

HASHGACHA PRATIS

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



Parshiyos Va'eira - Bo 5782 ■ Issue 80

HEART TO HEART

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

A Precious Opportunity for a Simple Yid

Chazal gave a precious gift to even the simplest Yid in the world -- a mitzvah he can fulfill easily and perfectly, endless times a day. *L'olam*, forever, he can say, "Everything Hashem does is for the best." (Shulchan Aruch, OC, 230:5)

Interestingly, the commentaries on the Shulchan Aruch have nothing to say about this halachah. No disputes. Nothing at all. Everyone agrees with the Shulchan Aruch. The Beis Yosef only adds the source for this halachah: the Gemara (Brachos 60b) relates that Rabi Akiva was once travelling with a donkey, a candle, and a rooster. He went into a city to find a place to sleep and was turned away. "Everything Hashem does is for the best," he said, and went to spend the night in a field outside the city. His lamp blew out in the wind. "Everything Hashem does is for the best," he said once again. His rooster was mauled by a fox. "Everything Hashem does is for the best," he repeated. Then his donkey was eaten by a lion. Once again, Rabbi Akiva repeated: "Everything Hashem does is for the best."

When he awoke in the morning, he ventured into the city and realized that bandits had attacked it during the night, capturing many people. Had he found a place to stay, he would probably have also been captured. Had the bandits noticed a lamp in a field nearby or heard his donkey or rooster, he might also have been in trouble. Instead, his life was saved by all the "bad" things that happened to him. When the sun rose and he realized that Hashem had saved him from robbers, he told his disciples: "I already told you, everything Hashem does is for the best."

The Maharal explains that because of his faith, all those things that seemed like tragedies turned into reasons to save him. The Shulchan Aruch doesn't say that one should say this after several hours, when he sees how everything turns out for the best. It doesn't always happen. Or rather -- it rarely happens. Only rarely do we merit seeing clearly how everything fits together like a puzzle. But we should always say it, whether or not we see the solution. Had we always been shown the results, there would be no free choice. But Hashem wants us to believe

in Him and His ways, whether or not we see in with our own eyes.

The word '*l'olam*' brings to mind other mentions of this word in the Torah. We start the morning prayers with '*l'olam*': "Forever (*l'olam*) one should have fear of Heaven, and admit the truth" (Tanna D'bei Eliyahu, 21). How can one admit the truth if saying the other "*l'olam*" -- "Everything Hashem does is for the best"? Aren't there times that we don't feel it is true? If we took a loan from a gemach when the dollar was worth 5 NIS, but had to return it at a 3 NIS exchange rate, shelling out so many more shekels, can we truthfully say "this too is for the best," without feeling that we are lying? It's hard, it's a loss. In truth, however, one should say the words even if they don't feel true. The more we say it, the more it becomes part of us, ingrained in our psyche, and creates new pipelines for Hashem's blessings.

Every morning and evening we announce: "Hashem will be king *l'olam va'ed*" loosely translated "for ever and ever." Just as this passuk describes a world which is certainly good, so too, is everything else Hashem does. And one who is steeped in faith that Hashem's actions are always for the best recites the 26 *Ki l'olam chasdo* refrain in Hallel Hagadol with joy. This understanding, that everything is for the best, makes us understand that Hashem will '*l'olam*, never, "allow the righteous man falter." (Tehilim 55:23) This refrain, '*l'olam*' will be evident in the end of days, when all the creation will clearly display Hashem's Name and sing together, "Hashem will reign forever, *l'olam!*" Imagine that every time, before something goes wrong, you'd be asked, "Do you want this to happen?" While we surely would say "no," Hashem says, "yes!" While we sometimes merit seeing how good it was in the end, most times we don't. But we must always remember -- there was an announcement that it should take place, and it is part of the greater scheme of the world, Hashem's good to humanity.

May we always merit fulfilling this halachah, and through it be blessed with infinite blessing and success.

