

HASHGACHA PRATIS

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



Parshiyos Va'eira - Bo 5781 ■ Issue 57

HEART TO HEART

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

You Should have Good Friends!

Every challenge and suffering brings some form of benefit. Shlomo Hamelech taught us, "בכל עצב יהיה מותר" (Mishlei 14:23) – in every distressing situation, there is gain. Rabbeinu Bechaye lists five reasons why the righteous suffer, and six reasons for why the wicked seem to enjoy a good life. Once a person knows that his yissurim serve a purpose, it's much easier to accept them. The knowledge that his suffering may be atonement for past sins or the cause for future blessings can change the person's entire perception. In the next world, every ounce of suffering he endured is accounted for, and he will benefit from it.

However, the Chasam Sofer points out an important rule to remember. The Mishnah (Avos 1:7) enjoins a person to distance himself from a bad neighbor, to refrain from befriending a wicked person, and not to despair as a result of punishments. What is the connection between the parts of the Mishnah? As we said, all punishments a person suffers in this world are ultimately for his benefit. A person should not give up hope of seeing their *toeles*. However, there's a condition: The person has to keep away from *reshaim*. If he joins with them and suffers along with them, then his yissurim will not be of benefit to him and will not cleanse him of his sins.

A case in point is the king Yehoshafat. He was a righteous king who usually "did what was straight in the eyes of Hashem." Once, however, he purchased ships from Tarshish, and made a deal together with the wicked king Achazya. What happened? They were sent down the river towards him, and were destroyed on the way. The navi told him, "When you teamed up with Achazya, Hashem destroyed your efforts."

A person gains nothing from partnering up with sinners. Suffering with them is a loss both in *ruchniyus* and in *gashmiyus*, in this world and the next. This is especially relevant to young people, who are most susceptible to negative influences. When

the Chasam Sofer pointed this out, he was alluding to the terrible threat to Klal Yisroel that prevailed in his days, that of the Maskilim. Many top yeshiva bochurim were lured away from Yiddishkeit into their clutches. The Chasam Sofer warned the youth in his day not to speak to the maskilim at all – not even one word! Don't have anything to do with them!

This danger is still around today. There are negative forces of all kinds, particularly in the form of bad friends for our youth. We daven every day, "save us from bad friends." All the efforts we expend on the proper chinuch of our children will be useless if they fall into bad company.

A young person with bad friends chas ve'shalom, stands to lose everything in both worlds. While he may experience some transitory pleasures, he will suffer a lot more, without even gaining anything from his suffering.

When Bar Mitzvah bochurim would go to the Gerrer Rebbe, the Beis Yisroel zy"ta, he would give them a short but all-encompassing bracha. "Zolst hoben gutta chaverim" – You should have good friends. Ah, the depth of this bracha! The future results of all the efforts we expend on behalf of the child's chinuch are dependent upon this. We ask in davening "למען לא ניגע לריק ולא נלד לבהלה" – we shouldn't have to see our efforts go up in smoke.

The Brisker Rav would demand a daily report about all his children. He wanted to know where they went, whom they spoke to, played with and so on. He did this as a great tzaddik who certainly invested much in the chinuch of his children, because he was aware of the tremendous scope of influence of the company a person keeps. May Hashem grant us the joy of seeing our efforts in chinuch come to fruition. Our children should have good friends and acquaintances and grow up to be the beautiful Yiddishe kinder we hope they will be!

FROM THE EDITOR

If I Don't have Food, I am Probably not Hungry

"That vort from Rav Aharon of Karlin is fundamental," an avrech from Bnei Brak said to me. "My daughter has been in the hospital for several months already. It's very hard. But that vort from Bitachon Yomi keeps me going and helps me stay calm."

He was referring to the vort from Tuesday, Parshas Lech Lecha (number 7 on the line). Rav Aharon Hagadol of Karlin zy"ta once had no food for several days. He suddenly felt very hungry. Then he thought about the passuk, "עניני כל אליך ישרו, ואתה נותן להם... אכלם בעתו" "in its time." The Rebbe still had no food available, so he concluded that it must not yet be the time for him to eat. He then felt renewed strength, and waited *another three days* until food arrived!

