

HASHGACHA PRATIS

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



Parshiyos Toldot - Vayeitzei 5782 ■ Issue 76

HEART TO HEART

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

Hashem Always Has the Upper Hand

They say hindsight is 20/20. Whenever something happens in the world -- a catastrophe, accident, or disaster, the first thing that people do is launch an investigation. Whether the investigation is public or private, everyone wants to know -- who was in charge? Who can be blamed? How did it happen? Who was responsible? And the results are fast in coming -- had they heeded the warnings, seen the signs, thought of the consequences... had you not signed -- you wouldn't have lost all the money etc. etc.

At this stage people assess the information and pass their verdict -- everything that could have, would have, and should have happened in order to avert the catastrophe. The problem is that all this talk is not only nonsense, it's an outright lie. Whatever happened was supposed to happen. It took place exactly as Hashem desired. How could we think in a way that alludes that Hashem might have, *chas veshalom*, lost control? The gemara (Shabbos 32) learns from the passuk: "When you build a new house, you shall make a guard rail for your roof, so that you shall not cause blood [to be spilled] in your house, and the *one who falls* should not fall from it." (Devarim 22:8) While we are obligated to place a guardrail around the roof so people don't fall, the "one who fell" was destined to fall there from the beginning of time. In hindsight, there are no guilty parties. Nobody is to blame, because nothing could have happened without Hashem's decree!

In perek 92 in Tehillim we read: "But You remain on high forever, O Lord." Rav Berachya quoted Rav Levi: "Forever you have the upper hand!" Hashem is always right, all the fine details, everything is clearly accounted for.

When was this passuk said? This is the perek that Adam Harishon recited on the first Friday night, after partaking from the Tree of Wisdom and being banished from Gan Eden. At that point in time, he had been stripped of his great stature, and instead of the angels preparing wine and food for him, he was banished to eating bread with the sweat of his brow, and Chava to bear children with pain. And yet he stood right there and sang: "It is good to give thanks to

the Lord, and to sing to Your name, O Most High... but You remain on high forever..."

These words that Adam Harishon spoke encapsulate everything the world has ever seen -- every catastrophe, war, and political upheaval. "You remain on high forever" -- Hashem always has the upper hand. He is forever in charge.

When a king passes a favorable judgement -- people are pleased. But when the litigant is punished and must suffer the consequences of his actions, the king is often criticized -- he wasn't aware of what had really happened; the witnesses were biased; the king is simply a merciless fellow. In contrast, when Hashem passes judgement it is completely, and totally just. Without doubt, everything Hashem rules is all mercy and kindness, all in order to do for us whatever is best for us. Therefore, in every situation, whether success or failure, the simple truth must remain foremost in our minds -- "You remain on high forever". We must memorize it, sing it, carve it in our psyche -- Hashem is always in charge.

Medrash Tanchuma writes (end of Parasha Yisro): "You shall not make with Me gods of silver or gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves." Said the Holy One Blessed be He: Idol-worshippers praise their idols when they succeed and curse them when they fail and suffer, but you are a holy nation, always give thanks for the good and for the bad." Praising Hashem is basic Judaism, the basis of a Jew. Thanking Hashem for every situation is not the result of heightened spirituality or a positive attribute. It is one of the mainstays of the Jewish nation, the reason we received the Torah. It is one of the mitzvos we mention twice a day in the Shema: "And you shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your means." Rashi explains: "And with all your means: You shall love Hashem with whatever measure He metes out to you, whether it be the measure of good or the measure of retribution." We walk the world with this simple faith: He is Good, and everything He does is truthful and right. Hashem is always in charge-- and everything is for the best.

(An excerpt from shiurim on Sha'ar Habitachon, 221-222)

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

FROM THE EDITOR

Did You Ever Hear...?

