

HASHGACHA PRATIS

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



Parshiyos Behar - Bechukotai 5782 ■ Issue 89

HEART TO HEART

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

The Investment That Never Fails

Rabbenu Bachaye describes an amazing phenomenon: a grain of wheat. What is so exciting about a wheat berry? When disconnected from the ground, it shrivels up and dies. But inside the earth, it sprouts and grows into new wheat stalks, producing many, many berries. So many, that ten thousand wheat berries can grow from one single kernel.

Now, how is it possible for such a weak cause – one single grain of wheat – to grow bushels and bushels of grain? And the truth is, it isn't. The only reason thousands and thousands of grains of wheat grow from one kernel is Hashem's decree.

Herein lies a message for us all: there's no need for great and major investments in order to reap rewards. Even one small grain of effort is enough for Hashem to provide for us, as long as we hope for Hashem's blessings. Because in truth, any effort we invest is too small and insignificant in comparison to the results we wish to see. All we really can do is hope and trust Hashem to deliver through whatever simple means He gave us to work with.

Here Rabbenu Bachaye teaches us that we must not wear ourselves out worrying and trying to **make something earlier than it should be, or postpone that which should take place; to multiply that which Hashem made less, and to shrink that which Hashem multiplied** in worldly matters.

Our efforts should be invested in what is really ours – the Torah and mitzvos we learn and perform. Only in regard to spiritual matters is every bit of effort important and valuable.

The Kamenitz mashgiach, Rabbi Moshe Aharon Stern zt"l was the grandson of the famed Rabbi Yaakov Yosef Herman zt"l (whose life is described in "All for the Boss."). He was once visiting in Switzerland to fundraise for his yeshiva and faced two possibilities: to daven Shacharis with an earlier minyan and a smaller congregation, or to daven later in a larger shul with a more affluent congregation. Being that he had always been scrupulous to recite Shema with its preceding brachos before the *zman*, he decided to daven in the smaller shul.

After Shacharis, the Rav met another fundraiser who was in town. "Too bad on you, you missed out!" the second fundraiser informed him. "I davened at the later minyan and there was a wealthy guest visiting from France. He gave every fundraiser a hundred Franc note. Had you been there, you too would have earned the money. Because you had to daven early, you missed out!"

Rabbi Stern would not hear of this reasoning. "Impossible!" he exclaimed. "There is no way that I could have missed out from scrupulousness in halachah! I merited to say Shema on time, and it is impossible to lose out as a result."

The second fundraiser wasn't impressed, "You with your bitachon, don't have money, and I, without your bitachon, have a hundred Francs!"

He spoke with such conviction that Rabbi Stern was afraid his words would damper his bitachon in Hashem. He davened, "Hashem, please don't let those words make a dent on my bitachon in You!"

For Minchah, Rabbi Stern prayed in the main synagogue. The French donor was there again, and noticed the tzaddik's fervent prayers. The sight touched his heart and after the services were over, he approached him and asked him who he was. When he showed him the receipt book for the Kamenitz yeshiva, the man handed him a hundred-Franc bill. "This is for you!"

After Minchah, Rabbi Stern sat down to learn just as he would in yeshiva. When the donor saw him learning so seriously, he approached him again and handed him another 300 Francs.

During Maariv, the donor kept an eye on him, and watched how he prayed Shemone Esrei. He was impressed.

After Maariv, the man approached him and said, "I will be returning to France soon. I brought some money with me to donate to charity and I need to finish it up. I see you are a special person and I want to give it all to you. Here, take all what's left." And he handed the Rav a thousand Francs.

Meanwhile, the other fundraiser was also in shul. He stood by looking with pursed lips, clearly recalling the scathing words he had uttered just that morning.

"I sinned with my words," he said to the Rav when the donor left. "I spoke improperly. I was left with a hundred francs, and you, with your bitachon in Hashem, earned a blessing of fourteen hundred Francs in cash!"

That's when the Mashgiach showed him the Midrash in Parashas Re'e (5). The Midrash quotes a passuk: "Fortunate is the man who listens to me to watch by my doors day by day." (Mishlei 8:34) Then it explains: "There is no man who listens to Me and loses out." And the Midrash also writes: "Said the Holy One Blessed be He: if you watched mine, I will watch over yours."

If you do Hashem's will, you will not lose out.

(Taken from shiur 42 on Sha'ar Habitachon)

FROM THE EDITOR

Take the Plunge

Now we are in the month of Iyar, and our heart is overflowing with gratitude to Hashem for four full years of Hashgacha Pratis – the newsletter and hotline that has made inroads in the Jewish world. Four years of inspiration, of learning about emunah, Hashgacha Pratis, and bitachon.