Why is it that people collapse under the pressure of their challenges? Hashem gives nisyonos along with the ability to withstand them. If the food isn't here yet, it's not supposed to be here. What are we missing here?

The key word is 'בעתו' – in its right time. You have to take each thing as it comes, to live in the moment. Life becomes overwhelming only when you think ahead and worry.

This man continued to describe his challenging situation. "If I would think about how I am going to manage, how I'll have *parnassah*, who will take care of the rest of the children – I would go out of my mind! It's just by keeping my thoughts in the present that I can survive."

The man internalized the lesson and implemented it in his life. He said he sees endless chessed Hashem and hashgacha pratis through their ordeal.

Baruch Hashem! Bitachon Yomi is blessed with *siyatta dishmaya* as well, to hopefully send the right message of *chizuk* at the right time, each day.

Good Shabbos, Pinchas Shefer

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

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• Kav Hashgacha Pratis for women
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THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

It's Never too Late

An avrech in Modiin Illit shares with us that his grandfather was critically ill in the hospital. The man's sons came to be with him and cheer him up. They started singing songs of *dveikus*, stirring niggunim of closeness to Hashem and longing for the geulah. Baruch Hashem, his mood improved.

Suddenly, a man walked into their room. He wasn't wearing a kippa. "My mother is in the next room. She heard your singing, and it reminded her of her youth. She said she wants to be *chozeres b'teshuvah*."

That was a surprising development, and made my uncles feel the power of a mitzvah.

Sometime later, the man returned, saddened. "She just passed away."

That was even more powerful – to witness the *hirurei* teshuvah of a Yiddishe neshama in the final moments of life. The singing aroused her dormant soul to return to Hashem. One mitzvah leads to another!

Saved by Vatanus

Our two-year-old loves to sit in the window of our apartment, looking out at the world. Like many Israeli homes, there's a wide windowsill he sits on and metal bars protecting it. The bars on this window can be opened, but obviously, we are careful to keep them locked.

One night of Chanuka, I went to check on the toddler, and... the metal bar door was open, and the child gone! I can't even begin to describe the avalanche of horrible thoughts and feelings that washed over me during those moments.

"I got him!" someone shouted a few moments later. I looked down from the window and spotted our downstairs neighbor's teenaged son holding our precious boy.

What happened? A few months ago, that neighbor had asked if he could install his *dud-shemesh* (hot water tank) outside the building, so he could have room for the renovations he wanted to do. The tank would be directly under my window. I really hadn't wanted it, knowing that birds would be attracted to it and make a lot of mess and noise. Nevertheless, I was *mevater* and gave him my permission.

Half a year later, my son fell out of the window – and landed on the *dud-shemesh*! The neighbor's son "just happened" to be there then, and scooped him up.

When you give to others, you're really giving to yourself.

The Zechus of Giving In

My neighbor wanted to add onto his apartment, building in part of the stairwell. I did not agree to such a thing and took him to Beis Din.

However, the Dayan advised me to let him do it. It was a hard nisayon, but I

The Fastest Way to Bnei Brak

I work for Siach Sod in Yerushalayim, a center for special-needs children. On *erev* Shabbos Chanukah, I had to arrange for a girl to be transported to Bnei Brak to be with her family. I tried calling many people, but none of them could take her. Finally I found a man who was going to Bnei Brak for Shabbos and asked him to take her. He was very hesitant; he was worried about her state and conduct in the car. I assured him that she was perfectly capable of good behavior and he had nothing to worry about. He agreed that I could call him back in the event that we don't find anyone else.

Indeed, no other option worked out, and I called him back. "Okay," he said, "Bring her to Rechov Shmuel Hanavi soon."

