

HASHGACHAH PRATIS

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



Parshas Balak-Pinchas 5785 ■ Issue 167

HEART TO HEART

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

Saved by Reb Elyah's Brachah

The Mashgiach of Kfar Chassidim, Hagaon Hatzaddik Rav Elyah Lopian zt"l, was traveling by train from Yerushalayim to Haifa. On the way, he asked his *talmid* to gather together a group of *Yidden*, because he had something important to tell them.

The travelers showed the *tzaddik* respect and gathered together those who were near him. Rabi Elyah began, "I have a *brachah* to make. Please, honored ones, please do *chessed* with a *Yid* and listen, and at the end say *amen*."

They agreed to his request, and they listened as Reb Elyah recited the *brachah* of *Asher Yatzar* with *kavanah* and enthusiasm, and they promptly responded "*amen*." Not much time elapsed, and the train stopped suddenly. What happened? There was an obstacle on the train tracks, and by an obvious miracle, the conductor succeeded in stopping at the last second.

Everyone was talking about the great *birkas Asher Yatzar* that was recited, and they felt that they were saved in the merit of that *brachah*.

Because, indeed, the *brachah* of *Asher Yatzar* has the power to save!

The *heilige* Rav Avraham Shalom Halberstam, the *baal* Divrei Shalom of Stropkov zt"l, would arouse the *tzibbur* on Rosh Hashanah before the *tekios*. One year, the people were waiting for the *rav* to come in before the *tekios*, and he was delayed.

When the Rebbe came in, in a loud, fiery tone he recited the *brachah* *Asher Yatzar*. Each word made a tremendous impression, and the congregation was aroused to *teshuvah* and loud sobs. That was his speech – "*Asher Yatzar*" – before shofar blowing. When he screamed out, "It is revealed and known before Your *Kisei Hakavod*," there was a *hisorerus* even greater than that which is caused when reciting the six *pesukim* that make up the acronym *kera satan*.

And not for naught. Only in two *brachos* did our Sages use the words "before Your *Kisei Hakavod*": in *Asher Yatzar* and in the *Zichronos* section of *Mussaf* of Rosh Hashanah, where we say, "there is no forgetfulness before your *Kisei Hakavod*." In these two *brachos* we mention, with trembling, the *Kisei Hakavod*!

If we look deeper, we will understand that what is described in the *brachah* of *Asher Yatzar* – our health, the daily functioning of our intestines, the constant protection from Above that ensures that no body part will open or be sealed up when it is not supposed to be – this is all a very lofty matter, which comes before the very *Kisei Hakavod*, no less!

When a Jew needs a *refuah*, he asks to be mentioned before a *tzaddik*, and this is proper and a nice *hishtadlus*; but here, in the *brachah* of *Asher Yatzar*, we are mentioned before Hakadosh Baruch Hu – before the *Kisei Hakavod*!

The *gaon* Rav Avraham Chaim Na'eh zt"l, the author

of *Shiurei Torah*, heard from his *rav*, Rav Chaim Yitzchak Chaikin zt"l, the *Av Beis Din* of Chevron, in the name of his *rebbe*, the Chafetz Chaim zy"a, that *Asher Yatzar* can protect people from difficult diseases in miraculous ways. He suggests that anyone seeking a *refuah* should recite *Asher Yatzar* with precision and without doing anything else at the time. After the *brachah*, one should also mention the name of the ill person who needs a *refuah*. This is a wondrous *segulah* that helps both the person himself and others.

What a pleasure it is to hear Rav Chaikin making the *brachah*. Often he would go on to describe and explain in his own words the wonders of the Creator: How the nutrients from our food make their way to the blood that is circulating, and how every part of the digestive system functions perfectly on a daily basis.

We were *zocheh* to hear from faithful people who had the heart to think about it, and the eyes to see it, how *tzaddikim* would recite the *brachah* of *Asher Yatzar*. The Chofetz Chaim zy"a, even in his old age, was careful to always recite this *brachah* by reading it from the text. In those times they did not print it in all types of fonts and colors and hang it near the sinks. The Chafetz Chaim would open a *siddur* in order to recite this *brachah*, and this is how his close *talmidim* followed in his ways and did this as well.

