for managing situations at home or at work, with your children or wife. Just think about them, how much you appreciate them, how good they are to you, and they'll feel it. You don't have to say a word. If you start feeling good about yourself, you'll soon begin feeling your advancement in *avodas Hashem*.

Rav Mandel's shiurim are broadcast on Kav Hashgacha Pratis weekly in all three languages - Hebrew, Yiddish and English

Effects on Two Ends

On the receiving end

I must thank you from the bottom of my heart for the special tune of the seven pillars of emunah that you left on the telephone line over Pesach. My family, my friends, and I enjoyed it a lot. We suffered something painful, and this tune brought joy to our lives. When a message comes with music, it goes straight into the heart. Thank you!

(You can listen to it too! Just press 5, after choosing Hebrew on the language menu.)

N.P. called in with the following story:

I was taken to court, and the situation was complicated. I covered the printing cost and distribution of the Hashgacha Pratis newsletters in 40 shuls, and also promised that if I'd come clean, I'd give a regular donation for distributing in an entire neighborhood. Baruch Hashem, I was miraculously exempted, and I also have the merit of knowing that anentire neighborhood in Ofakim will now enjoy the newsletters for a whole year.

On the giving end

You, too, can be a partner in spreading emunah throughout the world, and merit the Zohar's promise of "children and grandchildren who are G-d-fearing and upright!"

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