

HASHGACHA PRATIS

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



Parsh Bamidbar - Nasso 5784 ■ Issue 140

HEART TO HEART

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

It Is a Mitzvah to Relate This

In matters between man and his fellow, Rabbeinu Bachyai directs us to do good to others, with the goal of giving nachas ruach to the Creator of all worlds.

The reward for doing chessed is tremendous. The zechus of the chessed stands by you and is safeguarded forever, but one should not expect reward here in this world. Only in the Upper World will we see the results of our actions. There will be a great difference there between a deed that is publicly known and for which we received honor and fame, compliments and acknowledgment, and a deed that was done quietly, in a hidden way, without anyone else knowing.

In the fourth chapter of Shaar Habitachon, Rabbeinu Bachyai tells us: One should be careful as much as possible to hide this from anyone who does not need to know, because when he keeps his action hidden, his reward will be greater than it would have been if the deed becomes known.

We can add to Rabbeinu Bachyai's words that "yizaher" – he should be careful – comes from the same root word as zohar and light. The word zeh represents things that a person can point at with his finger, things that are well-known. If your desire is to shine a light upon the world, then hide "zeh" – try to avoid revealing your good deeds to someone who does not need to know about them.

Consider this parable: When everyone acknowledges and honors you, you'll be rewarded with a thousand dollars, but if you're zocheh to hide even a small part of the mitzvah, and no one knows that you did it, then you'll be rewarded with a million dollars! Obviously, we know nothing of the Heavenly accountings and how the reward looks in the world of neshamos, but it is clear that the reward for the hidden act is far more than the reward for mitzvos that are done in a revealed way.

If so, then the question is: How is it possible that throughout the generations, in Chazal, midrashim, the Gemara, and the mesorah up to our days, we come across stories that tzaddikim related about themselves? Certainly, they knew Rabbeinu Bachyai's words. Why then did they not hesitate to publicize their own good deeds? The Chida answers this question in his sefer Kaf Achas, and similar ideas are brought in the Sefer Chassidim.

There are three groups of people to whom it is a mitzvah to relate one's good deeds:

1) Parents to their children and children to their parents

When a father speaks to his sons in order to instill in their hearts mussar, yiras Shamayim, and good middos, and he comes to speaking about chessed, and he wants to teach his children, and he tells them, "I myself was zocheh to

do such and such in order to help a Yid. I did not speak to anyone about this, but to you, my dear sons, I am telling it, so that you will know which path to follow" – how sweet this is! What a tremendous influence it has on the relationship between them and on the chinuch of the children. This also applies between children and their parents. The greatest nachas that a child can bring his parents is when he tells them about a good deed he has done. This is a Torah obligation of honoring parents, and thus he will not lose out from doing so. In fact, just the opposite is true. His parents will bless him that he be able to continue his good deeds with added strength.

2) A Rav to his disciples, and vice versa
When a Rav is teaching a particular halachah, he has much greater influence when he relates something about himself: "Once such a story came my way, and I was zocheh to do such and such in the best way and with much joy." Things that the Rav reveals in order to strengthen his disciples in halachah or in mussar make his influence exponentially greater.

And when a talmid tells his Rav something, this gives the Rav much chizuk and honor, and he is strengthened by the knowledge that his words bore fruit.

3) A chavrusa – when learning together
Sometimes when two people learn together, one can bring a practical example in order to teach something or in order to influence the other to do good deeds in the best ways.

The common thread that links these three situations is that something is being revealed only in order to increase kevod Shamayim and to produce more ovdei Hashem, more of a desire among others to improve themselves. Therefore, on the Hashgachah phone line as well, we can tell stories that bring about a kiddush Hashem, as we are all chavrusos learning emunah and bitachon.

In the vidui of Yom Kippur we describe how nothing, including our innermost thoughts and intentions, is hidden from Hashem. The Creator knows what is motivating the person to tell his story: Is it the desire to be great and to gain kavod for himself, or is it the pure desire to make the kavod of Hashem greater in the world?

