

HASHGACHAH PRATIS

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



Parshas Ki Teitzei - Ki Tavo 5785 ■ Issue 171

HEART TO HEART

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

Gold and Silver Are Mine

Everyone certainly remembers the "pouch" we prepared together toward the end of chapter 2 of *Shaar Habitachon*, the pouch filled with *pesukim*. We learned about the need to prepare short, poignant sayings for times of challenge. When there is a storm, imbalance, or helplessness, it is not the time to go searching in *sefarim*. At such times one must quickly pull out the weapons that are prepared in the pouch close to his heart.

For this reason we repeat sayings, such as "*Gam zu l'tovah*," "Everything Hashem does is for the best," or the *passuk* that has been put to a tune: "For there was a reason from Hashem." We can also add, "He is a Shield to all those who trust in Him," and there are many more *pesukim* and short, poignant sayings that give eternal answers that can straighten our hearts and help us to regain our equilibrium in one second.

In chapter 6 Rabbeinu Bachyai speaks against those who "take collateral from Hashem," those who claim, "First Hashem should give me good things, and afterward I will do mitzvos." Rabbeinu Bachyai describes how foolish their behavior is, how it proves that they do not believe in Hashem, Who is *Kol Yachol*, and Who has proven His loyalty at all times, from the Creation of the world and until today.

If a poor man promises that he will pay back a small loan, we demand that he give something for collateral so that he will not evade payment. But if we're talking about a wealthy man, it would be very embarrassing to ask for collateral for a small loan, and this is certainly the case when the king of the country is the one who is promising to pay. The kingdom's finances are extremely secure, and there is no doubt that the king will pay what he promised.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu says (*Chagai* 2), "Mine is the silver and Mine is the gold!" and He concludes, "so says Hashem *Tzevakos*." This is a prophecy with a clear and eternal insignia, so that all can know without a doubt that the silver and the gold belong to the Ribbono shel Olam alone! The *me'farshim* expand the meaning of this wondrous *passuk*. This *nevuah* was said when Bnei Yisrael were about to build the second *Beis Hamikdash*. They were wondering, how could they build this House for Hashem? You need a lot of silver and a lot of gold to do that! Chagai Hana-vi told them: "Mine is the silver and Mine is the gold." You don't have to worry; there will be money. Hakadosh Baruch Hu will bring it, for as Rashi

explains, "And it is in My Hands to bring that which I desired." Ibn Ezra explains: "In every place it is Mine, and I will wondrously put it into the hearts of all those who have it to bring the gold to My House." Radak explains: In Whoever's Hands it is, it is Mine, and it is in My control to take it from one person and give it to another."

What an exciting *passuk*! What *chizuk*, what greatness! We all know that most people who read these words need money, clothing, food, and necessities for Yom Tov and *simchahs*.

So much money! Noting the facts and figures, it seems as if we are standing before an impossible task. How do you get to the end of the month? How do you get through life's events, along with the simplest of needs, which cost a fortune?

This is when one should remove from his pouch this powerful *passuk* from the time of the building of the second *Beis Hamikdash* (and you could also think about how it applies to the mortgage for an apartment where the *Shechinah* will rest). "Mine is the silver and Mine is the gold!" No one is the boss over money. Why is it called *zuzim*? Because it moves (*zaz*) from one person to another. Who moves it? The true Boss – thus says Hashem *Tzevakos*!

And so, on a regular weekday, a Yid sees all the charges going off his account, and he calls out to Hashem from his heart. No, there is no need to shout. We can ask quietly, in a whisper, but with true *kavanah*: Ribbono shel Olam, You are *Kol Yachol*. You testified through Chagai Hana-vi: "Mine is the silver and Mine is the gold." You are the Boss over everything. You see my situation, and You know that I have no idea how to manage. But You are the Master of all ideas, the Navigator of all circumstances, and the One Who fills all the bank accounts. You will certainly arrange for everything. "Show us, Hashem, Your *chesed*, and give us Your salvation."

