

HASHGACHA PRATIS

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



Parshiyos Beha'alotcha - Shelach 5782 ■ Issue 91

HEART TO HEART

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

Judge Them favorably

Someone's negative action presents us with an opportunity to do a mitzvah of judging him favorably. Maybe he didn't intend the negative outcome; perhaps we don't understand it, or lack context. Whatever the reason is, he's OK. And the truth is, there's something very calming in judging others favorably. It helps calm our nerves, floods our brain with positive hormones, and improves our overall well-being.

But what happens when this person's negative intentions are obvious? There are some people who, quite simply, enjoy doing bad. They take pleasure in causing harm. What do you do when you meet such a person, even if not in a dark alley? Do you shiver in fear? Fight or flight response? Take revenge?

Rabbenu Bachye (chapter four, end of the third part) discusses all the different people we meet over our lifetime and the various situations we come up against, including those he calls, **"enemies who covet him and wish evil upon him."** The enemy could be your coworker, neighbor, or even close relative. It is someone who intimidates and scares you. Who knows what damage he could do to you, or what he'll tell people about you? How do you stop this menace in his tracks, you wonder.

First of all, Rabbenu Bachye reminds us, this challenge is no different from other challenges. Just as we are commanded to place our trust in Hashem to help and protect us, so too here, **"he must have faith in Hashem and suffer his shame."** What this person did and how his actions affected me, like everything else in the world, comes from Hashem. Nothing happens by itself. Those who threaten my safety are only **"reasons for the harm"** not the source. Hashem, the **Cause of all causes, arranged this – the pain and suffering that should come about through this person.** The pain of the challenge brings about great rectification. Strengthening ourselves in bitachon includes remembering that **all benefit and damage is in the Hands of the Creator, blessed be He.** There is no power that can do good or harm without

Hashem's Will. This is a law that Rabbenu Bachye repeats here, for the fourth time:

"And he should remember in his heart" – memorize this message again and again until it is embedded in your heart. **The Creator blessed be He did, does, and will do all deeds.** You can even say it before Birkas HaTorah, repeat it again, morning, afternoon, and evening. Then, when a challenge presents itself, you'll pass with flying colors. You'll be able to think positively about those who harmed you, and perhaps even **do kindness to them.**

Our criticism must be directed inward, to ourselves. Shlomo Hamelech writes: "A heart knows the bitterness of his soul" – if there's anyone that needs correcting, it's me! Who knows what I'll need to suffer in the Next World because of my actions? So now, Hashem is giving me the opportunity to suffer in This World – to pay up here so I'll be free to enjoy the pleasures of the Next World. When suffering, pray that your sins should be erased. Then, Rabbenu Bachye promises, one will merit salvation and realization of the passuk: **"When the Lord accepts a person's ways, He will cause even his enemies to make peace with him" (Mishlei 16:7).**

Think about the people who harmed you, and realize how poor and miserable they are. What a terrible job they've been given – to torment people only because Hashem wants to send us a challenge and a kapparah! What a pitiful and shameful existence! Chazal tell us (Shabbos 32a) "A merit is brought about by a worthy person, and a debt – by an unworthy one." May we only be given positive missions! Challenges are measured, personally tailored to size. A Yid travels hours on Lag B'Omer, only to be stopped en-route. He can blame everyone in the world for the fact that he never made it to Meron, but he can also understand that there was a **reason Hashem made it thus**, and it was for his benefit. Then he can gain real benefits from the ordeal.

What are those benefits? That will be the topic of our next newsletter, IY"H.

(Excerpted from shiur 156 on Sha'ar Habitachon)

FROM THE EDITOR

Asking is Acknowledging

For years, R' Moshe has been waiting. R' Yaakov, his son, has been blessed with 14 children *ky"h*. He lives in a tiny apartment, and family members bump into each other all day. His life is impossible. His father, seeing his son's plight, works hard. He sets aside money every month, until finally, after years and years, he buys his son the perfect present: an airy and spacious house with a room for every child, a large living room, and a beautiful view, in the exact neighborhood where his son always wanted to live. On the big day, R' Moshe walks up the flights of stairs to his son's tiny apartment and presents his son with the keys. "Here," he says, "this is for you."

R' Moshe expects his son to break out in exuberant dance and song. Express excitement.