In the summer of 5784, as in all previous generations, every Jew who strengthens himself in bitachon gains the strength to do good deeds modestly. We can be happy simply because we're zocheh to do good without expectation of any reward, and we can make an effort to minimize publicity as much as possible. Thus we see good Yidden who are learning Shaar Habitachon and immortalizing the names of their loved ones by contributing to holy causes without publicizing their names at all.

May they all be blessed by Hashem.

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

FROM THE EDITOR

If the Gabbai Would Have Known

For many years I didn't understand the kohen gadol's tefillah on Yom Kippur – "Don't accept the tefillos of travelers regarding rain, at times when the world needs [rain]."

Picture it: Thousands of people have plowed and planted their fields, and they stand and daven – at every hour of every day – for Hakadosh Baruch Hu to send them gishmei brachah. Then along comes a single Jew who's out traveling, and it starts to rain, and it makes him uncomfortable, so he davens to Hashem, "Please, stop the rain." That's all he says. What possible effect could one tefillah of an individual have, davening because of his own temporary discomfort, when there are tens of thousands of tefillos of Yidden who are davening with all their hearts for rain that is so vital for all mankind?

Many Jews worked in the fields for long months. They invested all their strength and a lot of money – and in order for Hashem to have mercy on them, so that their many efforts won't be in vain, it is necessary that no one less than the kohen gadol, on the holiest day of the year, in the holiest place in the world, daven that Hashem shouldn't accept the simple tefillah of a traveler? But when a Yerushalmi Yid told me recently what had happened to him, I understood the answer to my question. This is the story he told:

I really suffer from the cold. When I'm feeling cold, I can't function at all – it's almost as if I'm paralyzed.

One year on Rosh Hashanah I was davening in a shul where about a thousand others were davening, and I felt like I just couldn't daven. The shul's air conditioners were working quite well and everyone was enjoying the cool air, but I was suffering terribly.

Suddenly, I cried out to Hashem with bitter tears, "Abba, I want to daven! Please make me able to daven with true kavanah, as I should on such an important day as this."

Suddenly I began to feel warm, and I found that I was able to daven! At first I didn't understand how this could happen, but an hour later I looked around, and I saw that the air conditioners had simply stopped working.

I laughed and told him, "If the gabbai would have known what you were davening for, he would have thrown you out of shul!" And then I understood the meaning of the kohen gadol's tefillah. The tefillah of a single individual can indeed tear open the Heavens. When the tefillah of an individual is the opposite of the desires of an entire community, an exceptional ko'ach is needed, a ko'ach that only the kohen gadol has when he is in the Kodesh Hakodashim.

Every single Jew is a child of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. When a Jew is suffering, when he's outside in the rain, and he cries to Hakadosh Baruch Hu to stop the rain, the rain might stop, even if the entire world needs it at that moment.

Rav Tzadok Hakohen of Lublin (Pri Tzaddik, Vayishlach) wrote, "We must realize how great we really are. We must realize that our actions affect the entire universe, up to the highest level of Shamayim."

Every single Jew stood at Har Sinai, and every single Jew has tremendous power. The tefillah and the actions of every single Jew can accomplish tremendous things in every dimension of the universe!

Gut Shabbat Pinchas Shefer

THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgacha pratis, as told on the hotline

A Message from the Bank

On Friday I had two checks in hand, ready to deposit, each one for a sizable – and much needed – sum. I figured that if I wanted the money to be available by Monday, the best thing to do would be to deposit the checks immediately, on Friday. Since I needed the money urgently, and I knew I would have to transfer it by the following Monday, I went to the bank.

My heart was pounding, because it was quite late. Chatzos had already passed, and for several years I have been careful not to do work that is not necessary for Shabbos after chatzos on Friday. Should I go home without depositing the checks? That would be a shame, since I was already right near the bank. The automatic cash machine was ready and waiting to work for me, and how long would the whole thing take anyway? It was truly urgent...

I deposited the checks.

On Sunday I called the bank, and they told me to call on Monday.

On Monday I called the bank and discovered to my chagrin that my account was in deficit, indicating that the money I deposited had not been received. How could that be? The bank official told me that it seemed that I'd deposited the checks two times.

"It can't be," I said. "I deposited them one time. Please check to find out what happened."