I called the center and asked them to send her, but they told me they couldn't bring her to Rechov Shmuel Hanavi, only to the Ramot junction. I called back the man. "But I can't go there," he said. "I turn off from Shmuel Hanavi and take Highway #1 to Bnei Brak. From Ramot, I would have to take a different road, the 443. That's much longer and I'm not even familiar with it."

What could I do? I couldn't get her there. I apologized to him, but there was nobody else who could do it. Her family was expecting her. Reluctantly, the man agreed. We sent the girl in a taxi to *Tzomet* Ramot, the man picked her up and they went on their way.

An hour later, the fellow got a call from the girl's parents. "Where are you?" they sounded frantic.

"I'm already in Bnei Brak; I'll be there soon."

"You got past the accident?"

“What accident?”

They told him that on Highway #1 there was a major traffic accident, unfortunately. Some people were even stranded there for Shabbos! But he was on the 443...

The Last Chance

My name is Levi Hirshler, and I live in Beit Shemesh. In Elul 5779 I was involved in an unfortunate incident somewhere, and wound up saying a very impolite thing to a man. I felt really bad about it afterwards, but I had no idea who he was, or how to find him. I davened to Hashem that I would meet him again and be able to ask for his forgiveness.

This past Shabbos Chanuka, there was a Kiddush in my shul. When I left the building afterwards, I was walking down the street and – there he was! The man I had been looking for, all that time. I hadn't forgotten his face, since it was hounding me since the incident over a year prior. He saw me, and approached to ask directions to a certain shul. He didn't recognize me. I told him that I had been looking for him to ask mechila for that comment. He forgave me readily.

Wow, what a load off my chest! I was so grateful to Hashem for sending him to me. Of all the people in Beit Shemesh, he specifically came over to me to ask for directions. I didn't even have to go over to him – Hashem had him to walk over to me!

The next day, I was mulling over the hashgacha pratis of it, when a friend came over.

“Did you see that man who came for Shabbos?”

“Sure.”

“He died.”

I was in shock. Hashem had sent him to me at the last possible chance to get his forgiveness. This drove home the importance of reconciling with people, before it's too late...

gave in and listened to daas Torah.

When I came home, I was greeted by screaming from the kitchen! I ran in to see my one-year-old lying on the floor, his face already turning blue! My older son said he had eaten a chocolate-covered cereal ball and it was stuck in his throat. I called hatzalah and tried to reach in to pull it out – unsuccessfully. The seconds ticked by slowly until finally, I was able to pry it loose. He coughed, the confection flew out, and he started breathing again. Baruch Hashem!

I felt very strongly that my son was saved in the zechus of giving in to my neighbor.

Eighty Years, To the Day!

Esther Davidgrodsky moved to Yerushalayim with her husband from the U.S. in 1930. They lived on Rechov Rashbam 16 and spent the rest of their lives there, while all their children remained behind in America. When she passed away, with international travel so difficult in those days, no one from her family was able to come to the levaya. Somehow, even her yahrtzeit was forgotten, and none of her descendants visited her grave.

That was until this year. One of her great-granddaughters needed a yeshuah, and wanted someone to daven at her Yerushalmi ancestor's kever. She called a friend in Israel, who contacted the Chevra Kadisha; eventually they located the grave on Har Hazeisim. A relative went there to daven for great-granddaughters' recovery, but he couldn't find it. He returned the following day with a man who was familiar with the cemetery. Finally, they found it. He stared at the stone, and it hit him – *today was Esther Davidgrodsky's yahrtzeit!* Exactly 80 years before, she had left the world, far from all her children, but eventually Hashem brought them back to her.

How to Make a Living

A Yid from Yerushalayim relates: I have a steady job, baruch Hashem, but it doesn't quite cover the bills. On the side, I am sometimes able to make shidduchim, and that helps out with parnassah.