The Rosh Yeshivah, the *gaon* Rav Meshulam Dovid Halevi Soloveitchik zt"l, the son of the Brisker Rav zy"a, related that when he was five years old, he saw an elderly person washing his hands and then reciting the *brachah* of *Asher Yatzar* with *kavanah* and enthusiasm, and this left a great impression on him. This was the *gaon* Rav Baruch Ber Halevi Leibowitz, the Birkas Shmuel. "To this day, ninety years later," Reb Dovid related, "the tremendous impression of that *birkas Asher Yatzar* that I saw Reb Baruch Ber recite is engraved in me, as it was like the *tefillah* of the *Yananim Nora'im*."

And similarly, the *gaon* Rav Chaim Brim zt"l and the *gaon* Rav Aryeh Shechter zt"l related that they saw the Chazon Ish take time from his learning to recite the *brachah* of *Asher Yatzar* slowly and with careful pronunciation. His entire being was involved, his face was red and his veins bulging, and he would say each and every word as if it were *Shemoneh Esrei*. And there were witnesses who related that several times, he put on his *gartel* in honor of the *brachah*. We hope and pray to be *zocheh* to strengthen ourselves in this great *brachah*, and that this strengthening should be a *zechus* for Yitzchak ben Basha, for his complete *refuah*, speedily. *Tizku l'mitzvos*.

Please daven for the *avreich* Reb Yitzchak ben Basha (Kletzkin).

Phone line for allocation of *pirkei Tehillim*:
077-482-2963

FROM THE EDITOR

How Amalek Reported on Krias Yam Suf

Check out their archives.

There was simply a tsunami. Exactly when the Jews reached the sea, luck was with them and they utilized the opportunity to cross the sea.

(Headlines from Amalek-party newsletter, 22 Nissan, 2448)

This was how Amalek reported the miracle of *Krias Yam Suf*.

How does one react to such headlines? This headline and others like it are the reason the Torah commanded us to eradicate the name of Amalek and of his descendants.

Was their interpretation inaccurate? Many great people assumed this and even proved it from the words of *Midrash Rabbah*: Hashem said, "This is the condition I made when I created the ocean, that [one day] I would split it."

Rambam (*Shemoneh Perakim LaRambam*, ch. 8) wrote that all the miracles that happened to our forefathers were set into nature during the six days of creation. It was preset into nature that on the twenty-first of Nissan in the year 2448, the sea would split.

Amalek claimed before the entire world that it was all natural.

Our war with Amalek is all about this main point: Who created nature?

We know and believe that Hashem created the world and that all of nature is only the Hand of Hashem. Thus, the miracle of the Yam Suf is even greater. As the Baal Shem Tov taught, "The miracle is even greater because from the beginning of the creation of the world, Hashem created this aspect of nature for the sake of Am Yisrael." (*Beshalach*, letter #7) Not only did the miracle surprise the nation at the last second, but it was planned in advance. The entire creation was planned in advance in order for Am Yisrael to experience miracles!

The *Toldos Yaakov Yosef* (*Parshas Mishpatim*) explains this further. Why did Hashem program these miracles into nature at the beginning of time? Hashem could have created the miracle in real-time, immediately before the splitting of the sea.

He did not do this, because a miracle that is outside the bounds of nature could occur only to a person whose own behavior is outside the bounds of nature, who overcomes his natural urges. Hashem *yisbarach* loves His children in every situation and at all times, and he wanted the miracles to be wrought for them in any case, even if not all of them had personally risen above nature. That is why Hashem programmed the miracles into the nature of the world, so that these *nissim* would happen to all Jews, whatever their personal situation.

What Amalek saw with the eye of apostasy, we see as the Hand of Hashem and His love for Am Yisrael.

Amalek saw that there was something natural that occurred here, something completely unconnected to the Jewish nation. In their foolishness, they failed to realize how the purpose of creation was being actualized before their very eyes, how the world was created for Am Yisrael! What is more "natural" than the fact that the world, which was created for Yisrael, would act in accordance with the miracles that needed to occur to them?

Over the past few weeks we have seen wondrous miracles; only a blind man or a fool could fail to see them.

There are those who listen to all sorts of natural explanations for these phenomena. But a believing Jew doesn't get confused. A *Yid* knows that *teva* is also created by Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Moreover, when Hashem hides His miracles in the guise of nature, He does so because he wants to perform these miracles for us no matter what our personal status, because He loves His children with boundless love at all times.

Let us give thanks and praise to His great Name, for the miracles that He did, that He does, and that He will do for us!