People remind me of the story about the righteous woman that spread and spread, making ripples in the community until, finally, the story led to the birth of the Hashgacha Pratis hotline.

A few months ago, I was talking to a Yid with a lot of experience in publishing newsletters.

"How many copies do you print?" he asked

"Almost a hundred thousand," I told him.

"I don't believe you," he gasped.

"Don't," I said. "Here, listen for yourself. I'll dial the office to ask them how many copies they printed this week." I dialed in, and the man heard the number.

"Listen, this is absolutely impossible. Impossible! *Zenes!* A miracle!"

"Tell me," people come up and ask me, "How can such a famous institution not have major donors to support it?"

Every administrator longs for the peace and quiet of steady sponsors that keep his institution afloat, for the serenity that comes with not having to constantly fundraise. Hashem, however, wants the Hashgacha Pratis institution to exist in this way. He wants for everyone to be a part of it! Hashem wants all of Am Yisrael involved. This newsletters is yours – your lessons, your stories, your insights on relevant questions. And the tremendous merits of *zikui harabim* are also yours.

Now, four years in, I can't stop praising Hashem for giving us the emunah to start, and to keep going. We are holding on tight and jumping into a great new endeavor. You are now holding the third newsletter published in nearly 150,000 copies, sent to 5,221 distribution points, and appearing in 491 communities in Israel alone (and innumerable communities around the world!)

The *zechuyos* are here, waiting for you. Turn to the back of this newsletter for sponsoring and dedications. May you merit to bring the light of emunah to every corner of the world, and feel Hashem's protection wherever you go.

Good Shabbos Pinchas Shafer

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

You can also join the many Jews who have changed their lives, by calling:

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• Kav Hashgacha Pratis for women
(Yiddish and Hebrew) - Menu 4

HASHGACHA PRATIS HOTLINE
Yiddish, Hebrew, English.

THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

Cash for Credit

I live in Bnei Brak.

One day, I saw a sign announcing a 200-NIS discount if I'd sign up for the buyers' club in a supermarket near my house. Since I am already their regular customer, I am already a member, but the sales representative told me I could cancel and sign up again to get the discount. No problem.

This sounded like a great way to make 200 NIS, but my wife burst my bubble. She said it didn't sound honest to her, because the supermarket intended for it to be a tool to bring in new customers, not regular customers. We argued about it for a while. Finally, she convinced me it was wrong, and I gave up on the idea.

The next day, when I was out shopping, I heard someone calling my name. I turned around and saw it was an elderly man whom I had helped in the past. I approached him and saw he was smiling from ear to ear.

"I've been trying to reach you for a few days now," he said. I apologized, but he explained. "No, I didn't mean to ask you for more help. I wanted to thank you. You helped me with something the other day, and it all ended up so well. Here," he said, pulling out a 200 NIS bill, "I want to pay you for it."

I tried to refuse. I told him it was really nothing, but he was stubborn. I ended up taking the bill just to please him.

I felt that Hashem was showing His approval to me. I had overcome the urge to take a 200 NIS discount dishonestly, and He had sent them to me in the most honest way there is, and in cash.

An Egggy Story

Erev Pesach was fast approaching, and I heard there would be a shortage of eggs. Recalling the shortage two years ago, when women stood there with beaters in hand and no eggs to speak of, I ran around trying to secure a few trays.

On Wednesday, 12 Nissan, on my way to shul for Shacharis, I stopped at the corner store and asked for eggs. "I don't have any" was the answer. I tried another store but got the same answer. Now, I was getting nervous. Though I hadn't davened Shacharis yet, I decided it was urgent. Where would we get eggs for Yom Tov?

I ran to another store. There, I was overjoyed to find two trays of eggs. Not one, two! I quickly paid for them and left them in a building near my apartment. On my way to shul, I called my children and told them to go down and pick up the trays.

I'm not sure how it happened, maybe it was my son's excitement at finding two trays of precious eggs, but somehow, the majority of those two trays found their way to the sidewalk. My son must have slipped, and instead of turning into Pesach lokshen, they became scrambled eggs

Land of Milk and Honey

A Yid from Lakewood recorded the following story:

The Rav of my shul is a great ba'al chessed and machnis orchim. All the meshulachim from Eretz Yisroel stop at his house. He gives them food and lodging, and gives us, his congregation, a taste of Eretz Yisrael. You can almost always find someone from Eretz Yisrael in our shul. Some of these visitors are great talmidei chachomim and tzaddikim. Their presence influences the whole shul, and we all benefit from the exalted atmosphere.