This past Elul, I went to the kever of Rav Areleh Belzer zy"ta to daven for hatzlacha to have enough money for all the costs of the coming month. There were plenty of expenses coming - Yom Tov, lulav and esrog, new clothing and more. As I was davening, the thought came to my mind that if I could make a shidduch, that would be enough – \$2000. But then I corrected myself – I'm talking to the Borei Olam, and I don't need to give Him ideas about how to help me! Instead, I just davened to have enough money to cover all the expenses.

The next day, I got a call from an old friend in America. He knew that I go to Rav Areleh's kever, and told me that a relative of his needed a yeshuah. The man wanted someone to daven at the kever for 40 consecutive days, and he was willing to pay for it.

I hesitated. I didn't really want to commit to going every day, even erev Yom Tov, Shabbos and Yom Tov. I told him I would think about it. I asked a Rav how to work it out, and realized that this might bring in enough money for the month. Besides, it was a chessed for the person who needed help.

I called him back and said I could do it.

“Great! He's willing to pay \$40 a day.”

Forty dollars for forty days? Ah, there's the money I had wanted! Obviously, Hashem sent it through a different venue than a shidduch...

Q's & A's

Q's & A's about emunah and bitachon

I wish to ask a fundamental question about proper Bitachon. If someone truly needs something, for example a place to live, should he be believing with full Bitachon that Hashem will surely send it to him. Or should he have Bitachon that Hashem can surely send it to him if He chooses to?

Q #13 for Issue 59

Y. Y. Y. Bnei Brak

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

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A Thought on Bitachon

From the shiurim on Kav Hashgacha Pratis

Kav Hashgacha Pratis is fortunate to host the shiurim of Harav Hatzaddik R' Berish Shneebalg shlit"u. He has given a series of lectures on home financial management with Torah lessons and values, particularly, emunah and bitachon. His lectures are down-to-earth, with practical discussion about how to act responsibly. Many people have been helped by his classes.

Most significantly-many families have been saved from the vicious cycle of gemachim. Some had debts in the range of millions of shekalim, and by following Rav Shneebalg's advice, they were finally able to get out of this cycle. With careful thought, planning, and especially - emunah and bitachon - they have seen that there is a way out.

People have requested a synopsis of his lectures, so we turned to the Rav for details:

The Rav begins with a story:

I was in a taxi on the way to give a shiur and the driver said he was from Tel Aviv. He begged me to come spread emunah in his city. I answered him that I'm still working on spreading emunah to myself! B'siyatta dishmaya, this is our main goal - to bring emunah to the hearts of *shomrei* Torah u'mitzvos, so that we live with Hashem and feel His hashgacha at every moment.

Baruch Hashem, in our times there is a tremendous thirst to hear the word of Hashem and strengthen our emunah. People sincerely want to live lives of bitachon.

However, it's very challenging in our days to have pure emunah. Even when we work on emunah, a thought steals in - "yes, but I'll also do this extra little hishtadlus, just to make sure..." By fighting these reflexive thoughts, we are on the way to guaranteed *shefa*. And this *shefa* is only a byproduct. The main benefit is the feeling of constant closeness to Hashem that we can acquire. Life becomes calm, sweet, and pleasant.

How did you start in this field?

I heard about a family in a terrible situation. They were at absolutely rock-bottom. The children were hungry, they picked clothing out of the garbage, and the mother davened to have a pot and stove to cook in! It was the worst situation. Where was the father? Out borrowing from gemachim, to pay off other gemachim... I decided to get involved, and Hashem helped me sort out their difficulties. The first step was to stop with gemachim. Once you resolve to do so, you begin to seek help from He who has all the money. When you daven to Him, He sends you all sorts of other ways to deal with financial needs. We saw that this cycle is not an immutable heavenly decree. Everyone can get out of it.

One mitzvah leads to another. People began contacting us to help them with their debts.

But what do I say to my son when he asks me for a new pair of shoes? Do I tell him to have bitachon?