Every time fear and worry creep up, we immediately take the words "Mine is the silver and Mine is the gold" out of our pockets, and peace and serenity return. Because we are in the Hands of our Father, and He does everything for our good. He cares for us and has mercy on us and on the members of our household, more than anyone else. And there is no doubt that He will send us His *yeshuos*.

May we be *zocheh* to see the *chesed* of Hashem *yisbarach*, with abundant of bounty, blessings and success, and with much joy; *amen*.

FROM THE EDITOR

The Solution to All Our Problems

Before *bein hazmanim*, I got a call from a representative of one of our generation's prominent Chassidic Rebbes *shlit"a*.

He told me that the Rebbe asked that we convey a clear message to the *bachurim*: With *emunah* and *bitachon* you can deal with any difficulty. The messenger asked that the Hashgachah Pratis hotline prepare a special program to convey this message.

I asked to hear the exact wording of the Rebbe's request, and this is what he told me, word for word:

"If a person knows that everything happens with *hashgachah pratis* from Hashem *yisbarach* – and not only is it with *hashgachah pratis*, but it is also for the good – then the person is satisfied; and this helps with everything."

I was very excited. This is exactly our mission – to spread this simple yet deep understanding:

Everything is with *hashgachah*, and everything is for the good.

We want to spread this essential healing elixir for all of life's problems and worries, the medication that gives a person peace, serenity, and true joy in life. Everyone is searching for joy, relaxation and serenity – and *emunah* and *bitachon* is the way to acquire it. Again and again – *emunah* and *bitachon*.

People have asked: Why do you keep advertising the monthly magazine again and again? You advertised a year ago, and whoever wanted to subscribe has already done so.

And the answer is simple. If you had a beloved brother who was, *chalilah*, ill with a dangerous disease, and you had a wonder medication that could heal him – wouldn't you try to persuade him repeatedly to take the medication? Even if he'd refuse it for the tenth time, you'd continue urging him until he'd be healed.

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THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgachah pratis, as told on the hotline

Beyond the Letter of the Law

When I left shul after *Minchah*, there on the floor I saw two hundred-dollar bills, one old and one new.

I picked them up and asked a *rav* if I was allowed to take the money, and the answer was yes. It was in a public domain; this kosher find was mine according to halachah.

The next day, at the entrance to shul, my son and I saw a sign which said that a sum of money had been lost. I called the number on the sign and asked, "How much did you lose?"

"Two hundred dollars."

"I know who found them," I told the man, "I'll try to find him."

I called the *rav* again and asked if in this case, when I know who lost the money, I had to return it. "According to the letter of the law, you don't have to return it," the *rav* paskened, "but beyond the letter of the law, you should give him the money."

I called the man again and told him that his money was with me. I gave over the money willingly and with joy, and my son, who was at my side, was happy along with me and reminded me that no one loses out by listening to Hashem.

A few minutes later, a Yid who has a son in *shidduchim* came over to me. Since I deal with *shidduchim*, he wanted me to suggest his son to a certain *avreich* in the community, and on the spot, he gave me two hundred dollars in advance.

I opened my hands and saw the bills. One was old and the other was new. How symbolic!

From the Time the Sun Rises Until It Sets

A Yid from Bnei Brak relates: One Friday afternoon, close to Shabbos, my widowed aunt called and asked me to come to her home ASAP. What happened? There was an electrical outage in the whole house, and nothing was working – no hot plate, no air conditioning...and could I please come fix the problem.

I asked her a number of questions, and I concluded that the fuse was burnt out. She needed a new fuse.

"I have a new fuse at home," I said happily. "I'm coming right away!"

During those moments I thanked Hashem that I was accustomed to preparing for Shabbos early. *Baruch Hashem*, everything was ready, and I could go out to my aunt and help her. I would just take the fuse and go.

But where was the fuse? I checked the regular place where my tools are kept, but I couldn't find it. I checked the closet with documents, the surface atop the refrigerator, and the corner closet in the kitchen, but I couldn't find it. And so several valuable minutes ticked by, until I remembered that

The Envelope Waited for Me

A Yid from the North relates: One day, when I was working in a factory, the boss came over to me and asked me, "Would you be able to go out now and deliver an envelope?"