Gut Shabbat
Pinchas Shefer

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

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

THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgachah pratis, as told on the hotline

An Original Gift

It was the first time I had gotten a taste of Shabbos. I was hosted in the home of a lovely family in Bnei Brak, who accepted me warmly and gave me a wonderful feeling. Besides me, there was a young couple there, with two small children who added much color to the whole celebration. I played with the children and thoroughly enjoyed them, and a moment before we parted, I felt it would be very fitting for me to give them a gift. I had not planned this ahead of time, but Hashem had arranged a perfect gift for me: a cute teddy bear. The little ones were happy with the new teddy bear, and I hurried home.

Another plan was awaiting me on Motzaei Shabbos. My friend had invited me to celebrate her baby's first birthday with her.

I had originally planned on giving the teddy bear in my pocket to my friend, in honor of her baby's birthday...

But the teddy bear was already given away, and now I had to think of another idea for a gift. What would I give her? It was Motzaei Shabbos now, and the stores were closed. I recalled that once, I had thought of giving someone a *sefer Tehillim* as a present, and in the end I gave her something else. The *sefer* was already gift-wrapped, and it could serve as a present. I did not know, however, how she would take to this gift, since my friend does not yet keep mitzvos.

I arrived at the celebration. The baby ran toward me. I could not give him the present in hand for fear that he would not be careful with the *kedushah* of the *sefer*. I gave the *sefer* to his mother, and to my surprise, *her* mother, who was standing beside her, said, "What a nice gift you brought! If you'd brought a game, it would have occupied the baby for only a few months, but you brought something that will accompany him throughout his life!"

I was pleased that the gift was accepted happily.

Several months passed, and my friend called and told me this amazing story:

A week ago, the baby's fever went up. He refused to eat, and I was worried about him. I went to the doctor, and he could not figure out the source of the problem. I went to more doctors, and soon I was sent to the emergency room, but they sent me home, since no one could figure out how to help my son.

Last night, I came to the emergency room with him again.

The doctors told me to wait, and I sat at my son's

One Daf

I have a dream of knowing an entire *masechta* by heart, backward and forward. If someone were to ask me questions on this *masechta*, I would not stutter or mumble but rather would answer immediately. I am a *melamed* in a *cheder* in Teveria, and this is my aspiration, which I hope my *talmidim* have caught on to as well. But practically speaking, it's not so simple. I chose *Maseches Shavuos*. And how symbolic that precisely this *Maseches* begins on *daf beis*, which tells you that if you don't succeed in learning the first page, learn the second page.... And I learn. I open the Gemara and begin. I always begin. I go through *daf beis* from beginning to end... and that's it. That's where it ends.

The second time I sat down to learn, once more I opened to *daf beis*, and once again my strength waned very quickly.

I think that is how I got to starting *Maseches Shavuos* thirty times. It's frustrating to see that I am still only at the beginning of it. I thought to myself, *How important, truly, is my daf? Who sees it? How is it that I am only beginning and not ending? And why does daf beis not bring in its wake daf gimmel?*

Can you understand the feeling of a person who set a goal for himself, and discovers how far away he is from achieving it? I was frustrated. But then I received a special *he'arah* from *Shamayim*, and Hashem showed me, in a way that could not be denied, that this *daf* was very valuable in His Eyes:

On the Shabbos when they started *Maseches Shavuos* in *Daf Yomi*, I was in a shul where about thirty *Yidden* were waiting to start the *shiur*. They waited for the *maggid shiur*, waited and waited, and he didn't come. Then, the moment I entered the room, someone said, "Here's the *maggid shiur*!"

"You thought I was the *maggid shiur*!?" I laughed.

He explained, "We learn the *Daf Yomi* every day with Rav Ze'ev Diner *shlit"a*, and today he didn't come. We thought perhaps he sent you to fill his place."

"What are you learning?" I asked them.

"We're starting *Maseches Shavuos*," said another participant in the *shiur*. "*Daf beis*."

"*Daf beis*?! Excellent!" I said, and I started telling them the *mishnah* by heart. From that point on, the path was open for me. The *daf*, that same *daf* that I've repeated and reviewed thirty times already, is fluent on my lips. I stood before the crowd and delivered the *shiur* fluently and beautifully, with Hashem's great *chassadim*. When the *shiur* ended, it seemed the group had derived much pleasure from my words. "We didn't know! We had no idea what a *talmid chacham* is in our midst! Is this how you know the entire *Shas* by heart?!"