This question plays out in a thousand areas - shoes, baby formula, chicken for Shabbos. I can tell you with confidence that if someone starts living with real bitachon, he doesn't have these questions! If you learn about it, especially Chovos Halevavos Shaar Habitachon, you know that Hashem gives everyone parnassah - whatever they need. In the beginning this is very hard. But if you get used to the idea that you have access to all the money you need, then even the children feel it. The actual amount of money in your bank account is not the point. It's an attitude, a feeling that Hashem is taking care of everything and there's nothing to worry about.

Many people defend themselves by claiming that it's the "minhag ha'olam" today to be in a cycle of debt. How would you respond to this claim?

What, if someone says the minhag is to be poverty-stricken? Do you want to keep such a minhag? Rabbosai! We could be "wealthy" and happy, if we just decide to do be. Put your energy into things that are productive, and turn to loans only for specific things, like buying a house. That is something that could be paid back and is necessary. Otherwise, avoid them at all costs! When you live in an orderly and responsible fashion, you learn to decide what is essential and what is not, and you won't need loans

to get through the month.

I'm not oblivious to money needs. I also have to provide for my family. Specifically when someone doesn't have it so easy, he has the opportunity to purify himself with emunah and bitachon. Otherwise, it's not even a nisayon.

But if until now I took loans whenever I needed, what should I do instead?

Once you know that loans are not an option anymore, there's no end of other solutions available. Listen to the shiurim to hear some of them. Trust in Hashem. Ask friends for help. Just don't go to the gemach!

Some people don't want to ever ask others for money, since the Mishnah in *Peah* (8:9) says that whoever needs money but doesn't take from others, won't leave the world until he is the one supporting others. It quotes the passuk ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח בה' והיה ה' מבטחו. So, these people argue, it's better to take loans.

I answer them with the Bartenura on that Mishnah. There's a big question here, for the Yerushalmi says the exact opposite! "Rav Acha said... whoever needs to take but doesn't - he is spilling blood, and it is forbidden to have mercy on him!"

So how do we understand this? The Bartenura explains that it depends on the situation. If the family is not managing on their own and are suffering intensely, than refraining from taking money is compared to murder (or suicide). If, however, the family can manage without the money, getting by with their essential needs, then it is praiseworthy to hold back and not accept others' gifts.

So it emerges from this discussion that if you're not managing, the right thing to do is to accept donations from other people.

Can you offer advice to those starting the process?

The Gemara in Yoma (76a) is the *yesod*. They asked Rabi Shimon ben Yochai why Hashem made the *mann* come down every day in the desert. Why couldn't He send it once a year and be finished with it? Then everyone could have their needs met beforehand.

He answered them with a mashal: Once there was a king who had just one son. The son came to him at the beginning of the year, and his father gave him a large amount of money, enough to last him the whole year. The weeks and months went by, and the son didn't come back to his father anymore. So, the king called him back and said that from now on, he would give him only enough money for one day, so that the son would have to come back every day to get his money. That way, he could see him every day!

So too, Rabi Shimon said, Hashem loves us and wants to have a relationship with us all the time. In the midbar He wanted them to daven to Him every day, so He sent enough *mann* for just one day at a time.

This is the message to us, for all time. Live with Hashem on a daily basis, ask Him for all your needs, and He'll supply you, just like He did in the midbar.

I know hundreds of stories of people who spend only cash, and they enjoy a relationship with their Source of wealth every day. "All beginnings are hard," but once you get used to it, you feel the closeness to Hashem and how He's taking care of your every need!

Effects on Two Ends

On the receiving end

I have friends who listen constantly to a line that broadcasts the latest news about lockdowns and everything. I have my own line - Hashgacha Pratis. I like to hear the latest news of what new story or shiur is available. Your chizuk is the best update for me!

My brother was going out with someone and it worried me very much. I pledged 1000 shekel to the Hashgacha Pratis line if he would find a better shidduch. Baruch Hashem, he soon did, and married a nice Chassidishe girl! I saw how well the segula works, so I pledged that if I myself would get engaged by Chanuka, I would give an additional 1000 shekel. I am happy to report that I got engaged. Please accept my donation!

On the giving end

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