"Yes," I responded. That is part of my job in the factory. The boss gave me an envelope containing \$500, and I took it out to my car. It was a rainy day, and to ensure that the envelope wouldn't get wet I put it into my suit-jacket pocket, so it was well protected.

When I started driving, I discovered that the gas gauge did not have good news for me; I had to fill my tank. I drove into a gas station, and from there I drove directly to the address he had given me, but then I discovered, to my shock, that I could not find the envelope.

How did it happen? I tried to recall the events of the previous fifteen minutes. I was asked to guard the envelope, but upon entering the car, I forgot to put it down properly in a secure place. And so, apparently, it had fallen out at some point.

In that moment I knew two things in a very clear way: The first was that everything that Hashem does is for the best. The second was that Hashem would not abandon me. I strengthened myself in *emunah*, and I called home to ask my family to say *Tehillim* and daven that I find the money quickly. Then I drove back to my workplace. I did not find the envelope there. I continued on to the gas station, where I then found it. The envelope was lying on the ground right where I'd parked while filling my tank with gas. No one had moved it from its place. It was torn because of the rain, but the full sum remained.

I felt that the *zechus* of my *emunah* stood by me. Thank you, Hashem!

Customer Service

Most people do their shopping in one of the widespread chain stores, where they receive service from different cashiers. I, on the other hand, was *zocheh* that near my home there is a "real" *makolet*, with an old-time seller who forges genuine relationships with his loyal customers. Each time I come to the grocery to buy something, I also enjoy his genuine interest and his *devar Torah*, with a story for dessert, depending, of course, on how much traffic there is in the store.

One day, at the beginning of the war with Iran, I was standing in the grocery and talking to the seller as usual. At the same time, one of the people from the neighborhood came in, took several items, and walked over to the counter to pay. Before paying, he made an interesting proposal: "I have four new packages here of corona masks," he said. He held up one unopened package with those nostalgic masks and asked, "I don't have what to do with these. Perhaps you want to buy them from me?"

The seller nodded his head in affirmation. He rang up the man's purchases and subtracted forty shekels from his total – ten shekels per package. The masks changed hands, the seller put the boxes on the shelf under the counter. After the customer left, he told me, "I don't make anything on these masks. No one buys them today. Anyone who needs this type of mask goes to the pharmacy, but he's a steady customer, and that's why I'm giving him this service."

We continued our conversation, which had been interrupted. A moment later another customer came in to the store. As soon as he walked in he turned to the seller with a question: "Do you have any corona masks?"

"Yes," the seller answered simply, bent down to the shelf underneath the counter and put the box, which hadn't even had the chance to gather any dust on the shelf, into the man's hands. "Ten shekels," he said. The man paid, took the box and left.

I was amazed. Just a few seconds before, the masks had arrived, and already there was a demand for them. They were really not meant to be here, the seller should not have agreed to take them, and the man should not have shown up specifically now, and not just five minutes ago, for example. It was a purely a Divine sight.

My curiosity was burning, so I concluded the conversation with the seller, took the products I had purchased, and ran after the buyer. "Excuse me," I said. "Why do you need corona masks?"

He answered with the innocence of someone who does not recognize his own personal miracle. "They asked me to come to work in a place where there is a lot of dust. I have to wear a mask while working, so now, on the way to work, I stopped in at the *makolet* and bought masks." I figured he would be clearing out bomb shelters, a job that had become popular during this time of sirens and missiles. And once again, I was amazed to see how Hakadosh Baruch Hu cares for every Yid, so he would not have to exert himself too much and so he would immediately have what he needs.

On the giving end

We were facing a major challenge: Our son, whom we expected to get into *yeshivah gedolah*, found himself with no positive responses from any of the yeshivos to which he had applied. All our efforts bore no fruit, and the new year was approaching. As a *segulah* for a *yeshuah*, we decided to donate toward the dissemination of *emunah* in an entire city. To our surprise, on the very day that we donated, we got a phone call from an especially *chasuveh* yeshivah, inviting our son to be tested. His test went well and, to our great joy, our son was accepted.