I met a friend who told me, "You know, your newsletters talk about things we haven't been used to hearing. Thanking Hashem for the difficulties, finding Hashem in pain and suffering... These concepts are slightly foreign -- they haven't been spoken about before. Yes, we know to thank Hashem for everything, and that whatever Hashem does is for the best, but thanking Hashem for the pain and suffering -- that's a *chiddush!*"

Truth be told -- this friend is somewhat correct. While this concept has been around forever and is actually mentioned in the gemara, it wasn't spoken about excessively in the past. But Hashem, in his infinite kindness, has made this concept into common knowledge in our generation.

While explaining it can take a whole book, we can suffice by mentioning the gemara in Brachos (60b): "One is obligated to bless Hashem for the bad just as he blesses Him for the good." The gemara then asks -- How could we equate the two blessings? The blessing for good news is *hatov v'hameitiv* -- the Good, who does good, while the blessing for bad news is *dayan ha'emes* -- the righteous Judge? To this, Raba answers -- while the blessings are indeed not the same, the manner of reciting them, the joy expressed in both, should be identical. Just as one blesses Hashem on the birth of his son, so too he should bless Hashem for losing a large sum of money- with joy.

The gemara (Psachim 50a) tells us that in the future, there will only be one blessing -- *hatov v'hameitiv*.

The Noda B'Yehuda recounts a memory of a speech he heard in his childhood from the great maggid, Rabbi Efrayim Reischer. He asked: Why would the Gemara state that only the blessing of *hatov v'hameitiv* will exist in the next world, instead of simply remarking that in next world there will only be good?

He answered that when one reaches the next world, he will begin recalling different incidents when he recited *dayan ha'emes*. How he lost a hundred thousand dollars and worked on himself to recite *dayan ha'emes* with the proper feeling of joy. How he listened to stories and shiurim about Hashgacha Pratis in order to arouse his awareness of what a great chessed it was to lose all that money. Recalling this will cause him to exclaim:

"What's wrong with me? How could I have said *dayan ha'emes*? I should have said *hatov v'hameitiv*!" The next world will reveal how everything was really good, in the truest sense.

So now, we can express our thankfulness to Hashem for having begun revealing to us the future world, the world of *hatov v'hameitiv*, in which everything is for the best. Mashiach's times...

Good Shabbos, Pinchas Shafer

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(Yiddish and Hebrew) - Menu 4

THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

Forgiving

R' Tzvi told the following story:

Exactly three years ago, our life came to a standstill. My daughter, a young mother of three, was diagnosed with cancer and we went to war, battling for her life. The entire family rallied to help and we, her parents, did everything possible. At one point, my wife traveled with her to the US for surgery that could, perhaps, save her life.

The morning after they set out, I was sitting in shul learning, when I heard a simple, hardworking man tell his friend how someone had made fun of him yesterday and hurt his feelings. He was so hurt that he announced, "I will never forgive that man. Never!"

I suddenly recalled the immense power of forgiveness, how people who forgive others are called 'beloved' by Hashem, so I went up to him and told him, "You know, my daughter traveled yesterday to the United States for surgery that we hope will save her life. You have power in your hands, you can save her life – please, please, forgive the man. Please do it for my daughter!"

The man looked at me. "I hear what you're saying. It's a very painful story. But what can I do? My feelings were hurt so terribly, its impossible to forgive him! My heart is bleeding, and you ask me to forgive?"

"You don't have to forgive him right now," I told him. "Take your time. I really can't place myself in your shoes. I understand you must have had a horrible experience, but think about it. You now have a chance to save a Jewish girl's life. Perhaps you can rethink this and let me know in fifteen minutes?"

I didn't have to wait fifteen minutes. Five minutes later he came to me and said, "Look, I decided to forgive that person." He called two other people over to serve as witnesses and said, "I forgive that person with all my heart and soul. In the merit of my forgiveness, may this man's daughter be healthy and well." He mentioned my daughter's full name. We all felt something important had transpired.