They checked, and when I called them back they told me, "You deposited them only once, but the bank didn't accept it."

That's how it turned out that the deposit I had made on Friday afternoon was a total failure. Not only did I gain nothing, I also lost out. I felt that miShamayim they were showing me how important it is not to do work on Friday after chatzos. I did something that was only a bit wrong, and I got the message that one does not gain from doing something like this. I should have made the effort to find another solution that would have enabled me to have the money in order to transfer it by Monday.

I thank Hashem for the direct mussar that He gave me.

Pay Only If the Repair Is Successful

If one day you'll collect only the hashgachah pratis stories connected to washing machines, I think you'll succeed in filling a book as large as an actual washing machine.

This is my story. One day the machine stopped working. You simply press the button and there's no response; you bang on it, and nothing doing; the clothing is dirty and the machine remains indifferent. It will not launder your clothes.

This is a machine that has been serving us faithfully for several years – but not for so very many years. I called the company, and they heard my complaint and sent a technician. The technician checked things out, tried all sorts of things, pushed some tools into the machine, and then soberly announced that

What Is So Urgent Two Minutes before My Trip?

On Thursday, Tu BiShvat, I decided to take my family on a trip up North, to the tziyun of a great tzaddik. The entire family was already waiting in the van, and I was in the house organizing a few last details. Precisely during those pressured minutes a Yid knocked on my door. When I opened the door in order to go downstairs to the van, the uninvited guest started talking.

"Listen," I told him, "I can't talk to you now. There's a car honking for me downstairs."

"Two minutes, just two minutes," he asked.

Not a contribution, not food, just two minutes. I gave them to him.

You're my neighbor's friend, right? He mentioned a name, and I nodded.

"He has a few girls at home who are stuck with shidduchim, and we thought it might be connected to fights between the neighbors. Perhaps you could speak to him and have some sort of influence on him."

"I really am his good friend," I answered in a hurry, "but not to the point that I would be able to influence him. I'm not the type for this sort of thing. I'm sorry. But I'm really not the right person."

I didn't have time to see his reaction. "It's nice that you're thinking about your neighbor, my friend," I continued. "May Hashem send him a yeshuah very quickly. Thank you very much."

He also said something, maybe also a "thank you," or something else. I was already in the car. I apologized to everyone, and we set out on our way.

When I came to the tziyun, suddenly a surprising thought came to me. Why did Hakadosh Baruch Hu send this friend of my neighbor to me just when I was on my way out? Perhaps there was a message from Shamayim here that I should daven for his daughters? I called my friend and told him I was standing in a special place, near the tziyun of a tzaddik, and I asked him for the exact names of his daughters so that I could daven for them.

That feeling that I was a messenger of the Creator, that I had gotten a Heavenly message to daven for them, brought me to daven from the depths of my heart. I shed tears and asked Hashem yisbarach to have pity on all of the precious bnos Yisrael so that they would build their own homes very soon.

On Tuesday, less than a week later, I got a call from my friend. "You're one of the first ones I'm calling," he told me, "because I feel that you have a big part in this shidduch. In your zechus my daughter got engaged."

"Mazal tov!" I was genuinely excited for him.

"On Thursday, after you davened, the shadchan called and suggested the shidduch. This was a proposal that had been suggested before and didn't go through, and now, baruch Hashem, it came to be."

Sometimes what is needed is one more tefillah from the depth of the heart in order to open up the gates of Shamayim.

What to do?

Had we made the Shabbos in some distant yishuv, that would have been a difficult question, but the Shabbos took place in Kiryat Sefer, and we immediately discovered the neighbors and their wonderful good hearts.

The person in charge of the hall went to call a goy. On the basis of the leniency brought by the Rema, we assumed that was okay. However, the messenger looked and looked and could not find one – not even one – non-Jew! We therefore felt that Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted us to display special shemiras Shabbos without the slightest blemish, even though there is a heter for calling a non-Jew in our situation.

Meanwhile, an avreich approached us and said there was room in his fridge for all our food. Another avreich took the boiling-hot pot of cholent and placed it on his hot plate. It was beautiful to see how each person thought about how he could help us out.