On the receiving end

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who contribute to the Hashgachah Pratis phone line, especially to the esteemed *maggid shiur* Reb Dovid Kletzkin. *Baruch Hashem*, I listen to his *shiurim* constantly, as I have since his first *shiur*. From listening to the *shiurim* I gain tremendous *kochos*, especially in facing the difficult *nisayon* I am dealing with in *shidduchim*: I had several children who were close to thirty years old who were not yet married. *Baruch Hashem*, recently, most have them had a *yeshuah*. And that is why now I would like to give thanks: In the last *shiur*, Rav Kletzkin spoke directly about *shidduchim*, and his words were like a life-giving dew that gave me strength and *chizuk* for the difficult challenge.

We Buy an Apartment with *Emunah*

I am a Yid from Yerushalayim. Yes, truly from Yerushalayim. Once I was from abroad, but today, after ten years of living in Eretz Yisrael, I am truly a Yerushalmi.

I have been married for seventeen years, *baruch Hashem*. After seven years of marriage, we made aliyah to Eretz Yisrael and settled in the Holy City, in a rental apartment belonging to a very wealthy Yid who lives in *chutz la'Aretz*. The wealthy man rented out the apartment to us at lower than the going rate in the area, and we lived there, month after month and year after year, and he barely raised the price. I knew to appreciate the fact that our rent was very reasonable, and I thanked Hashem for it.

One day, a son of the *baal dirah* called and told me the news: His sister was engaged, and there was already an apartment ready for her – the apartment where I was living! This apartment belonged to his wealthy father, and now the time had come for his father's daughter to come live in Eretz Yisrael, in that apartment. Therefore, I was to vacate the premises.

The news hit me like a thunderbolt. I had lived in this apartment for many years, and it suited me so well, and I suited it. Why would I change everything and start searching for another apartment? And how would we manage? The prices of rentals in our area are almost double the price I am paying now.

Just thinking about the cartons and the traveling was painful, but the hard feelings didn't last for too long. My connection to *Shaar Habitachon* in *Chovos Halevavos* did not begin today. For many years I have been connected to this *sefer*, delving into it and learning it deeply. I can sit and look at one paragraph for two full hours, during which I internalize the valuable treasures that it gives. Now, when I was tested, all the logical and true words came up, words of *emunah* and *bitachon* that have been rooted within me throughout the years.

Nonetheless, it wasn't easy for me, but I knew what was expected of me. I began immediately to thank Hashem for His mercies and His *chesed* with me, for the seventeen years of a happy marriage, for sons and daughters and a wonderful family, for the *zechus* of living in Eretz Hakodesh, for the nice apartment I've lived in until today with especially good conditions. That's how I went to *kollel*, with a song on my lips. As I passed a quiet side street without any passersby, I even burst into dance, thanking Hashem for all His goodness.

Despite everything, when I got to *kollel* my *chavrusa* immediately realized something had happened to me. "What are you worried about?" he asked, and I told him.

He took it even harder than me. He started to comfort me and to share in my pain, but I felt that dwelling on this apartment issue did not do me any good. I thought it would be better not to talk about it at all. In those moments I accepted upon myself two things: To strengthen myself in *emunah* without making a big deal out of the story with the apartment, and not to talk about the call from the landlord's son for the next two weeks.

I decided that during these two weeks I would learn *Shaar Habitachon* and strengthen myself in the recognition that everything is from Hashem, everything is for the good, and He is *Kol Yachol*. He helped me, He is helping me, and He will continue helping me. He had arranged an apartment for me until now, and he would arrange an apartment for me from today onward. There was no reason whatsoever to worry!

And thus, during this time I gained a lot of *chizuk*, and when I came to talk with my wife about the new situation, the fact that we had to move to another apartment, I told her everything calmly, which very much influenced the way she accepted my words, *baruch Hashem*.