The operation went exceptionally well. My dear daughter was completely cured and a few months ago, against all the doctor's predictions, she gave birth to healthy twins. Hodu la'Hashem! This simple fellow who invested all his emotional stamina to forgive the man and save my daughter, was overjoyed to receive the news of our double mazal tov. "Believe me," he said, "it was so hard for me to forgive that man. But it was worth it! Look what I got in return!"

118 Years Later

Rabbi Dovid Kletzkin tells the following story:

On the 27th of Tishrei, my father's mechutan, Rabbi Chaim Binyomin Halevi Klein passed away. On Monday evening I went in to be *menachem avel*. The son of the deceased, R' Dovid Klein, told me he deserves a mazal tov on the birth of a grandchild. The bris was scheduled for Thursday. Since halacha mandates that one can wish mazal tov to an *avel*, I wished him a hearty mazal tov. One of those present mentioned that the Shulchan Aruch (194) quotes the Midrash: "When a male child is born, the entire family is healed from their pain."

At this point a halachic discussion ensued. Why did the Shulchan Aruch uncharacteristically quote a Midrash?

Someone mentioned that the Chasam Sofer answered this question. He writes that

More Shul, Less Hospital

My name is Chaim Tzvi Glendauer, and I live in Bnei Brak. A couple of months ago, I saw a tiny pink dot near my one-year-old baby Aharon's, eye. The dot grew steadily, and we soon saw it was a wart. While unpleasant, I've seen warts before on my other children, and I know that they eventually heal and fall off, so I wasn't overly concerned.

A few more weeks passed, and the wart kept getting bigger and bigger. "This must be a different kind of wart," I thought. It was constantly growing and had become infected, oozing pus and mucus all over. I took my son to the doctor.

"This wart is just too big and infected," the doctor said. "It needs to be surgically removed."

I made an appointment for the surgery. It was due to take place on Tzom Gedalya. The hospital secretary called and told me we had to be there for the 7:30 appointment for pre-op. Tzom Gedalya is a difficult day to wake up early, but I was up for the first selichos, then davening. The people around me seemed to have a lot of time. While I was sitting on needles thinking of the 7:30 appointment, the chazzan was in the Rosh Hashana mood and sang through the entire davening. Then, the Sefer Torah needed to be rolled to the proper reading because they had forgotten to roll it after Rosh Hashana. The clock was ticking away. Soon, I realized, I'd never make it to the hospital on time. I kept telling myself everything would turn out for the best and I could trust Hashem to work it out for us.

As soon as the davening was over, I raced home, picked up my son and hurried to the hospital. We got there 15 minutes late. Pre-op usually takes about an hour, so the surgeon usually comes in later. This time, the surgeon walked in just as we came in. The secretary had just stepped out, so I walked myself right up to the surgeon and asked him to take a look at my son's face. I wanted him to look at the wart, because it seemed that over Rosh Hashana it had started to improve.

The surgeon took one look at the wart and said I was right; it was starting to shrink. He decided it wasn't wise to operate on it, and it would be healthier to leave it to fall off on its own without scarring. I was overjoyed. I realized that every delay that morning had worked out for my benefit – had I come on time I wouldn't have met the surgeon until right before the operation, and only after a tiring hour of pre-op preparations would the surgery be cancelled. Every extra minute I spent in shul was equal to many more minutes I was saved in hospital stay.

Train Encounter

That morning everything that could go wrong – did.

I live in Tel Aviv and learn in a Kollel in Bnei Brak. That morning I missed the quarter to nine bus, which means the next one would only come at ten. I'd be really late if I'd wait, so I went to another place where there should have been a shuttle to Bnei Brak. After waiting there for fifteen minutes I realized the stop had been changed and the shuttle no longer stopped there. I had missed that too.

In a last-ditch attempt to get to Kollel at a normal hour, I decided to take the train. I got on a bus to the train station, but the bus driver drove slowly, and I got to the station two minutes after the train had pulled out. At that point I just gave up trying and sat down to wait for the next train, due to arrive in twenty minutes.

Twenty minutes later, a train pulled in and I got on. I saw an empty seat at the entrance, near a sweet looking, obviously non-religious boy. I asked him if I could sit there and he said, "Yeah sure, why not?"