I told them that I was the same simple Reb Shlomo from the *cheder*; they hadn't gotten confused... and I aspired to learn all of *Shas*, and had even started learning *Maseches Shavuos* in order to know it by heart. But in the meantime, this was the only *daf* I knew. The only *daf* in the entire *Shas*!

Rav Ze'ev Diner had been at a family *simchah* in another city and had asked an *avreich* in the neighborhood to fill in for him. This *avreich* had prepared the *shiur*, but when the time came to give it, he completely forgot that he was supposed to be there, and he didn't come. The *maggid shiur* and the group were excited by this revelation of special *hashgachah pratis*, which caused them not to miss out on even one day of learning *Daf Yomi*. But I felt that there was something else here. The *avreich* who was supposed to deliver the *shiur* had prepared it. Why did Hashem cause him to forget about it?

Hashem had organized an entire group of *Yidden* to wait for me to deliver the *shiur* on the one and only *daf* that I know by heart. It felt to me like Hakadosh Baruch Hu was sending me a message: My son, your learning is very dear to Me!

Ilui Neshamah, Even if Unintentional

Last Shabbos, toward the end of *krias HaTorah*, the *gabbai* approached one of the *mispallemim*, a Yid who was standing right near me, and asked him to daven *Mussaf* for the *amud*. The man nodded as though in agreement, then turned around and looked both ways. To my surprise he turned to me, bent down and whispered: "Can you be the *chazzan* for *Mussaf*?" Never had I encountered such behavior. This man was just asked to serve as *shaliach tzibbur*, and he was passing the job on to another random *mispallem*! To my wonder, the man whispered in embarrassment, "I lost a tooth."

Now I identified the strange tone of his voice, the accent of a person who was missing something in his mouth. Without delay, I rose from my place and marched over to the front of the shul, ready and prepared to fulfill my unexpected role. I honored Hashem with my voice, and the *mispallemim* had true *oneg Shabbos*.

On Motzaei Shabbos my brother told me, "On Shabbos at *Minchah*, I was the *chazzan* in honor of Saba's *yahrtzeit*." Then it hit me: This week was the *yahrtzeit* of our great-grandfather, who was a great *talmid chacham*, and I am named after him! For one second I was upset that I'd forgotten about the date and hadn't made sure to serve as *shaliach tzibbur* in davening on Shabbos, but suddenly I realized that I had indeed been the *shaliach tzibbur*! Even though on Shabbos I hadn't remembered anything, and it did not enter my mind to offer to serve as *shaliach tzibbur* in one of the *tefillos*, *min haShamyim* it was orchestrated that I fulfill the *minhag* to daven for the *tzibbur* on the Shabbos preceding the *yahrtzeit*, for the *zechus* and *ilui neshamah* of our righteous great-grandfather.

After I told the family this story, another brother added his own story:

"As you know, I was visiting the neighborhood where I lived in the past. On Shabbos in the

On the giving end

It happened suddenly. In one second, my daughter collapsed and lost consciousness. The ambulance rushed her to the hospital, but the doctors were not optimistic. During those stormy moments, as my heart was pinched in pain, I promised: If my daughter recovers, I'll establish a center for the distribution of the Hashgachah Pratis newsletters. This would serve as a source of strength and comfort for people in pain, and strengthen their *emunah* and *bitachon* in Hashem. Less than four days later, the miracle occurred: My daughter was released from the hospital, fully recovered. Hodu laHashem ki tov!

On the receiving end

After two difficult surgeries, I was left in pain and broken. One night, I was writhing in pain, in tremendous agony, and I sought solace. I called the Hashgachah Pratis phone line and selected Rav Nachman Neihous's *shiur*. To my surprise, the chosen *shiur* was about "accepting yissurim with *ahavah*." That moment, I understood this was a Heaven-sent message for me. I did not have to listen to the *shiur* at all. Merely hearing the topic gave me strength to handle my pain. I hung up the phone with a feeling of enlightenment and serenity. The next day, with renewed strength and confidence, I listened to that wonderful *shiur*. Thank you all, and special thanks to the *chashuveh* rav, Rav Nachman Neihous *shlit"a*, for his clear presentation and pleasant *shiurim*.

morning, I davened in the *shul* where I had davened dozens of times when I lived nearby, but where I have never served as *shaliach tzibbur*. This time, since I was a guest in the shul, they wanted to give me an *aliyah*, and since I am a *levi* and the *rav* of the shul is also a *levi*, they gave the *rav* the *aliyah* of *levi* and they gave me *maftir*. After I concluded the *aliyah* for *maftir*, the *gabbai* asked me nonchalantly to serve as *chazzan* for *Mussaf*. While I was coming to the front of the shul, it hit me: Saba's *yahrtzeit* would be this week!" "Thus, with incredible *hashgachah pratis*, I was *zocheh* to fulfill this custom, to lead the *tefillot* of the *tzibbur* and to give *nachas ruach* to our righteous great-grandfather."