Now I embarked on the technical *hishtadlus* and asked my friends if they knew of an apartment for rent. One of my friends told me, "Perhaps the time has come for you to buy an apartment."

"To buy?!" The idea totally shocked me.

"Yes, to buy. At your age you can already consider this." He smiled. In several short years I would be of the age my parents were when they married off their eldest son.

At that moment I tossed out the idea completely. Even if I bought an apartment with good terms for a mortgage, I would first have to put down several hundred thousand shekels, and I did not have a shred of an idea of how I would get that money.

But afterward, at night, the idea gave me no rest. Perhaps it really was time to buy an apartment? Perhaps it was not so untenable? Perhaps this was a sign from *Shamayim* that I should do something toward that end? Perhaps this was really what Hashem wanted of me? I recalled that once, my friend's father had suggested that he'd give me a large loan to purchase an apartment. At the time I did not take him up on his proposal, and in the meantime the man had passed away. His son inherited his wealth and became a wealthy man himself. I decided to turn to him as *hishtadlus*.

I called him, and I was surprised by his warm reaction. He offered his help willingly and gave me a loan for a much more significant sum with very comfortable conditions, and from there the way was not long to purchasing an apartment. *Baruch Hashem*, we found a proper *dirah*, and ever since, each month we are able, with the mercies and *chassadim* of Hashem, to cover the payments for both the mortgage and the loan.

In retrospect, we can see that indeed it was Hashem's will that I purchase an apartment, because ultimately the sister who got married did not come live in that rental apartment. The whole upheaval was only for me, so that I should purchase the apartment that Hashem had prepared for me.

While we could say that the apartment simply fell into our hands, this was also a process that required a lot of *bitachon* and *emunah*, not to fall prey to worry or nervousness. On the days that I learned *Shaar Habitachon* I was able to maintain calm and serenity, and on the days that I didn't, I didn't stay calm.

I saw tangibly how only Hashem helps and protects me, and how when my heart trusted in Him, I was always helped.

I had placed the fuse in the silver closet in a glass box.

The find in hand, I ran outside. I could no longer get a taxi, and for lack of other choices, I took one of my boys' bikes and pedaled away into the Bnei Brak heat.

I changed her fuse, and behold! There was light.

The problem was taken care of at literally the last minute, while in the background the songs for Erev Shabbos were broadcast throughout the area. On the way home I walked in the Bnei Brak heat with its high humidity. I did not have time to change clothes, so I went straight to shul to start Shabbos.

During the *seudah* I thought to myself, *I wonder what's behind this – what is the story behind this whole problem? Why did Hashem arrange it so that I entered Shabbos in this way?*

On Motzaei Shabbos I received my answer.

During *shalosh seudos*, the electricity in our home blew suddenly, and everything turned off. Immediately after Shabbos I checked the electric box and discovered that, due to the humidity in Bnei Brak, the whole mechanism was soaked with moisture. The fuse that got the wettest was responsible for all the heavy electrical products: The oven, the range, the fridge and the air conditioner.

I understood that if the fuse had blown at the beginning of Shabbos, we would have remained the whole Shabbos without a hot plate, and without air conditioning and a refrigerator, and it would be difficult to describe the *ogmas nefesh* such a situation could have caused us. But Hashem sent me the mitzvah to help an *almanah* on Erev Shabbos, so that I would have that *zechus* to prevent *ogmas nefesh* on Shabbos *kodesh*.

He Does Wonders

I woke up in the morning with strong pain in my neck. I waited for it to pass, but the pain persisted, so I went to my local clinic, where I joined the queue of those waiting to see the doctor.

I waited for a long time, and at a certain point I made the *brachah Asher Yatzar*, with *kavanah*, from a siddur. Hearing the *brachah*, one of the people waiting in line told me, "You can go home – you don't need a doctor."

"How did you come up with this diagnosis?" I asked.

"From the *brachah* that you made. Anyone who makes such a *brachah*, with such seriousness, does not need a doctor." He spoke with such certainty, but nonetheless, I stayed.