The hardest part was finding a place to eat. We couldn't sit in darkness. We hadn't lit enough candles to light up the entire hall without electricity. We had dozens of guests, families with women and little children. What would we do? Eat in the street? Spread everyone out among the families in the neighborhood? What would we do?

I was standing near my mechutan, not knowing what to think. I said, again and

On the receiving end

The niggun of the "Seven Conditions" played on your phone line is truly a gift! It gives me life and strengthens me each time anew. One day, when I had tons of pressure from work, with a mountain of tasks to do, it was this niggun that saved me. I simply listened to it, and suddenly I felt how the tension left me and my strength returned to me. Thanks a million!

On the giving end

The bachur entered our office: "Here is a contribution of 720 shekels," he said joyfully. "About a month ago someone donated money as a zechus for me to get engaged, and I just got engaged! I want to donate now as a zechus for my two brothers to get engaged." Three weeks later he called excitedly. "Both my brothers got engaged!" he related. "I knew the contribution would help, but I didn't imagine it would happen so quickly!"

again, "It's all for the good, it's all for the good. Hakadosh Baruch Hu knows exactly where we are. He always did and always will do everything. This Shabbos is probably a special Shabbos, a great Shabbos, within which there are rare brachos and tremendous zechuyos hidden away for all of us."

During those very confusing moments, when I had no idea what to do, an avreich I had never met before came over to me and said, "I live across the street, three floors down. I have a huge dining room and a yard, which could hold all of you. Come to me."

I couldn't believe my ears. "But it's Erev Pesach now. How could we come to you with all our chametz?"

"That doesn't matter," the avreich said. "Come on down to me."

I was totally unprepared for this idea. I couldn't imagine people coming to my house a week and a half before Pesach and spreading chametz all over the place. I tried to hold back, although I had no possible alternative solution. If I didn't accept his offer, what other option did I have?!

He saw me deliberating, and he told me, "I promise you that our joy in having you eat in our home will be greater than your joy. Please come and make us happy. Let us rejoice with the chassan and kallah."

I believed the baal habayis, that he meant this truthfully, and we let everyone know that we were going to eat across the street. Immediately, bachurim and avreichim from among the guests came over and started moving the tables and benches in the direction of the house. Within a short time the tables were set up in his dining room, which was much nicer than the hall where we were supposed to be. When I saw how nice it was, it highlighted for me his and his family's mesirus nefesh in giving us their home. We had young, mischievous children with us, and the big family simchah brought a great deal of dirt and mess along with it.

In order to give me a good feeling, he initially said he would eat with us, but when it came down to it, he and his family quickly disappeared. The baal habayis stood outside the hall for a while, directing the latecomers among our guests to his house. "It's here, across the street by the X family. Go down three flights." He didn't tell any of them that it was his house.

Later, when he came in, and we thanked him and asked how we could possibly express our appreciation for the tremendous chessed he had done for us, he said, "I have a daughter in shidduchim, and I'm asking you to give her a brachah that she find her proper zivug speedily."

The entire crowd blessed him, obviously with all their hearts.

One of the guests looked at our host's Shabbos clock and came over and told me, "The clock is set to turn off at 11 p.m. Soon the lights will go out and we'll be in darkness again."

We discussed it and reached the conclusion that we could ask a child to move the time on the clock, according to a psak brought in sefer Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchasah, which generally follows the rulings of Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l. It's not so simple to do this, because a child could easily touch something a part that will cause it to turn off altogether. I was not comfortable with the heter, but on the other hand, there was a public need here, and the joy of a chassan and kallah to consider.

They went over to the clock, and moments before the child was about to do what he had to do, the lights went out! This was special hashgachah pratis. Ultimately, the early lights-out didn't bother us, because one large central light fixture stayed on, and in this magical atmosphere, the zemiros and the songs and praises rose up to Hashem along with the joy of the sheva brachos.

Once again I felt that this was no one if not Hakadosh Baruch Hu watching over every step of ours, ensuring that we would merit to keep Shabbos kodesh with special hiddur, along with experiencing amazing, rare hachnasas orchim. The next day we ate in the hall, in daylight, and after Havdalah we mentioned our host's request regarding his daughter. One of the people there began a "Mi shebeirach," and everyone said a perek of Tehillim in her zechus.