(From lesson 230 on Sha'ar Habitachon)

FROM THE EDITOR

The story before the end

You open your eyes one morning and see -- nothing. The world has gone dark. Slowly, you get your bearings and realize that you are not in your own bed at home -- you are in a pitch-black room. Who put you there? And why?

Suddenly, the room is flooded with light. You see your father standing right there next to you pointing to the ground. "My dear son, I brought you here," he says, "because the ground here is filled with diamonds. Go ahead, collect them." And then, just like that, the room goes black again.

You no longer hear your father, nor do you see him. Although you know he is right there with you in the room, his presence is hidden. But the diamonds are there, waiting to be gathered. You start working.

After a while, your little brother shows up with an upside-down smile. "What's wrong with you, bro?" you ask. "Why the long face? We've just seen the light, we know why we were here. Our father is right here with us. We both saw the diamonds. Why are you crying?"

"Dear brother," says the little one, "it's precisely that blinding flash of light that causes me misery. It reminds me of those few sweet moments in my life. The memory makes me depressed." As the big brother, you'll surely know how to comfort him and say, "You don't understand, little brother. The purpose of those few moments were to fill us with energy! They showed us where we are -- we are in a wonderful place; the dust is rolling with diamonds. All we have to do is bend down and pick them up! And our father is right here with us! That moment of clarity illuminates the present, it serves as a constant reminder of our place and mission! You are right about the present, right now it's dark, but keep the memory of those moments of light, and they'll brighten your future."

People ask me, "What's the point in Hashgacha Pratis stories? What do we gain from hearing them? So, fine, there are some nice stories with happy endings. But those are the minority. Most stories are still awaiting their happy conclusion."

Tzaddikim of yore established the custom of telling these stories to illuminate our present. True, most of our lives take place in the dark state of *hester*. Hashem's presence is hidden. But when we talk about the *giluy* -- about the times our existence was illuminated and bright, when Hashem's presence was clear -- it illuminates our present, shines the light of Hashgacha on our present life. We remember that Hashem created and continues to maintain the world, doing only good for us. Emunah, our tzaddikim tell us, is greater than seeing. A Hashgacha Pratis story figuratively 'turns on the light' in the dark room and we catch a small glimpse of the reality. We 'see' it. But when the story still hasn't reached its happy end, we need faith to see the light. Emunah brings us to much higher and greater places, both in *ruchniyus* and in *gashmiyus*.

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THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

Saved by a Blessing

My two-year-old nephew just started learning the brachos. The first bracha my brother taught him is the bracha of *Shehakol*. My little nephew learned quickly, and before placing anything in his mouth he makes a loud, resounding *Shekaol neheye bidvaro*.

One night, after she put him to bed, my sister-in-law heard a resounding *Shehakol* coming from the kitchen. How could he have gotten into the kitchen while he was supposed to be sleeping in bed? My sister-in-law ran into the kitchen and caught the toddler just as he was about to fill his mouth with Acamol pills!

Although the Acamol is stored in a baby-proof bottle, high up in the highest closet in the kitchen, that rambunctious toddler had gotten to them. Only the bracha brought his mother running in the nick of time.

Driving the Driver

We had a family wedding and really wanted to make it on time. We made all the arrangements, got everyone ready, but the taxi driver got stuck in traffic and we missed the chuppah. My wife was really upset about it, and I, who had recently heard Reb Dovid's shiur about, "Everything Hashem does is for the best", tried to calm her down by reiterating that everything was for the best.

The taxi driver must have been listening to me because he suddenly interrupted, "You want to know how everything is for the best? I'll tell you. I was driving my car around the center of Yerushalayim waiting for a ride, but nobody needed rides just then. Suddenly, I got a message from the operator of my taxi company that they needed a car in Ramot. I jumped to take it. When you have nothing, even driving out of your way is worth it.

"I drove out to Ramot, but just as I pulled up to the address, I saw my customer's coat fold into another taxi. Oh, well. He must have given up and found another driver. I felt like a total *schlimazel*. I drove around a little, and two minutes later two guys stopped me and asked me to take them to the Sha'arei Tzedek emergency room.