Hashem's Table

It happened several years ago. I returned home from my job at the bank, where I work as a clerk, and on the way I saw a small ad: Furniture needed for a *beis medrash* established recently – tables, chairs, bookcases. We would be grateful for any contribution." I did not think there was a way for me to help them, but the request touched my heart, and so I took a note with the phone number.

The next day, I came to work as usual, and then I saw a carpenter taking apart my desk. "Excuse me, this is my work table," I said.

"You'll get a new table," he told me. "This is a new branch, and the management has decided to upgrade the furniture."

Indeed, just a month earlier, the branch had moved to a new location. This was an upscale branch, originally meant for clients from abroad. The furniture in it was expensive and heavy, but the management had decided that it was not suitable for the bank right now. The clerks needed furniture with a modern, simpler line, and the fancy, heavily decorated, impressive quality furniture was to be tossed into the trash.

The clerks near me claimed that the furniture we had until now was comfortable and more suitable, and what did we need this revamping for, but the carpenter continued his work. He had received orders from the management, and this was what he had to do.

He went from one desk to the next, from closet to shelf to chair, and took apart everything. Suddenly, he turned my way and asked: "Perhaps you know of someone who would want this furniture?"

A moment before I shook my head no, I remembered the note I had torn off just the day before from the small notice. "Yes, I have the number of someone who could use this."

I called the number, which, it turned out, belonged to the *rav* of the shul. "There is a donation here of furniture for your *beis medrash*," I told him.

He asked several questions and clarified to where he was to send a van to pick up the furniture.

"Not a van, a truck," I emphasized. "There is a huge amount of everything here, and it is all great quality."

The *rav* was excited, and the *avreichim* got together and arranged for a truck. They came to load up the furniture and were amazed by the quality, quantity, and beauty of the pieces. Their *beis medrash* merited truly magnificent furniture.

I was happy – I had been *zocheh* to glorify Hashem's house.

But this is just the beginning of the story...

My name was now listed in the bank's construction department as someone who knows people and institutions that need furniture. Several days later, the architect of the department called. He said they were closing an entire floor of the bank in Tel Aviv, and they were going to get rid of the furniture there. "Do you know someone who needs furniture?"

I said, "For sure. I'll call you right back with the details."

At that second I did not know of anyone who needed furniture, but I knew exactly what I had to do. I started a round of phone calls. I called one yeshivah, then another and another, until at the end, two trucks were sent off filled with furniture for Yeshivas Shemaya, and another two trucks for Yeshivas Beis Kol.

The success excited me. I am merely a bank clerk. I don't have extra money. The *tzedakah* I am *zocheh* to give is not more than the standard that is acceptable in Am Yisrael, and here I had the *zechus* to fill *yeshivos* and shuls with furniture. In my *zechus*, the voice of Torah would be heard in greater comfort and grandeur, and all it took was my making a few phone calls.

Two weeks passed, and the department of construction contacted me once again. This time they were renewing the branch in Yerushalayim, and with the previous successes still fresh in my mind, I searched for the next yeshivah. This time, trucks set out with the furniture for Yeshivat Porat Yosef and Rinat Torah.

Several more phone calls of this sort, and the *battei midrash* in the North and the center of the country received tables and chairs and closets and shelves. In Bnei Brak and Modiin Illit as well, I already have "clients." I was *zocheh* also to help *avreichim* who were so pleased to have a new closet in their homes. *Hodu lo, barchu Shemo*.

In the meantime, my phone number became known on the other end as well. Yeshivos started calling to ask if I knew of someone who was replacing their furniture and was interested in donating their old furniture. The "business" flourished, and a waiting list was created.

One day, I got a call from yeshivas Slobodka. The tables and chairs in this *heiligh* yeshivah are decades old, and they were about to fall apart. The *rabbanim* were sitting at rickety "dancing" tables, and they desperately needed to replace them. "Can you arrange for 500 units?" the yeshivah secretary asked.