Two weeks later, on Motzaei Shabbos Chol Hamoed, Erev shevi'i shel Pesach, on the day that the sea was split, I got an emotional phone call. Our host was on the line. "Baruch Hashem, we're drinking l'chaim now. My daughter is getting engaged!"

He related that they got a positive response from the chassan's side on Sunday, the day after our Shabbos sheva brachos. Someone on the chassan's side had heard the story and was amazed by the special hachnasas orchim. This, along with his daughter's good qualities, pushed them to close the shidduch. They were also amazed to hear that the kallah's mother did not tell her mother anything about her massive hosting. She had seen no reason to talk about this. What could be simpler than inviting a group of ninety people, when you see they are in such a quandary?!

We needed a special zechus," their mechutan, father of the chassan, claimed, "the zechus of Shabbos and the zechus of hachnasas orchim, and especially in such a huge, beautiful way, with mesirus nefesh."

the machine had breathed its last. There was no way to fix it.

"So bring me a new machine," I said. "This machine is still under warranty."

"But there is no warranty for this type of problem," the technician announced. "This is the situation. Good luck."

He went on his way, and I thought to myself, What should I do? A washing machine costs several thousand dollars, which I don't have, and we must do laundry. Only at that stage did I remember that I had not yet done the most important hishtadlus. I hadn't davened.

I started to daven to my Father in Shamayim, exactly like a child would speak to his father. I told Him about the machine and about how hard it is for me to pay for a new one. I asked Him to fix it for me. I gave tzedakah and anticipated a yeshuah. Several moments later I had an idea to ask a handyman in my neighborhood to fix the machine. My wife told me that the idea did not seem like a good one. If the technician from the company couldn't fix it, how should a simple handyman, who just "understands" a bit about washing machines, succeed? But we wouldn't lose out from trying. I called him and asked him to come see the machine. "If I don't succeed in fixing it, you won't pay a cent," he assured me. "And if I fix it, then you'll pay me whatever is coming to me."

He came, checked things out, turned this and pressed that, and – the machine was working! Turning nicely. How much did the repair cost? You're not going to believe this; but here, on this phone line, we learn how to believe. It cost me only 100 shekels!

Do you see how our Father in Shamayim took care of my machine? He was only waiting for me to remember Who is the real Boss here.

Saved from Chevlei Moshiach

I am an avreich from Yerushalayim. I want to talk about the wonders of Hashem, and also about the wonders of His dear, beloved children, people of chessed, who uphold the world with tznius and simplicity, who truly care about a Yid whom they don't even know, and who are ready to make tremendous effort in order to prevent agmas nefesh.

B'shaah tovah, we merited to marry off our dear daughter with her chashuveh chassan on the second of Nissan this year. Both my family and the family of the mechutanim live in Ramot. We decided to make the Shabbos sheva brachos in Kiryat Sefer, which is not so far away. We found a place for everyone to stay there, and a pleasant hall to fit all the guests from both sides. We prepared for the Shabbos sheva brachos, excited and filled with joy for our young couple.

Everything was ready. The hot plates in the kitchen had large pots of soup on them, the meat, and the cholent, and trays of fish. In the fridge there were boxes of salads, drinks, and mezonos. The whole oneg Shabbos was ready, and the guests – about ninety in all, knew that a special experience awaited them.

Just how special it would be, we had yet to discover. A bit after sunset, when the skies were painted in an orange-purplish hue, the light in the hall went out. In the adjacent shul as well, darkness reigned. Both these buildings were connected to one generator. The electricity had shorted out, and only the light of the candles somehow mitigated the darkness.

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Hashgachah Pratis in Sifrei Kodesh

Hashgachah Pratis in the Sefarim Hakedoshim

A Great Mitzvah

It is a great mitzvah for a person to ask Hashem for his food, in the morning before he eats breakfast, and in the evening before he eats supper. Regarding this there is a perek in Tehillim, "Tehillah L'Dovid," recited in the morning after Shemoneh Esrei and in the evening before Shemoneh Esrei. And the reason [for reciting it] is indicated there. And he should raise his eyes to the Heavens when he says the pasuk, "Einei chol eilecha yesabeiru" and "Poseiach es yadecha," like a poor man who is asking for his needs.