"I was glad to have found a ride at last, and drove them over to Sha'arei Tzedek. Just as the two got out, I collapsed. My passengers ran in and called the doctors. It turned out I had suffered a massive heart attack and their quick response saved my life. The doctors told me that had I not received the medical attention when I did, I would have probably been dead. That ride, or the lack of the other rides, actually saved my life. And I was even paid to drive myself to the ER..."

Just in Time

One Shabbos afternoon last year I happened to leave the house late for Minchah, and found myself catching Minchah in a nearby shteibel instead of my regular shul. I stayed for seuda shlishis and was treated to a story from a guest speaker.

And this was his story:

Many years ago, I used to live in Tzefas and was active in a local kiruv organization. Once a week I would join a friend who had a car, and we would drive to one of the neighboring villages to spread Yiddishkeit.

One day, I slid into the front seat and

How I Became a Millionaire

I work in a factory as production manager. I often meet with different customers to iron out details of their order.

I was once at a meeting with a wealthy *gvir*, a frum Yid who wanted to sign on a large contract with my factory. We sat for a couple of hours ironing out the details of the contract and Baruch Hashem, we were both pleased with the outcome. When we took a short break for refreshments he sat back, relaxed, and told me how he had become rich.

"I am the youngest of a large family," he began his story. "My father, may he rest in peace, worked hard to put bread on the table. Baruch Hashem, he managed to marry most of us off. All of my brothers got apartments, but when it was my turn, he was already sick, and a short while later, he passed away. After the *shiva*, my brothers sat together to discuss how to divide up his estate. I was sure I would receive his apartment since I had none of my own, but some of my brothers thought otherwise. We are ten brothers, and as you know, ten brothers have ten opinions. In general, they seemed to lean towards dividing up the apartment between all of us. One of my brothers even went so far as to rent it out. Within a short time, I found myself in my own rented apartment, with no financial help.

"I was, understandably, very upset with my brothers. I went to a rav and asked him if I could, halachically, demand my father's apartment for myself. He said that I could rightfully do so. 'However,' he told me, 'I have an *eitz* worth its weight in gold. Peace is worth millions. It is priceless! Don't fight, and you'll see, you'll only gain from it.'

"I decided to heed his advice. Don't think it was easy – my family was growing, and I needed *parnassah*. It was hard, and I worked myself to the bone. Every time I passed by my childhood home, I would think of my brothers living calmly in their own houses while I worked my days and nights only to cover the rent.

"Slowly, I learned a profession and started advertising a service I could provide. In the beginning customers came in a slight trickle and I counted my earning in the hundreds. After a while, more and more people started using my services and the trickle became a stream. I had to take in workers and then more; soon I opened another branch, and after a few years I was counting my earnings in the millions. Hakadosh Baruch Hu sent His blessings in a way I wouldn't have imagined even in my wildest dreams. I was able to buy my own apartment, and much much more.

"A while back, one of my brothers who had been opposed to giving me the apartment needed a medical procedure that cost a half a million. I was, Baruch Hashem, able to cover it myself, out of my own pocket. Although he didn't stand by me then, I decided I owed it to him – had he not been opposed to giving me that apartment, I wouldn't have come to my present state of wealth. And the truth is, since that donation to my brother, I've seen even greater success in my business."

The Journey of Thanksgiving

When my daughter was two years old, she experienced something totally normal – she came down with a fever. In the beginning it looked like a regular virus, but when the fever would not recede for a few days, the doctor sent her for bloodwork. Everything came back clear, but the fever would not go away.

This time the doctor sent her to the ER. And so, we found ourselves on the first day of Chol HaMoed Pesach in the hospital. There, an ultrasound scan showed an infection we couldn't have known about otherwise, and she was treated with antibiotics. For the last day of Pesach, she was discharged with oral antibiotics and we hoped that the story was behind us.

It was not to be.