We sat and talked. He told me about his school, an irreligious institution in which children don't even learn to say the Shema. I explained what the Shema was, how we believe in Hashem past, present and future, and that everything is from Him. We talked about emunah and he exclaimed, "Every day, from now on, I will

recite the Shema." At that point I got off the train, excited to have discovered the reason for all those missed rides... no doubt, it was worth it.

I don't know what happened later; I have no idea if anything came of the encounter. But I know that trains have conductors, and the world has its Master.

The Most Expensive Spot in the World

R' Berish Scheinblag told the following story:

It was right after the Six-Day War, and a young Kollel man found himself suddenly orphaned of his father. A sudden heart attack – and his father was gone. Alone and bereaved, the young man had to make all the arrangements for the funeral and burial. He desperately wanted to bury his father in Har Hazeisim, the Mount of Olives, but the area was not yet being used for burial. Only three years after the war did the Chevra Kadisha resume burying on the mountain, and meanwhile, people were using the Sanhedria or Har Hamenuchos cemeteries.

The young man went to speak to his rebbi, Rabbi Yehudale of Dizikov. Rabbi Yehudale told him, "Don't worry. You know, your father's burial spot has already been inscribed in heaven, have no fear."

And that's exactly what he did. With no compunctions, the young man walked into the Chevra Kadisha offices and asked them to bury his father in Har Hazeisim. The clerk realized the young man didn't understand how things worked and decided to play a joke on him. Instead of telling him it was impossible, he told him, "Go to the clerk who sits in the Jerusalem municipality and ask him for permission to bury your father on Har Hazeisim." He told him where the clerk's office was, and the young man set off. In the office, he found a clerk reading a newspaper. "What do you want?" he demanded.

"I want to bury my father on the Mount of Olives," said the young man.

"No problem," answered the clerk, absentmindedly, "very good." A minute later he caught himself – while it was very good to be buried in Har Hazeisim, it would be very, very complicated. "Well, I said I would agree, I must keep my word," said the clerk as he placed a call to the offices of the Chevra Kadisha and informed them that he gave his permission.

"You should just know, this is not how it normally goes here," the clerk explained to the young man. "They might think that you called from a public pay phone and made believe that you are me, so I'll give you a signed note, so they don't make trouble for you." He proceeded to write and sign a note stating his permission to bury the deceased in the Mount of Olives.

The young man returned to the Chevra Kadisha with the note and, strange as it was, they pulled out maps of the burial spots and asked the young man to choose where he wanted to bury his father. The young man wasn't satisfied with the maps and asked to physically travel out to the mountain and choose the spot himself. They traveled to the mountain along with people from the Chevra Kadisha and the young man chose a spot close to the Chernobyl Rabbanim's burial sites. The Chevra Kadisha representative signed his consent, and the funeral took place. The father was buried in the chosen spot.

Two weeks later, the young man came into the Chevra Kadisha offices to pay for the burial plot. The clerk said, "You don't even know where you buried your father. That spot is one of the most expensive plots in the whole world! On the Mount of Olives, near the greatest tzaddikim. Now you'll probably tell me that you're a Kollel man and have nothing to pay. Nu, I really don't know what to do with you."

He refused to deal with the young man and sent him to the head of the Chevra Kadisha. The chairman repeated what the clerk said, then asked the young man, "How much do you think you could pay?" the young man said he could pay a thousand *lirot*, in twenty installments. A large sum for an avreich, but nothing compared to the true value of the spot.

"That father," concluded R' Berish, "must not have been a simple fellow. He must have had great merit to be buried in such a holy spot, near great and holy tzaddikim. He must have also had a great zechus to have such a son who went with such strong emunah in Hashem to arrange things the best way possible. This young man is now over seventy, but the message from his story still rings loud and clear – do things with faith, and Hashem will work it all out."