Instead, he is greeted with a stoic response. R' Yaakov honors his father. He serves refreshments, sits and talks to him, makes a pompous speech expressing his appreciation to his father, describing how the new apartment will help him and his family. At the end, though, he remarks, "Dear father, I really don't want that new house. I'll move in, though, because you gave it to me."

How does his father feel? What would you feel?

What an ungrateful child! Your father worked long hard years to provide you with better living conditions, and you don't want the house? Yes, you expressed your appreciation, you thanked him, but your words are meaningless because at the end of the day you really don't want to take his gift.

This story expresses a deeper understanding of tefillah (Gur Aryeh, Bereshis 2:5):

Rashi explains that Hashem didn't bring down rain until Adam Harishon acknowledged its importance to the world. Once he understood and acknowledged it, he davened, and then it rained.

The Maharal explains: After one acknowledges something's importance, he must go one step further and pray for it. Only then will it become reality. As he writes:

"For without praying for it, He obviously would not have been given rain, for one who acknowledges the importance of something but doesn't pray for it is an ingrate."

Saying "I want" is the essence of prayer. Hashem, our dear Father in Heaven, wants to give us all the best. He waits and longs to give us more and more, and He expects us to appreciate what he gives. He waits for us to say, "Father, we want it." The way we express this is through tefillah.

Now we understand how our "Father in Heaven longs for our prayer"! He waits for us to daven because He wants to give to us. He wants to give to someone who can appreciate His gift. In praying for something, we express our understanding of how valuable the gift is.

Daven for every little thing in life! Ask for everything, because Hashem longs for our prayers. (Yalkut Shimoni, Tehilim 874)

Good Shabbos Pinchas Shafer

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

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Yiddish, Hebrew, English.

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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

Sing a Song of Seven

My name is Yaakov Cohen. I had the zechus to do the sound production for the song about the seven conditions on the Hashgacha Pratis hotline. (you can listen to it after choosing Hebrew on extension 5) Working on the song was the catalyst for an amazing display of Hashgacha Pratis.

I own an electric car. This is a car that runs on electricity instead of gas, and filling it up is done by charging. There are many charging stations, but the best one is always near your house. Before moving into my new apartment in Ramat Beit Shemesh Dalet, I asked the builder to build a charging station in my parking spot. The builder couldn't do it because I had bought the apartment for a special deal and the original plans couldn't be changed. However, if I wouldn't make the change and have the station installed now, it would require a lot more work and destruction to install it later. I really had to do it immediately.

I found an Arab contractor who was doing work in the neighbourhood, but he wanted all the money up front. It was a gamble, but having no other option, I agreed. I paid up and waited with a beating heart to see what would happen.

For an entire six months, the Arab came in and worked. Then, at some point he disappeared from my neighbourhood completely. I was afraid all my money had been lost.

I called the Arab and told him to please come and finish up, but he had an unending string of excuses. His mother died, his grandmother wasn't well, he broke his shoulder...it didn't end.

On 13 Nissan I called the Arab. He said, "Call me in two days." I made a note to call him right after Yom Tov. While normally we don't build over Yom Tov I reasoned it was *davar ha'aved*, and a lot of money was hanging in the balance. Later on he might disappear again ... Somehow, I found lots of excuses why it was permitted to busy myself with it on Chol Hamoed. I must have caught the excuse bug from the Arab.

That day I was working on the music track for the Hashgacha Pratis song. The words kept replaying in my ears as I adjusted and listened: "The seventh, his ways are hidden and deep, above and above, it is impossible to detract or to add, to advance or delay what the Creator determined."

'Ah, Yaakov,' I told myself. 'You

Pure Desire

Rav Yaakov Yosef Werzburger *shlit"a*, the Rav of Berdichev, Ukraine, tells the following story. We are publishing the story now in to generate *zechuyos* for the suffering Yidden in Ukraine. May Hashem save them, along with all of Klal Yisrael, amen.

Rav Yaakov Yosef wanted to have a new mikveh in his city. Once built, he needed a halachic authority to examine it and pronounce it kosher. It had to be a person who was proficient in all the relevant halachos and building methods. He decided to call the Yerushalmi Rav, Rav Yehuda Leib Mintzberg *shlit"a*, who is a noted authority on mikva'os.

Getting a Rav to come from Yerushalayim is no easy feat. You need to pay his ticket and hotel, make all the arrangements, and in this case, it had to be done as soon as possible; every day without a mikvah is a day lost.