It seemed that the baby had become dehydrated because of the fever, and her kidneys were affected. Although everything was currently fine, she needed yearly checkups with the nephrologist to make sure everything would remain that way. Her kidneys were scarred, and there was no way, according to the nephrologist, that the scarring would go

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This prognosis was hard for us to accept – how could a child, born a healthy little girl, suffer from damaged kidneys due to a virus? But every year when we went to the nephrologist it was the same story. “Everything is OK now, but we have to keep following up. There’s no way her kidneys will go back to being what they were.”

At this year’s checkup, the nephrologist was flabbergasted. He just couldn’t contain himself and shouted, “Look at that! Her kidneys are clear! There’s no sign left on the scan! You have two 100% healthy kidneys!” He really couldn’t believe it.

We were overjoyed. We thanked Hashem with all of our hearts, and I am publicizing this story here with deep gratitude, so everyone should know that Hashem makes miracles and cures the ill in ways no doctor could have anticipated.

How did such a miracle happen? I have no idea. I don’t know what goes on in Heaven and in what merit Hashem decided to give my daughter her health back, but I’d like to share with you something that occurred the day before our appointment.

The day before, I had a certain procedure done in the Hadassah Hospital. I was called in for a 4:30 appointment with instructions to be there a half hour early. I finished Mincha at 3:40 and got into a taxi, hoping to be in the hospital by 4, but it was not to be. The road was blocked, and the taxi crawled along. I had only 90 shekels in my pocket and the taxi meter was ticking away. My first thought was, ‘If the meter passes the 90-shekel mark, I can always go out and withdraw more from an ATM machine near the hospital.’ But then I thought, ‘And what’ll happen if the ATM doesn’t work? Better I should trust Hashem than trust an ATM machine.’ And I decided I would trust Him to arrange everything. And arrange He did.

When we pulled up at the hospital, the meter showed 98 NIS. The driver told me 90 was fine with him.

When I got out, I had no idea where to go. The Hadassah Hospital is a huge complex, more like a town. Again, I placed my trust in Hashem and took the elevator down to the first floor. I saw a doctor and showed him the letter I had received. He knew where I had to go. “I am going right there. Here, let’s go together.”

When I got to the waiting area, I was called right in. I was glad I didn’t have to wait there, with the TV screen blaring away.

Baruch Hashem, the treatment was successful. As soon as I got out, my wife called to tell me that a check I had been waiting for had just arrived. I thanked Hashem profusely.

I left the hospital and stood at the bus stop, but then realized I had no bus card. I decided to trust Hashem to send me someone who would help me. And that’s exactly what happened – someone came up and offered to pay for my ride home.

I was so overflowing with gratitude for the way Hashem had arranged everything that day. I decided to spend the long ride home thanking Him.

I started thanking Hashem for every detail of my life. I thanked Him for my eyes, my eyebrows, my beard and payos. I thanked Hashem for looking normal. I thanked Hashem for every one of my limbs, for my family, children and children-in-law, grandchildren, their health, and the joy they give us. I thanked Hashem for my seven-year-old with the kidney problem, and asked Hashem that she be cured. I was so overcome with gratitude that tears ran down my face. When the bus let me off near my house I realized the ride had been too short for everything I had to thank Hashem for.

The next day, at the nephrologist, we learned our daughter had two 100% healthy kidneys.

Thank You, Hashem!

Of Spirit and Scent

I am a *yungelit* from Monsey. This past Motzaei Shabbos I was gifted by Hashem with a moment of revelation of pure Hashgacha Pratis. This is what happened:

On Friday night, the 9th of Kislev, my two-year-old who was running around the house, discovered a forgotten box of *besamim*. It wasn’t the one we use to sniff on Motzaei Shabbos. It was a box someone had distributed in shul on Yom Kippur, and I must have brought home on Motzaei Yom Kippur, dropped somewhere, and forgotten.

Although we don’t have the custom of sniffing *besamim* on Friday night, since the spices were spilled on the table, we all recited the proper blessing and enjoyed their scent.