(An excerpt from shiur #11)

the Midrash is quoted so that it should be so – when a member of the family passes away it indicates that *midas ha'din* is present and with the birth of a male child, halachah rules that the *midas ha'din* should pass, and the family be healed from their pain.

R' Dovid Klein's grandson was born before the grandfather passed away, so they were debating if the family would be healed from their pain nonetheless. The Maharshal writes that if the bris is held during the *shiva*, the family is cured, and even if it was before the *levayah*.

After this whole debate, I asked the mourners how old their father was, and they said he was 75 years old. "In that case," I said, "there is no question. The Butchacher Rov writes in Da'as Kedoshim that there was no judgement on the family if the deceased was over seventy."

An old edition of Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah was lying on a bench, and the mourners wanted me to show them the source. I was slightly uncomfortable about it – many old editions don't have the Da'as Kedoshim printed inside, and in those that do, the print is small and difficult to discern.

The volume was pressed into my hands and I opened it with a prayer. And lo and behold – it was at the exact place where the Da'as Kedoshim writes: "there's nothing extra [i.e. no additional *midas ha'din*] here for the mourners."

Everyone was excited and told me I had to publicize the story on the telephone line, but I thought there was nothing great about the story – things like this happen by the dozen. I got up, recited "*Hamakom yenachem*," and went home.

A half hour later, my brother called and told me what had happened next – he had come after I left, and the mourners were showing every visitor the above quote. One of the Talmidei Chachomim there was clearly excited – "Today is the 29th of Tishrei!" he said. "The *yahrzeit* of the Butchacher Rov!"

This was very special – exactly 118 years after his passing, Hashem arranged it that the words of the holy Rebbe would be repeated again and again so his lips should murmur in the grave and it should be a merit for his holy neshama, may his merit protect us all.

The Power of Protest

My name is Uriel. I work in a bakery, and many drivers stop in our shop for a cup of coffee and a pastry. Last Thursday, a driver stopped in and told me what had happened to him on his last ride.

"My name is Tzadok. I was stopped in Geula to pick up a passenger who wanted a ride out of the city. You know how those long rides go, we started talking, me and my client.

'How old are you?' he wanted to know.

'I'm probably the same age as you are,' I told him.

'Where did you grow up?'

'In Katamon,' I said.

'I also grew up in Katamon. Which school did you attend?'

I told him I had learned in a non-religious school. And what did he say? 'Me too! I know you – you are the reason I became religious!'

I was amazed. How was I connected to this person's teshuva process?

'When we were in the fifth grade,' he began, 'On the last day before Pesach, the teacher said,--I wish those who are going to eat matzos this Pesach a Chag Kasher V'sameach, and those who will not – a pleasant vacation! One of the kids got up – it was you, Tzadok, and yelled at the teacher 'How can you say that? Aren't you embarrassed – Jews who don't eat matzos on Pesach?'

'At this point, I got caught up in your protest and did something to the teacher, which I cannot repeat today. It elicited gasps from all the students, and when it was time to come back to school after the Pesach vacation, I wasn't allowed back. No other non-religious schools in the area wanted me either, so my parents ended up sending me to a religious school, where I learned Torah and mitzvos. All those merits are yours! Thanks to your protest – I became religious and came to where I am today.'

Q's & A's

Q's & A's about emunah and bitachon

Mine is a question of 'how'. I try very hard to work on my emunah and bitachon. My general approach I life is to rely on Hashem to arrange everything for us. I try to really and truly live this way, but my wife thinks this behavior is reckless and irresponsible. She often gets aggravated by my approach to life. I must add, though, that I do everything to help out at home and work hard to bring in a decent parnassah. How does one make emunah and bitachon come to life? How do you 'drive the message home', literally?
Q #28 Y.B. Yerushalayim

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

Correct Yourself

Rabbi Shlomo Cohen from Elad: Someone's credit card was stolen. He saw the many purchases that had been made on his card and he consoled himself with emunah and bitachon. Everything is from Hashem... until he realized it was his wife who used the card. All his emunah and bitachon went out of the window... Another story: a good husband bought his wife an expensive piece of jewelry which she promptly lost. He comforted her saying he was destined to lose the money and she didn't have to suffer for him. He went out and bought the same piece again.