Getting Rav Mintzberg to Berdichev became his top priority, but in the meantime he had to travel to Zhitomir. In Zhitomir, a short half hour away from Berdichev, he bumped into, wouldn't you guess? Rav Mintzberg from Yerushalayim!

"How did you get here?"

Rav Mintzberg told him he had been summoned by the conference of European Rabbis to examine several mikva'os.

"We also have a mikvah that needs to be checked," said Rav Wurzburger. "I was just thinking about how to contact you!"

The mikvah was authorized, and Rav Mintzberg asked Rav Wurzburger to please tell the story on the Hashgacha Pratis hotline.

Advertising a Competitor

Thirty years ago I had a houseware store. I sold plates, cups, and silverware, and Baruch Hashem, I was making enough to put bread on the table.

One day, I was walking down the street towards my store when I saw someone doing renovations. He was opening a new storefront, and when his sign went up, I saw black -- he'd be selling houseware- exactly my line of silverware, dishes, and pots! His store was not new, and had already built up a great clientele, and it was moving right on to my block. What a headache, and what a nisayon!

People told me to take the owner to court and demand that he move away. Although opening his store near mine was *hasagas gevul*, I didn't want to fight. I talked to myself about emunah, memorizing the Chovos Halevavos: "There is nobody in the world we can harm me or benefit me without Hashem's permission." I also repeated to myself that no one can touch something that I deserve. I kept thinking these thoughts until that new store no longer bothered me.

One day, a big caterer came in to my store to buy a large set of houseware for his business. He bought hundreds of plates and silverware, filling my cash register with several months' worth of earnings. After paying, I asked him how he knew about my store.

"I went to the famous store in its old location and there was a sign saying they had moved here. So I came here."

He didn't even realize he had made a mistake.

At that moment I realized how fortunate I was that the famous store had moved in right next door to me. All their faithful customers now patronized my street. My competitor was advertising for me.

Unimaginable Success

My brother-in-law and I have been working together for a long time. He has a salad store, and my family and I make his salads. One day, I stepped into his store and saw that right next to my salads there was

a pile of salads from another company. I was shocked. How could my brother-in-law order salads from another company? We work so hard all week, and if he sells other salads, ours might get stuck and we'd lose money! It wasn't fair! While we didn't really have a contract barring him from selling another company's salads, I thought this was self-understood.

I called up my wife all upset, but she calmed me down. "It's a nisayon from Hashem to teach us that salads don't give parnassah. Parnassah comes from Hashem."

"What should we do?" I asked my wife.

"Let's daven to Hashem to send us plentiful parnassah," she answered with emunah. I agreed with her and didn't say a word to my brother-in-law.

That day, my brother-in-law called. "Something strange is happening here today," he said. "Your salads are gone. Absolutely finished! Not one container is left. And there are lots of people asking for them. Can you make the same amount again? I'll pay you more than usual."

A Dress in Duress

A mother of several girls tells the following story:

Baruch Hashem I have been blessed with several girls. Dressing them all, especially if you like matching dresses, can get expensive. I enjoy seeing them dressed well, and try to find creative ways to do so without spending too much.

When the Malbushei Kavod clothing sales started I was overjoyed. I ordered a set of matching dresses for all my girls and thanked Hashem for the chessed those organizers did.

When the order arrived, I realized there was one dress missing. A dress is not merely thread and cloth – it's a little girl who's been waiting for a new dress for a long time. It's a girl who sees all her sisters wearing the same dress, and she doesn't have it. A dress is also expensive at the beginning of the season, and we really couldn't afford it.

Some nice people set up a telephone line for Malbushei Kavod, where people announce if they have extras of one item or things they need. I called in and posted that I was looking for a certain dress in size 7, but nobody left a message in return. Every day I called and asked, but nobody answered my posting. I told my sister that I was looking for the missing dress, but she couldn't do anything besides offer her empathy. I really tried to find that dress, especially when I saw how upset my daughter was. But after a while, when I saw all my efforts were fruitless, I realized I had to change course.

I started speaking to Hashem. "Hashem," I said, "You run the world. You run all the sales and send the dresses to the right addresses. Please send my daughter a dress just like her sisters' in her size." I stopped actively trying to find it. I stopped calling the telephone line. I only asked Hashem, every day. I said, "Hashem, if that's what you want, please send us the money to buy her another dress."

A few days later, my sister called and told me she had the dress in size six. Someone had an extra, which she had taken for me. I didn't say anything. What should I tell her, that it was one size too small?

The following day, she called and announced she had the right dress in the right size. What had happened?