When she cleaned up after Shabbos, my wife found the original box of *besamim* from shul. It had a sticker on it: Donated *l’iluy nihsmas... niftar*: 9 Kislev.

asked the driver, “Where are we going today?” He, being just as spontaneous as I was, slid his finger around the map and stopped: “Tirat Hakarmel.” So Tirat Hakarmel it was.

We got on the road, and since the route to Tirat Hakarmel passes right by Meron, we decided to drive up and see if anyone needed a ride.

At the exit to Meron, we saw two Yidden, one obviously religious, and the other – obviously not. We stopped and offered both a ride.

“Where do you need to go?” I asked the religious one. “Tirat Hakarmel,” he said.

“Great,” we answered in unison. “That’s just where we were headed.” The other needed to reach Akko which is also on the way. We took both, and set out.

The not-yet-religious fellow sat in the back seat looking like he’d swallowed a whole fish cold. He spent the entire ride ogling us with his big eyes.

After he got off in Akko, I turned to the religious fellow. “What was wrong with that guy?”

“I’ll tell you,” he said. “When I came up to the exit, I met him standing there. He had been waiting for half an hour and nobody had come by at all. When I told him I need to reach Tirat Hakarmel, he said, ‘Forget it. You’ll never find a ride here. I am going to Akko, which is a large city, and nothing is coming by. And Tirat is a tiny village so far off the beaten track.’ But I insisted I would get a ride quickly since I am a *mohel*, and whenever I am on my way to perform a Bris Mila I always got a ride within minutes. ‘You’ll see,’ I told him, ‘Give it two minutes, and I’ll have a ride.’

“And that’s just what happened. Two minutes later you two pulled up and offered me a ride right to Tirat Hakarmel. No wonder he looked thunderstruck! He was sure either you or your friend were Eliyahu Hanavi himself!”

I put this story away in storage, waiting for the right time to put it to use. And that time came a few weeks ago.

The bachurim in the yeshiva where I teach had learned an entire Maseches with great diligence, and the staff decided to treat them to a day trip to Meron. The yeshiva is small and of meager means, so I set off with the entire class, fifteen boys, with only a few hundred NIS in my pocket. Obviously, there wasn’t enough to rent a private van, and we used public transportation.

Although we set out of our hometown in Beit Shemesh pretty early, there were a lot of setbacks and traffic. By the time we finished praying in Meron and were ready to start out home, it was almost eight o’clock at night. We planned on catching the eight o’clock bus to Yerushalayim, but the bus was full and drove right by.

What were we to do? Here I was, with fifteen teenage boys, stranded in Meron in the dark. The next bus to Yerushalayim was at ten, but by the time we’d get to Yerushalayim, we’d miss the last bus to Beit Shemesh. And with the money I had, there was no way I could hire a fifteen-seater even to Tzefas.

The boys started getting nervous, so I pulled out the story I told you at the beginning. I told them about the *mohel* who was on his way to a bris in Tirat Hakarmel and how he got a ride. “Hashem can do anything for us,” I promised the boys. “He can even send us a fifteen-seater to take us home.”

A few minutes later, a fifteen-seater pulled up and offered us a ride, free of charge, to Natanya. I decided to do Natanya, then catch a bus from there to Yerushalayim. But I was stopped by another Yid who also was on his way to Beit Shemesh. “Don’t go to Natanya,” he said. “Wait, soon you’ll have a direct bus to Yerushalayim.” But I didn’t know what would happen with the next bus, and decided to take the ride.

By the kindness of Hashem, we were able to catch the bus from Natanya to Yerushalayim. By twelve-thirty we were all safely back in Beit Shemesh. And just so I could appreciate Hashem’s chessed, I learned what happened to the other Yid. He stayed there waiting and only got home at three a.m..

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Q's & A's

Q's & A's about emunah and bitachon

News of disasters and tragedies cause me to shake with fear. I worry that these things might happen to my close family. How do you overcome worry? Isn't worrying the opposite of bitachon in Hashem? Do I calm myself and think 'It won't happen to me,' or is that simply deceiving myself?