You are the asking the question. It's you who is bothered by it. Therefore, it's your obligation to provide the answer: Is your bitachon limited to things that are your responsibility or do you also try to include things that are hers?

Rabbi Dovid Leifer from Yerushalayim: The Ba'al Shem Tov tells us that any lack you see in another is actually an area in which you yourself are lacking. If you see that your wife is not a ba'alas bitachon, I recommend you check yourself ...

Rabbi Yoel Benck from Yerushalayim: If it bothers your wife, it means Hashem sent this nisayon to test you. You must strengthen yourself even more in bitachon. When you yourself have adequate bitachon, your wife will see it's real and join you.

Rabbi Arye Farmad from Nof Hagalil; Rabbi Menashe Cohen from Tifrach; Rabbi Yechiel Michel Ponfeder from Ashdod: Bitachon is absorbed by osmosis, not by preaching. A calm, relaxed ba'al bitachon enjoys his life and everyone around him is naturally inclined to be like him and join him in his pleasurable existence. This is your job – to serve as a role model.

Everything in Due Time

Rabbi Mordechai Wallis from Bnei Brak; Rabbi Simcha Gellis from Yerushalayim; Rabbi Avraham Tzvi Kletzin from Beitur Illit; Rabbi Yehuda Ba'adani from Rechasim: Your wife is probably also a ba'alas bitachon, but it's only natural for her to express her fears and worries. This expression is a way of asking for your support. When a woman says she's having a hard time you need to empathize with her difficulties, not preach bitachon.

Rabbi Shimon Sofer from Bnei Brak; Rabbi Shimon Rotner from Ashdod; Rabbi Shlomo Schiff from Beit Shemesh; Rabbi Mordechai Glader from Beit Shemesh; Rabbi Mordechai Hakohen Malachi from Beitur Illit; Rabbi Yitzchok Tzvi Lebowitz from Tifrach: A financially difficult time is not when you talk about bitachon and emunah because it only illustrates lack of empathy and causes anger and frustration. You must understand – just as you were not born a ba'al bitachon – you had to work on it, learn and listen to shiurim, the same is true for your family. You must teach

it to them, tell stories, learn, teach, and talk about it at the Shabbos table. Thank Hashem together with your family for the past and present. These lessons are all time favorites, except in stressful times. And the message is soaked up slowly -- it takes time. At stressful times you should set the example yourself, not demand anything of others.

Every Person Has His Level

Rabb Michael Freidman from Beitur Illit: Different people have different bitachon requirements. The Gemara (Chulin 84b) writes: "One should always eat and drink less than what is within his means, and he should dress and cover himself in accordance with his means, and he should honor his wife and children more than what is within his means; as they are dependent on him and he is dependent on the One Who spoke and the world was created." **Rabbi Aharon Nachman (Brash) from Beit Shemesh** adds a quote from Sefer Ohelos Efrayim (volume I, 154) on the succah: "This is why women, slaves and children are not obligated with the mitzvah of succah -- because they sit in another's shadow: the slave sits under his master's; the youngster depends on his mother; the mother on her husband, and the husband himself is the one who sits only in Hashem's shadow."

Rabbi Yehuda Gewirtzman from Beit Shemesh: So, it seems your wife lacks the tools to feel bitachon like you do. It's not your obligation to preach to her – that will only add to her feelings of self-blame.

Rabbi Aharon Beifus from Rechasim: Everyone has a different level of bitachon. You must attune yourself to her level when dealing with her issues. Sometimes it seems easier to behave on a higher level of birachon but it's really just a test – and the right way is to behave on a lower level, according to the circumstances.