My sister is a seamstress. Naturally, Erev Pesach is a very busy time, and she tells all her clients that all alterations must be brought in by a certain date. After that, she won't take any work.

One of her clients didn't know of the cut-off date. She tried calling again and again, until finally, after getting no answer on the phone, she walked over and knocked on my sister's door. In her hand she carried a dress that needed to be fixed. A size 7!

"This dress is one size too big for my daughter," said the lady. "Can you take it in for her?"

"I don't do alterations until after Pesach," said my sister. "But I have a better idea for you. I have the same dress in size six. Would you like to swap?"

"That would be a great idea!" the lady was excited, "I really wanted a six, but there were none left in stock."

And so my daughter got her dress, and we all learned a lesson on the power of prayer.

know it's wrong to build during Chol HaMoed. Why would you think to speak to the Arab on Chol HaMoed? You can't change anything anyway because Hashem is the one Who decides when it'll happen. The only thing you can, and must, do, are the mitzvos of the Torah! I decided I wouldn't speak to the Arab over Pesach. And whatever would be, would be. On the day after Pesach, I called the Arab and surprisingly he answered without excuses. He promised to come the following day, and he kept his word – he arrived with a few workers, and they finally finished the job. My car can get charged right near my house and I think it's really in the zechus of the Hashgacha Pratis hotline that charged me with emunah and bitachon.

A Momentary Guest

Every year, come spring, I suffer from allergies. As soon as the weather gets a little warm, my nose gets all stuffy, my eyes get teary, and my head starts to throb. I find it hard to function for the entire season. Spring, for me, spells misery.

What didn't I do to cure myself! I took many different medications. I tried herbs, acupuncture, and Bach remedies. They all promised a cure, but nothing really helped.

This year, on one fine winter morning in Adar, I woke up with a stuffy nose and I realized my allergies had arrived early. Now I'd have two months of suffering. I had no energy for it. No, not now! Never! "Please Hashem," I begged from the bottom of my heart, "cure me. Make me better!" I knew nothing could save me but Him.

The miracle occurred. The next morning, I woke up like a new person. I felt good. My allergies that used to plague me for a full two months disappeared after just one day.

I was elated.

Then I realized something about another challenge we'd been having. My wife works at a job that demands more of her than others, but she's being paid less than other employees. The administration agreed that she deserves to be paid more, but the managers hadn't taken care of it yet. This had been going on for a while now, with no end in sight.

Why, I thought to myself, for something natural like a salary, we pray and pray and are not answered, while to cure my allergies all it took was one prayer? I thought that the answer was because for my allergies it was clear that I had only Hashem Himself to turn to, and He was the only One Who could save me. He was my only address! But for my wife's salary, there were people to call, paperwork to fill, and connections to make. While we turn to Hashem, we trust our connections too much.

The allergy lesson taught me to always place my trust totally in Hashem. Only He can do anything.

Q's & A's

Q's & A's about emunah and bitachon

Hashem only does things that are good for us, we all know that. Why should we pray and ask Hashem for anything? If it's good for me, I'll get it anyway. And if it isn't good, why should we ask for it? What's the point in davening at all?

Q #43

A. Z., London

Disclaimer: All opinions mentioned here are presented for discussion only.

For practical ruling, please consult with your Rav.

To all our responders: Thank you for answering. Due to response volume and space restrictions, we could only quote the main points without the names of submitters.

The World Depends Upon Prayer

In your question it seems you assume you'll get what's coming to you even without prayer. But this is not certain, because the world depends upon prayer. Even all the blesseings that have been prepared for you on high will not reach you without tefillah! We find (Bereshis 2:5, Rashi) that when Hashem created the world the blades of grass were ready to grow but didn't because there was no human being to daven that they emerge from the ground. Our forefathers were likewise not blessed with children until they prayed for them. (Yevamos 64a) All creatures are obligated to pray to Hashem, which is the essence of the human experience. (Bava Kama 3a)

The Prayer Connection

Davening is connecting. Tefillah literally means to connect. (see Bereshis 30:8, Rashi) Through prayer, we connect with Hashem and express our relationship with Him. Our very life depends upon it. We trust in Him and believe in Him.

Hashem has *nachas ruach* when we daven to Him. Tefillah comes in place of the korbanos, which cause *nachas ruach*.