(Sefer Chareidim, ch. 38)

One Must Daven All the Time and in Every Situation

It is said in the name of Rabbeinu the Baal Shem Tov zy" a that even when the food is placed on the table before the person, and he is prepared to eat it, he still needs to daven that nothing should happen, that no problem should interfere while he is eating, and that the food should not harm his health. There is a source to be found for his holy

words in the Zohar Bereishis p. 199 on the words, "A man of faith an abundance of blessing" (Mishlei 28:20) – even though the food was already in his hand, and even though he already davened for his food in Shemoneh Esrei in the brachah of Bareich aleinu, nonetheless, this did not suffice for

him, and before eating he made a special request of Hashem yisbarach for his food. This is proof of the obligation to daven all the time. Regarding this it says, "an abundance of blessing," because by doing this he brings down an abundance of blessing and good upon the world.

Rav Zusha of Anipoli's Custom

I heard from Reb Yitzchak and other chassidim that the holy Reb Zusha of Anipoli had the custom before eating, even if the table was already set, to say, "Ribbono shel Olam, Zusha is hungry, Zusha wants to eat." This is what he would say several times.

(Zehav Hamenorah)

Asking for food each day

Anyone who has emunah needs to daven to Hashem for food each day. Why? Because when a person davens to Hashem for his food, he causes the "tree of food," in which everything is found, to be blessed. And even if he already has food, he should ask Hashem for his food each day, because through his tefillah the blessing from Above will be found each day.

(Zohar Shemos p. 62)

"Those who await His chessed" are those who anticipate and wait each and every day and ask Hashem for their food. Rav Yisa Saba would not prepare his meal each day before asking Hashem for food. He would say, "We will not start the meal until we receive [the food] from the House of the King"; and after asking of Hashem, he would wait one hour and then say, "Now is the time that I've received my food from the King, so that now we can prepare the seudah."

(Zohar Shemos p. 62)

"A man of faith" is a man who has emunah in Hashem, like Rabi Yisa Saba, who, even though he had enough food for that day, would not prepare the food until he davened for his food for that day. After he'd daven and ask for food from Hashem, he would prepare it, and he'd always say, "We will not prepare anything until we receive our food from the House of the King."

(Zohar Bereishis p. 199)

A Thought on Bitachon

From the shiurim on Kav Hashgacha Pratis

Much of the pain and suffering we undergo stem from our imaginations. These fantasies are like thick smoke: They blur our ability to see reality clearly, and they cause tension, anger, sadness, and helplessness.

For example, imagine a man who comes home exhausted following a long, tiring day at work. He opens the door and senses tension in the atmosphere: The children are fighting, and the general atmosphere in the house is one of sadness and irritability. And instead of seeing the reality as it is, he starts building towers in the air: "Maybe I did something wrong? Maybe I'm not a good enough father?" These thoughts cause him pain and panic.

But what would happen if he were to choose another way? If he were to decide, despite all the difficult feelings, to change the film in his head. If he would decide in his heart that there was no tension and start broadcasting peace and happiness, he'd discover the people around him reacting accordingly.

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

Like One Man with One Heart

The same is true regarding matters between man and his fellow. A person who imagines that his friend is angry at him, and builds towers in the air about this, is liable to find himself cut off and alone, far from his friend and making the chasm deeper and more painful. However, if he exchanges his fantasies for a sober assessment of the reality, he may discover that his anger is passing and temporary, and perhaps it stems from a misunderstanding or from a personal difficulty of his friend's. An open, candid conversation could bridge the gaps.

At Har Sinai, all of Am Yisrael stood together "as one man with one heart." All of Am Yisrael needs to be one, with each one striving to complete the avodas Hashem of the others. This is a foundation for kabbalas haTorah.

Only a sober perspective will enable us to be "as one man with one heart," without hatred, and for each man to love his fellow and to receive the holy Torah.



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