Summary

Rabbi Yishai Shlomo from Binyamina summarized it: A. At stressful times offering words of emunah is detrimental. Only listen and empathize, explaining that you are doing everything possible to fill all their needs. B. Women have a different kind of struggle with bitachon. Honor that difference. C. Talk a lot about emunah and bitachon, especially stories – the smaller, the better. D. Remember – you are your only responsibility. And if you are strong, your family will follow suit.

Question for Newsletter # 78

We hear a lot of Hashgacha Pratis stories when it comes to returning missing and lost items. Seemingly, if it hadn't been decreed that the item should be lost, it shouldn't have gone missing to begin with. Why does Hashem do it at all?

Y. H. Yerushalayim

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 Vayishlach

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

Excerpts from the popular shiur by Harav Yehuda Mandel shlit"a from Lakewood

Do What You Can

"And Eisav despised the birthright" (Bereshis 25:34). This passuk encapsulates Eisav's approach to life. Everything – or nothing at all. He saw that being good demanded a lot of him, so he threw everything away.

I was recently approached by parents whose son had fallen to doing terrible things. They asked me to speak to their son, and when I did, he told me, "You know, I have really tried hard, many times, but time and again I've failed. That's it – I've had it. I give up."

The holy Kotzker Rebbe was known to say "yishuv – shelo mida'as" – giving up is a result of foolishness. Giving up shows lack of sense, lack of awareness of one's power and abilities.

And that is really the main thing – never to give up. Try again and again, even if a sword is placed on your neck, you must never give up. The war against despair is the greatest of all wars, one which reaps grand dividends.

Learning mussar is the real solution to combating despair. Every time one learns mussar he gains something immeasurable. In Novardok they used to say that removing that which is covering over one's self is enough to change a person tremendously.

Some people learn mussar, but still see no change. Rabbi Yechezkel Levenstien zt"l used to say, "If you learned mussar -- even if you changed nothing -- it was worth it." Rabbi Yisroel Salanter said: "Even one who learned mussar and saw no change must continue to learn it

because it will eventually make a difference."

I once studied a lot about bitachon. I learned and learned and felt nothing penetrating -- I was still riddled with anxiety and worries. Crestfallen, I went to speak with my Rebbe, Reb Gershon Liebman.

"What did I gain from all my learning?" I lamented, "I see no difference!"

But he was adamant. "Of course you gained! It does something, whether you felt it or not."

Reb Liebman knew the incredible power of mussar.

People tell me, "I learn mussar and things just keep getting harder for me." It's true – that's exactly the answer: the fact that their nisyonos are getting harder is a sign that they are advancing, because as much as one is greater, his nisyonos get harder and harder.

The street is full of impurity, every step outside is like stepping into the bottom of Gehenom. Even an avreich who sits and learns Torah gets all mixed up with one step outside of the beis midrash. Why are there such terrible nisyonos? What does Hashem want from us? Hashem is so full of mercy, what are all these nisyonos?

My friends- everything is a test from Hashem! Hashem creates the circumstances in order to test us and see if we will follow in his ways or not. The Alter of Novardok used to say, "Do whatever you can, and Hashem will help." Start – and Hashem will do the rest.

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

Since I began listening to the telephone line, my life has changed immeasurably! I'm so excited that my eyes are tearing while writing this – the daily bitachon is like a voice from heaven telling me exactly what I need to hear that day. The line revives me, literally! It brings me closer to Hashem, fortifies my tefillah and simchas hachaim, and in general you could say I'm a different person today. All the shiurim on the line are so clear, sweet, and full of love that I can't stop listening. I owe my spiritual life to the Hashgacha Pratis Hotline!

On Thursday before Rosh Hashanah I listened to many stories from R' Dovid's shiurim, and my emunah and bitachon got fired up. I saw the small stories in the newsletters of the givers and receivers, and I promised that if my daughter gets engaged till Succos I would donate a large sum to this important institution. A shidduch came up as Rosh Hashana approached, and it ended in a mazal tov at the end of Succos. Since the OK arrived before Succos, I am publicizing this story.

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 (972) 631-3742 or donate by:

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