I was once amazed by a visitor who was staying in our kehillah for several days. He always wore a calm, relaxed expression on his face. 'Where did he get that sense of calm?' I wondered. 'He's far from his home and family, but somehow, he seems to have everything he needs.'

One day, I saw another congregant talking to him. After they parted, I approached him, "How do you know that Eretz Yisroel'dike Yid?"

"He is from Bnei Brak. His grandfather had a grocery store which I used to frequent as a kid."

The name of the street sounded familiar. "Sounds interesting. My grandfather also lived on that street. I wonder if he knew him."

As soon as I had a chance, I called my father. "Tatte, do you remember a grocery in Bnei Brak on such-and-such street?"

"Sure, I remember it," my father sighed nostalgically. "There's an interesting story linked to it. One day, your grandfather walked into the store and saw that the grocer was extremely upset. 'What happened?' your grandfather asked, to which the grocer responded that he'd just been shoplifted. 'Someone came into the store, took a bag of milk, and walked out without paying! Just like that. Could you imagine? He must have been doing it for a while because I've been losing a lot of from this!'

"After thinking for a moment, your grandfather said, 'Look. The man is not taking expensive or luxurious items, all he's taking is a bag of milk. He must be very poor if he has to stoop to this. Let me pay for the bag, and you continue looking away when he comes in and takes it.' My father pulled out a few shekels and paid for the bag of milk. This set up went on for many years, every single day.

"Years went by. Grandfather, who did this simple chessed, passed away. But in Shamayim his action was recorded for posterity, and he was repaid -- not only in the next world, but in this one as well. You know the large dairy I own here in America? We hold a large share of the kosher dairy market here in the US, and make a wonderful parnassah from it. I am certain it is in merit of our grandfather paying for that poor man's one daily bag of milk."

The Cure Before the Crisis

A few months ago, my wife fell and suffered a head injury. She recuperated from it, but still suffers from a tough side effect -- she has difficulty reading numbers. While she is able to read letters, numbers, somehow, get all jumbled up. Somehow, she finds ways to get around the problem, and continues with her daily life.

Two weeks ago, I was home alone when I began suffering from an allergic reaction. I didn't realize what was happening to me and what had triggered it. All I knew was that my face was swollen, and I was having difficulty breathing. I called

my wife up and asked her what to do. Like me, she also did not become too alarmed and did not understand the severity of the situation. She told me to call the local health clinic, looked up the number in her cell phone, and gave it to me. I took down the number and dialed. As soon as the phone rang, I was greeted by a human voice asking me what I wanted. I told them, "My face is swollen, and I can't breathe." Within a minute and a half there was an ambulance at my door with a doctor who administered an adrenaline shot. A few minutes later the swelling went down and I began to breathe better.

Later on, I realized what had happened. My wife, who had difficulty reading the numbers from her cell phone correctly, had 'mistakenly' given me the number of a 24-hour emergency care center with doctors who answer home calls. Had she given me the correct number, I'd have been greeted by an electronic telephone system that would have taken a long time to navigate, and who knows if I'd have survived the long wait... Hashem had sent us the cure, through my wife's difficulty with numbers, before the crisis, just in order to save me later. May my wife enjoy a complete recovery soon.

Of Fathers and Sons

My name is Tzvi, and I live in Modiin Ilit.

I work with ba'alei teshuva on various levels of observance and am privileged to observe their dedication first hand, but this story beats anything that ever happened to me before. One young man arrived at the Yeshiva, wanting to learn. He struggled mightily to get through first seder for a while, until he felt ready to learn two sedarim, and finally also a third. With tremendous willpower, he learned three full sedarim a day.

This went on for a while, until one day he received a phone call from his parents that lead him to understand that his father was planning to start working on Shabbos. Although his parents had never been fully mitzvah observant, they had never worked on Shabbos. "Why, Dad? Why work on Shabbos?"

"I have many debts, and if I work on Shabbos, I'll make an additional 3000 NIS a month which will help me cover them," said the father.

"Dad," said the young man, "I'll work. I'll go and earn those 3000 NIS for you. If I do that, will you stay home on Shabbos?"

The father agreed that if his son would give him 3000 NIS, he would stay home and keep Shabbos properly.

The young man told his father he would look for a job and went to speak with the staff at the yeshiva. "Do I have to go out to work and stop my studies in order to keep my father from desecrating Shabbos?" he asked.

The question was presented to one of the gedolei hador and the answer was an unequivocal yes. After struggling mightily to learn Torah, he had to give it all up and go to work, but he didn't ask questions – he acted, and did as he was told.