Q #32

C.K. Modin IIIit

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

Hashem Is My Shelter

Rabbi Yaakov Schlesinger from Haifa; Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Oman from Modiin IIIit; Rabbi Nechemia Eliav from Afula: The Rishonim have already debated if saying "it won't happen to me" is the way to go. If it calms you, you can certainly travel this route. This is clear from the story of Hillel the Elder, the Ben Yehoyada (Beitzta 16), and Hamaspiq L'ovdei Hashem (chapter 8). **Rabbi Dov Kaufman from Modiin IIIit** adds that according to Rabbenu Yonah one is obligated to trust that Hashem will help him, as he writes (Sha'arei Teshuva, third gate, 52): "We are warned here that if one sees disaster is near, he must fill his heart with faith in Hashem's salvation and trust in it."

Rabbi Meni Darchi from Ramat Gan: You are not the only person to hear of such tragedies. Why isn't everyone walking around worried? Could it be that you believe, maybe subconsciously, that you somehow have control over things in the world, and then, when this belief is shaken you feel like you are left high and dry? You must work on the thought that everything is in Hashem's hands. You have no control over anything that happens, or may happen. This will save you from the devastating feelings of helplessness.

Rabbi Dovid Binyomin Zussman from Yerushalayim; Rabbi Chaim Zvi Glander from Bnei Brak; Rabbi Shlomo Stern from Bnei Brak; Rabbi Moshe Deutch from Yerushalayim: Hashem wants to do what's best for people and everything we go through is for our benefit. So, what's there to fear? If Hashem wants it to happen, it'll happen. And if not – not. And even if it will happen, Hashem will help us. And **Rabbi Yisroel Klein from Bnei Brak** adds that even this thought itself will fill us with serenity and faith.

Rabbi Nitai Idani from Yerushalayim: I recommend you learn from Chovos Halevavos Sha'ar Habitachon on a daily basis. And also, reciting chapter 91 in Tehilim is recommended to ward off fears (Moreh Nevuchim, II, 51). **Rabbi Yehuda Aryeh from Beitar IIIit** adds: Make sure to answer "Amen Yehei Shmei Rabba" aloud as Chazal tell us (Shabbos 119b) it helps annul evil decrees. And after the decree is annulled, there is nothing more to fear.

Straightening Our Hearts

Rabbi Yishai Aboud from Tel Tzion; Rabbi Rami Buzaglo from Elad; Rabbi Yosef Dushinsky from Haifa; Rabbi Yehoshua Cohen from Yerushalayim; Rabbi Yechiel Brand from Beitar IIIit; Rabbi Ariel Karmi from Bnei Brak; Rabbi Aharon Beifuss from Rechasim: Fear is meant to make us greater – to arouse in us fear and awe of Hashem, thus causing us to correct our actions and repent. Sifrei Chassidus tell us that fear of physical things is "fallen fear" – it is a call from Hashem to repent. When we do our part, we no longer have anything to fear. To this, **Rabbi Zalman Klein from Afula** adds a passuk (Vayikra 26: 3-6): "If you follow my statutes... and you will lie down

with no one to frighten [you]" – tzaddikim explain that when we follow Hashem's statutes all fears and worries dissipate. **Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Twersky from Elad:** Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky would explain the passuk: "The one went away from me, and I said, 'He has surely been torn to pieces'" (Bereshis 44:28) as follows: Yaakov Avinu was surprised at himself 'How could I have fallen to such thoughts?' The answer is because the 'One' went away from him. When Hashem, the One, is forgotten from heart, fears take His place. Fear of tragedy is a result of lacking emunah.

I Suffer From What I Fear

Rabbi Eliezer Roth from Yerushalayim: Tzaddikim tell us that good thoughts bring on good tidings. Our thoughts can affect reality, and fears can come true. Fear is a feeling Hashem created so that we fear Him, and also – to protect ourselves from danger. Fears and worries can actually come true. **Rabbi Mordechai Glendauer** quotes from the Arvei Nachal (Vayetzei): "Fear, characteristically, has a magnetic pull -- it attracts the very thing the person fears like a magnet... therefore, the best advice is to remove it from his mind so whatever it is will not happen."