Five hundred! No less! And each including a table and also a closet! I had never dealt in such quantities. The deals I had brought about were for up to fifty or seventy units at once. Once we had dealt with even a hundred, but five hundred? There was no chance.

"I would be happy to help," I said, "but I have no idea how to do so."

Less than two months passed, and I received a phone call from the carpenter who worked for the bank: "We're closing down two large branches in Netanya, and we have a huge amount of furniture to give away – five hundred units!"

Three trucks made their way from Yeshivas Slobodka. The tables were no longer dancing; only the hearts were dancing with thanks and song to the Giver of the Torah. How fortunate are you, all the *bnei hayeshivos*, who are sitting at the tables of the Omnipresent and learning His *heiligh* Torah!

side, crying. I wanted to take

something out of my bag, and

suddenly I came across the *sefer* *Te-*

hillim that you brought me. I told myself, *Do*

I have anything else to do? I'll read this book, and

who knows, maybe it will help. I opened it at random

and started to read, my tears wetting the *sefer*. Several min-

utes later, a group of doctors passed right by us.

The minute they passed by my baby's carriage, he coughed

in a frightening way. The doctor at the head of the delegation

turned around and asked me in English what was wrong with

my baby.

I explained what I had gone through with my baby, and he

asked the nurses to immediately give me a fully equipped

room. The other doctors joined him, and after thorough testing,

he gave his diagnosis: This child had a hidden polyp in his

throat, which was preventing him from eating and was bringing

his fever up.

He instructed them to admit him to the hospital for a short while

and give a specific type of antibiotics to address this problem.

Baruch Hashem, soon enough, my son was back to himself.

Afterward, they told me that this doctor is a top professor in pe-

diatrics, the head of a pediatric department in a London hospi-

tal, who had come to take a tour of their pediatrics department.

"Do you believe it?" my friend said excitedly. "All this was in the

zechus of my saying *Tehillim*. At the exact second when I start-

ed saying *Tehillim*, this professor arrived, and at that very same

moment, my son coughed in a strange way, which caught his

attention. Thank you for the gift you brought me!"

"Don't ever forget it," I wished her happily. I thanked Hashem,

Who shows His *hashgachah pratis* even to those who are dis-

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em, Who shows His *hashgachah pratis* even to those who

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Hashgachah Pratis in Sifrei Kodesh

Hashgachah Pratis in the Sefarim Hakedoshim

Material Loss, Eternal Gain

This *gemara* implies that losses are part and parcel of a person's life. Why is this necessary? It is because no one is perfect, and every person must be cleansed of his sins and must experience some suffering. But Hakadosh Baruch Hu, in His kindness, exchanged his physical suffering for the loss of his possessions....

If a person is *zocheh*, this loss is incurred by his doing a mitzvah, such as *tzedakah* or *chessed*. He then gains in several ways: a) He gained a positive Torah mitzvah, exchanging something worth very little for something eternally precious. b) As the *Zohar* explains in *Parshas Terumah*, a mitzvah on which he spent money earns far more reward than a mitzvah he fulfills without any expenditures. c) The material loss he incurs because of the mitzvah is only temporary, because Hashem will certainly compensate him, giving him many times his loss.

I have explained this at length so that people will understand how this works. Ultimately, every person must suffer a loss of his possessions as punishment for his sins, so that he will not need, *chas v'shalom*, to be punished in Gehinnom or through some other terrible punishment. Why would a person avoid giving *tzedakah* and doing *chessed* and then, *chalilah*, have to bring the rebellious Gentiles into his home or have to go to doctors?! As *Chazal* say, "A home that is not open to the poor – will be open to doctors." It is far better for a person to act with wisdom in the first place and to open his home to the poor, to separate *ma'aser*, and to do *chessed*. Then it will be good for him in all ways.

(Based on *Ahavos Chessed*, ch. 13)

Tzedakah and Emunah

Every Jew says *Shema Yisrael* twice each day, and certainly he believes its words. However, even though he says the words, they might not speak to him. Although he has basic faith, he does not truly believe that everything that occurs to him and all that is done to him comes from the Creator *yisbarach*.