The young man found an evening job in a men's retail shop. When the owner heard his story, he agreed to pay him more than the accepted salary.

One evening, when he was at the desk, someone approached him. "Tell me young man, what's your story? Why is such a sweet, gentle young man sitting here, instead of learning in the yeshiva?" The young man told him his story.

"What a shame," said the man. "Here, I will give you 30 thousand shekels as a loan. When you have money you can return it, and if you don't – don't."

Hashem had tested his beloved child, and when he withstood the test, Hashem sent a messenger to solve both problems at once – both his father and his Torah learning were saved.

on the sidewalk.

At noontime, I saw a truck rumbling down the street. The truck stopped at every supermarket and out hopped a delivery man, hands piled high with trays of eggs. Within half an hour, all the groceries in the area were filled with eggs.

Had I gone to daven in the morning without making excuses, I could have found fresher eggs with less anxiety, runaround, and heartbreak.

The lesson I learned was: Don't do anything before davening.

From Near and From Far

We live in Yerushalayim, but my wife has a job in Modiin Ilit. She liked the atmosphere, the crowd, and the salary, but traveling was difficult. Therefore, while continuing her job in Modiin Ilit, she searched for a job closer to home.

At a walking distance from home there was a business along her line of work. I thought it would be a great idea for her to get a job there, so when I heard they were looking to hire, I urged my wife to send in her resume.

My relative has connections in the business so I asked him to put in a good word for her, and indeed, he did. My wife was called in for an interview but was rejected. We tried again, and again she was interviewed, but again she was turned down. Unsurprisingly, the same thing happened a third time.

A while later, we learned that my daughter had a relatively mild medical issue that required surgical correcting. Now we understood why my wife wasn't accepted to the job—her current job gave her medical insurance that would cover the cost of the surgery. No other business offered that benefit, and Hashem had kept her there to save us the tremendous cost! Baruch Hashem, my daughter had the surgery, and the problem was solved.

During Covid, her job required full time performance, which became increasingly difficult to provide while working from our dining-room table. My wife went back to job hunting, and to wishing for a job closer to home.

After a while, the office in Modiin Ilit closed and all the employees set out job-hunting. One employee sent her resume to twelve places. Another sent to seven. My wife sent her resume to two – the one in our neighborhood, and another one.

After sending it, she realized she had sent an outdated resume. But she refused to send another, deciding instead to trust in Hashem. "I sent it, and that counts as my hishtadlus. I will not send it again!" she said. She recalled her previous attempts. This time she would rely on Hashem alone.

For six months we survived on her unemployment benefits. After six months, she received a positive answer from the neighborhood business. She got the job just like that, without sending messengers, without begging people for favors, and without correcting her outdated resume.

Everything is much better now – she likes the workplace, the benefits, and the proximity to our house.

We are grateful to Hashem for the job, and for having withstood the nisayon. In those six months that she received unemployment, my wife received job offers for triple her salary. But my wife turned them down because the atmosphere was decidedly non-religious.

We are certain we didn't lose out on anything. Hashem arranged it all for our benefit, and we are sure He'll continue giving us His bracha in the future.

Q's & A's

Q's & A's about emunah and bitachon

I've been working at a business for a long time. I invested energy and much of my life here. Recently, my boss hired a new supervisor, skipping over me, with all my experience and dedication. I try to tell myself that it is min haShomayim and what's coming to me will come in any case, but it still breaks my heart to see another person getting what should have rightfully been mine. Please give me some insight on this. Q #41 A.N., Petach Tikva

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

Inspirational Ideas

Rabbi Azriel Amrani from Yerushalayim: You write that you try to work on your emunah and bitachon. That's very good. With time, you'll begin feeling the results. Admittedly, it's very difficult watching someone else gets a job that you assumed was yours. Knowing that the pain is natural and normal is in itself a comforting thought.

Rabbi Dovid Leifer from Yerushalayim; Rabbi Shimon Rotman from Beit Shemesh: Hashem doesn't want from you more than you can do. If you were given this nisayon, Hashem will give you the koach to withstand it, and even grow from it. And if you try, Hashem will help you. An idea that can be helpful is to wholeheartedly *farzin* the person who got the job. Call him up and congratulate him on his new position. Say something nice to him, and even offer thanks to Hashem for sending good parnassah to another Yid. It isn't easy, and in the beginning, you may not really mean what you say. But eventually it'll seep in because the external influences the internal. And you'll see, in the end it'll have an effect on you, and you'll feel relieved.