Prayer = Preparation

Sefer Ha'ikarim (chapter 18) addresses this question. He answers that while prayer does not change an edict, it prepares us to receive the blessing. Just as ploughing and sowing prepares the field for the blessing of crops, so too, prayer prepares humans

for the blessings of Hashem.

The Ramban (Shemos 4:10) and Maharal (Gur Aryeh, Bereshis 33) write that some brachos will not arrive without prayer.

Beis Elokim (authored by the Mabit) explains that some things require multiple prayers, the number of which is determined above.

Me'or Einayim (Yismach Lev, Yoma) explains that sometimes the yeshuah is held up by *kitrugim*, which are sweetened through prayer.

Birkas Shalom quotes his father, Ba'al HaSulam: "You must know that prayer corrects a person even more than punishment."

Pray to See It

Degel Machane Efraim (Parasha Vayera) explains the passuk (Tehilm 85:8) "Show us, O Lord, Your kindness." While whatever Hashem does is always for the best, sometimes the good is concealed. This is what David Hamelech prayed "Show us" – the good should be obvious.

Ask Hashem

Humans don't really know what's good for them. Therefore, we ask Hashem to do whatever He does for our benefit. The Kedushas Levi states it succinctly (Drush L'Rosh Hashana): "One should be cautious to only pray that his prayers be fulfilled according to Hashem's Will and Mercy."

Question for Issue #93

My question is a general one. What should I think when already stuck in a challenging situation – financial trouble or a medical crisis? How do I encourage myself?

R.S., Beit Shemesh

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 Korach

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

Finances are a sensitive point for lots of people. Making money is really not easy. Every penny is hard earned and comes with sweat. And sometimes after the sweat, it doesn't come. Is there any way to circumvent the struggle? The answer is: Yes.

Let's take a closer look at this challenge. They say that the difference between school and life is that in school you learn a lesson and take a test, while in life, you take a test that teaches you a lesson.

Poverty is a challenging life-lesson-test to strengthen our muscles. And once we take it and learn the appropriate lessons – we'll go on to the next thing. Learning all those lessons will save you the need to struggle. Learn the lesson so the test is no longer necessary!

This concept appears in the Ohr Hameir (Naso): "Uncover my eyes and I shall look at hidden things from Your Torah" (Tehilim 119:18) – Hashem tests a tzaddik in showing him one of the problems in life to see if he'll remain steadfast in his ways. But Dovid Hamelech *a"h*, in his profound understanding, didn't want the problem. He asked that Hashem reveal to him the light of the Torah, not through causes and reasons (tests and lessons), but "Uncover my eyes and I shall look." Direct revelation. What is the purpose of the Poverty Test? Simple

Excerpts from the popular shiur by Harav Hatzaddik R' Beirish Shnee balg shlit" a

The Solution to Poverty

– to strengthen our emunah and bitachon, bring us closer to Hashem, so we raise our eyes up just to Him.

And this is what Rabbenu Bachye writes in Chovos Halevavos (Sha'ar Habitachon, chapter 3):

If a man strengthens himself in the service of G-d, resolves to fear Him, trusts in Him for his religious and secular matters, steers away from reprehensible things (such as anger or arrogance), strives for the good middos, does not rebel in prosperity nor turn towards leisure, is not enticed by the evil inclination, nor seduced by the witchery of this world - the burden of exerting himself in the means to a livelihood will be removed from him... His livelihood will come to him without strain, according to his needs, as written "G-d will not bring hunger to the righteous." (Mishlei 10:3)

When we strengthen our emunah and bitachon, to trust only Hashem for everything we need, we're assured all our needs will be taken care of. And Be'er Mayim Chaim (Behar) writes: "In merit of the emunah and bitachon, the upper wellspring is awakened, and one receives all manners of blessing, plenty, and goodness, above and beyond the natural order."

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

Effects on Two Ends

On the receiving end

I owe my life to the Hashgacha Pratis hotline. Several years ago, I was an emotional wreck. The situation was so bad that I need hospitalization. Now, almost two years later, my only medication is the Hashgacha Pratis hotline. It brings me back to life, literally.

My dear granddaughter was in shidduchim for a while. We were a little anxious about it because she also had a slight medical problem. I promised to cover the cost of publishing the newsletter in 18 shuls if she'd get engaged by Rosh Chodesh Sivan. Baruch Hashem, she got engaged one week before Rosh Chodesh to a wonderful boy from an excellent yeshiva.

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!"

Call now to the sponsorship hotline (9722) 631-3742 or donate by:

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