Fear Not

Rabbi Shlomo Shimon Rotman from Beit Shemesh: The Gemara in Brachos (60a) recounts that when Hillel the Elder returned from a long journey and heard sounds of screaming from his town, he said, "I am sure the sounds do not come from my house."

How was Hillel so sure the screaming wasn't coming from his house (indicating that tragedy had struck)? The commentators explain that Hillel taught his family emunah -- faith that everything is from Hashem and for the best. Nobody ever screamed in his house. When our lives are steeped with emunah, nothing that happens is ever bad. There's nothing to scream about.

Rabbi Avraham Shalom Shisha from Yerushalayim; Rabbi Yehuda Frankel from Ashdod; Rabbi Chaim Meir Katz from Ashdod; Rabbi Meir Wallis from Bnei Brak: Worry and anxiety severely compromise our quality of life, both spiritually and physically. Therefore, you must do everything it takes to get rid of it. People who suffer from anxiety must also consider that it may not be a result of lacking emunah but rather of a weakened emotional state. Sometimes, a psychologist or psychiatrist are what it takes to overcome it.

Question for Issue #82

Hashem gave me very rambunctious children. I try my best to deal with them calmly, but I sometimes find myself loosing it. How do I remain in control of myself? I am not looking for educational advice but for direction in my own internal work. What can I do?

N.S., Beit Shemesh

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A Thought on Bitachon

From the shiurim on Kav Hashgacha Pratis

Rav Shmuel Shneur was a beloved talmid of Rav Gershon Liebman zt"l. He was a great tzaddik, talmid chacham and *marbitz* Torah. He was once visiting in Lakewood, my hometown, on a sweltering hot summer day. The roads were literally sizzling in the heat, and the town was deserted. Everyone was home trying to cool off. I was standing at the window looking outside when I saw Rav Shneur taking a walk. I ran out to him and asked, "How can you tolerate this horrible heat?" he looked at me puzzled. "Tolerate? What's wrong with it? I enjoy it!"

Yissurim are a gift from Hashem. There's nothing like *yissurim* to push us to change and grow. Take, for example, a couple suffering from lack of shalom bayis. Instead of walking around upset because of the mistake they both must have made, they can try to find the positive in the situation. A lack of

Excerpts from the popular shiur by
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Strolling in the Sweltering Heat

shalom bayis can teach a person to give in, to have patience, to develop an optimistic outlook, to go the extra mile... Each and every one of our middos can be refined through this sort of ordeal.

All *yissurim* are holy. They are Hashem's messengers. Even if we don't see what's good about them, that's their mission, and they'll fulfill it. Those who know that this world is transient, passing – just a blink and it's gone, know to appreciate *yissurim*. And should you wonder about their value if you enjoy them so much that you no longer suffer as a result of them? The Alter of Novardok said, "One who has already purified his middos to the extent that he no longer suffers pain from his *yissurim*, is nevertheless considered to be undergoing *yissurim* and loses nothing."

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 am an avreich. I live in Beit Shemesh and I owe you a tremendous debt of gratitude.

I recently married off my third child. In your merit, I have been learning about emunah and bitachon. When I married off my first two, I borrowed large sums of money. My debt weighs me down like a ton of bricks. This time, when my third got engaged, I decided not to take on more debt and saw open miracles. Baruch Hashem, I was able to marry off this child without taking out a single loan. I told the entire story on the main telephone line.

On the giving end

Last month I donated this newsletter's distribution in ten shuls, hoping that in this merit, I would be able to sell my apartment. My name was also mentioned at the graveside of the author of the Chovos Halevavos, and I promised that if I managed to sell the apartment, I would donate another ten shuls. Baruch Hashem, my apartment was sold!

C.S., Bnei Brak

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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