Rabbi Aharon Beifuss from Rechasim: Your problem is really two-pronged – one is your middos, and the other is your emunah. Working on our middos is a lifetime job. Being unappreciated is very painful, especially if you feel like you did your best and gave your job your all. A comforting thought could be that while, perhaps you are the best person to fill the position, the managers had other considerations in choosing a hire. Perhaps they even made a mistake! This can help calm your hurt feelings. As for your emunah, I recently heard a story similar to yours. Two friends worked at the same business. One got a raise with a promotion, while the other did not. In the end, the two made a shidduch, and the friend who had gotten the raise covered all the wedding expenses. That's where it became clear that the money was

destined for both of them. The one who got the raise got to safekeep it for their joint wedding expenses.

Hashem Knows What's Best

Rabbi Yehuda Gweirtzman from Beit Shemesh: You seem to think they don't appreciate you. But you have to believe that the One Who really matters, Who runs the world – knows, appreciates, and cherishes you and your abilities. He will send you the best position that matches your abilities, and will do so in the right time and place. This is all not in your hands to choose. But giving the promoted guy a good feeling is in your hands, and will really give you a lift. **Rabbi Gamliel Hakohen Rabinowitz from Bnei Brak:** The Gemara in Bava Basra (91b) writes: "Even the water drawing minister (a small position) is destined from above." We don't know what Hashem has in store for you, or what His calculations are. In general, you should know that administrative positions aren't all glitz and glamour, as the Gemara tells us in Brachos 55a. At times, a simple peaceful life is better than the rollercoaster life of leadership.

Rabbi Yaakov Cohen from Beit El: I work in a special education school. I've been working there for years and was just an assistant teacher. When I was finally promoted and got a homeroom class, I realized that my previous position was much better suited for my abilities, and the following year I went back to my previous position as an assistant teacher. I am successful in my position and earn no less than a homeroom teacher. It turns out there was there no mistake after all.

Question for Issue #91

Hashem only does things that are good for us, we all know that. So 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 something negative? What's the point in davening at all?

A. Z., London

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 Bamidbar
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

Rabi Shimon Bar Yochai's neshama contained a spark of Moshe Rabbenu's neshama. Rabi Shimon bar Yochai revealed the Hidden Torah, the secrets concealed in Moshe Rabbenu's Torah.

In Maseches Succah (45a) we learn: "Rav Chizkiya quoted Rav Yirmiyahu who quoted Rabi Shimon bar Yochai: 'I can absolve the entire world from judgement.'" Tzaddikim tell us that Rashbi, with his proficiency in the hidden Torah, knew that every Yid is really, deep down, a tzaddik. With that awareness, Rashbi could absolve the whole world from judgement.

Rashbi revealed the hidden Torah also in worldly things. Let us take a closer look at one of the stories that make up the tapestry of his miraculous life:

After speaking negatively about the Romans, he was given a death sentence. At first, he hid in the Beis Midrash where his wife provided him and his son with food. When searches became more frequent and he was afraid his wife would be subjected to torturing, he escaped to a cave in the Upper Galilee where Hashem provided him with a carob and fig tree for food, and a water spring for water. There, he spent the next thirteen years.

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

The Hidden Life

This story reveals how the world functions through the prism of the hidden Torah, which Rashbi knew so well. A person who moves into a cave cannot naturally expect to survive. But in the realm of the hidden Torah, he certainly can. Rashbi revealed a great secret – with emunah and bitachon, all of life's needs can be provided for.

When a person acts in accordance with the world's natural order, Hashem interacts with him on that realm – the natural. But when one lifts himself up and lives a life sustained by emunah and bitachon and mesirus nefesh, he is effectively defying the natural world, and then Hashem provides for him in unnatural ways.

"Many acted like Rabi Shimon and didn't succeed." Why didn't they? Because they only acted "like Rabi Shimon." Partially, somewhat. Only similar. Part time emunah. But life with complete emunah is always peaceful, calm, and happy, devoid of any worries and stressors. Worries and anxiety are "like Rabi Shimon," not quite there yet.

"Cast your burden on Hashem, and He will provide for you." (Tehillim 55:23) If your entire burden is on Hashem, you can rest assured that you'll have everything you need, in the right time.

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 live in London. I have to tell you, I get incredible inspiration from the content on your telephone line, the stories and shiurim. You really do an amazing job! But only when there was a problem with the London extension did I realize how precious your line is...

On the giving end

On Friday, Erev Rosh Chodesh Nissan a young lady called to donate newsletters to be distributed in ten shuls. She told us that she had promised to donate them if she'd be engaged by Rosh Chodesh Nissan, and here she was, a kallah, fulfilling her promise.

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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