The proof is that he does not give *tzedakah*. If he truly believed that everything was from Hashem, why wouldn't he give *tzedakah*? It is known that the world is upside-down: Those who are considered lowly in this world are highly

esteemed in the Eyes of Hashem, and He loves the poor. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur He decrees that they be given all their needs, through the hands of the rich. But the rich man thinks that he became wealthy through his own power and talent. In truth, Hashem enables the rich man to make enough in one day of selling on a market day, or on any other day, to provide many times more than all the poor man's needs. He profits at the expense of non-Jews. But if

he lacks *emunah* and refuses to share his money with the poor, non-Jews will profit from him instead. What kind of *emunah* is this, when a Jew withholds money from another Jew, thereby causing non-Jews to profit?

(Based on *Divrei Shemuel*, *Parshas Bechukosai*)

Tzedakah or a Loss

On Rosh Hashanah, Hashem determines the amount of sustenance a person will receive during the coming year. Just as the amount a person will gain is determined on Rosh Hashanah, his losses are likewise determined on Rosh Hashanah. If he is *zocheh* and has good *mazal*, he will give poor people the money he is meant to lose, but if he does not have the *zechus*, the money he is to lose will be taken by Gentiles who are poor in mitzvos and who rebel against Hashem; moreover, he will have to bring them into his home and give to them against his will....

(based on *Maseches Bava Basra* 10a)

The Rich Man and the Poor Man

There was a poor man who felt he had no choice but to become an informer against his fellow Jews. When he saw merchants traveling with wagons filled with contraband, he would beg them, "Please have pity on me. I am a poor man." Some of them were smart enough to notice that he was trying to examine their stock, and so they gave him a nice donation and left them to go on their way unharmed. Others tried to get rid of him by giving him just a few pennies, which he refused. They then insulted him, and he ran to the customs officials to inform on them so that they would be caught with their contraband and arrested. Then they went back to the poor man and offered him a lot of money to bribe the authorities to release them, but he replied, "What can I do now? It's already in the hands of the judge. You should have taken care of this in advance."

This is a parable of a rich man whose income was decreed for him on Rosh Hashanah, but it was also decreed how much money he must lose during the year. If he is *zocheh*, he gives that portion of his wealth to the poor. But if he is not *zocheh*, non-Jews will come and take it from him forcibly. When a poor man comes and begs the rich man for *tzedakah*, the rich man who is wise will realize that he must forfeit a portion of his wealth, and he will give the poor man a fine donation. But a fool will react with anger and give nothing, so the poor man will cry and complain to Hashem. As a result, the rich man, or one of his beloved children, will become ill. Then, in his distress he will offer money to the poor man so that he the poor man will daven and say *Tehillim* for him. But the matter is no longer up to the poor man, for it is now up to the *Beis Din* Above.

(Based on *Ma'aseh Bereishis*)



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A Thought on Bitachon

From the shiurim on Kav Hashgachah Pratis

Excerpts from the popular shiur by

Harav Yehuda Mandel shlita from Lakewood

Miriam Hanevia's Power

"And Miriam died there.... And there was no water for the congregation." From this *passuk* we learn that in the *zechus* of Miriam, Am Yisrael had water to drink throughout the forty years of their wandering in the desert. What a huge *zechus*! Millions of men, women and children quenched their thirst every day with pure, sweet water, all in her *zechus*.

Miriam's name hints to her beginnings. She was born during a bitter period, at the very start of the slavery and persecution in Mitzrayim. Indeed, her early days were filled with bitterness. She had additional names: *Azuvah*, *Yeriah*, *Chel'a* – names that reflected the difficult situation: illness, her face pale as a *yeriah*; abandoned; forgotten by all.

Her situation was too difficult to bear: bitter, sickly, pale, and abandoned. But Miriam did not break. She trusted in Hashem

and overcame all the difficulties. In the end, her names were changed: She was named *Ne'ara* and *Tzara*. Her face shone like the sun at midday, her friends were jealous of her beauty, and she was healed from her illnesses.

Moreover, in her *zechus*, the waters of *Be'er Miriam* flowed; this was the source of water that quenched Am Yisrael's thirst in the desert. She was also the one who led the women in singing *Shiras Hayam*. How much *chizuk* we can draw from this! There are people who are going through complex difficulties, suffering from bitterness or sadness, distanced from society, ill, and unsuccessful. From Miriam's story we can draw endless *bitachon* to strengthen ourselves and rise above every situation, and in the end, to emerge from all our problems and, in addition to all this, to help others as well!