At the end of the wait, I went in to the doctor. The doctor checked me and asked several questions, and his conclusion was: "I don't see a solution to your problem, but I could give you painkillers."

I took the prescription, but I didn't rush to the pharmacy. The words of the person waiting in line regarding the *brachah* of *Asher Yatzar* echoed in my ears, and I decided to wait several days and in the meantime, to strengthen myself in saying the *brachah* with *kavanah*, and then perhaps the *refuah* would really come without any intervention.

And indeed, that's what happened. Several days later the pain passed as though it had never been there. Blessed is He Who heals all living flesh and does wonders.

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Hashgochah Pratis in Sifrei Kodesh

Hashgachahh Pratis in the Sefarim Hakedoshim

The Blessing of *Bitachon*

For he who trusts in Hashem and does not rely on the things that I mentioned [i.e., wisdom, strength, wealth, and relatives], not only will Hashem do his will and bless him, but he is also granted these four things that I mentioned. How so?

If he is not wise, Hashem gives him wisdom ... if he is not strong, Hashem holds his hand and strengthens his heart ... if he is not wealthy, Hashem makes him wealthy ... and if he is in a foreign land, separated from his relatives, Hashem brings him close....

(Based on *Menoras Hama'or*, Rav Yisrael Ankeva, ch. 14)

Blessing, from the House of Hashem

When a man strengthens his *middah* of *bitachon*, then certainly blessing will come into his home ... and therefore, now, when there are many difficulties facing us in the world, and we have almost no source of *parnassah* in the natural order of the world, we need to place our trust in Hashem, knowing that nothing is difficult for Him. Certainly, through our trusting in Him, He will send His blessing to us from His House ... and this is hinted to in the words of the *navi* (*Tzefanyah* 3:12), "Those who will

remain in your midst will be an oppressed and impoverished nation, but they will rely on the Name of Hashem." The *navi* does not explain there what will be the result of trusting in Hashem's Name, but in another place it explains: Blessed is he who comes with the Name of Hashem, we bless you

from the House of Hashem, the Source of all blessings and *shefa*.

(Based on *Nefutzos Yisrael*, an appendix to *Shem Olam*, by the Chafetz Chaim, ch. 8)

If Someone Trusts in Hashem, Hashem Will Save Him

"I trusted in You, Hashem, I shall not be shamed forever, and with Your righteousness You saved me" (*Tehillim* 31:2). This is as the *passuk* states (*Yeshayahu* 50:1), "Whoever among you fears Hashem and heeds the message of His servant, then even if he walks in darkness and there is no light for him, he can trust in Hashem and rely on his L-rd."

When Am Yisrael enter *batei kenesses* and say to Hashem, "Redeem us," then Hakadosh Baruch Hu says: Are there righteous and G-d-fearing people among you? And Am Yisrael answers: In the past, in the days of our forefathers, in the days of Moshe and Aharon, and in the days of Shaul and Dovid, there were righteous people among us. But now, due to our sins, they have been taken from us. As it says (*Yeshayahu* 57:1), "Because of the evil, the righteous man has passed away"; and it says (*Tehillim* 12:2), "For faithful, honest people have been eradicated from mankind," and we have no one on whom to rely. For the longer we are in *galus*, the more troubles come upon us, "...when he walks in darkness." Hakadosh Baruch Hu tells them: Trust in My Name, and this trust in me will stand by you to save you from your troubles and to take you out of the *galus*, as it says, "He shall trust in the Name of Hashem" – for anyone who trusts in My Name, I will save him.

Chananyah, Misha'el and Azaryah trusted in My Name and I saved them, and so Nuvachadnetzar said to them (*Daniel* 3:28), "Blessed is the L-rd of Chananyah, Misha'el and Azaryah, Who sent His angels and saved His servants who trusted in Him." And likewise Daniel, because he trusted in Me to save him from the lion's den: "And Daniel was uplifted from the pit" – because he trusted in Hashem.

Dovid said: since this is the nature of *bitachon*, that You save those who trust in You; therefore, I place my trust in You.

(Based on *Midrash Tehillim* 31)

Constant Hashgachah

One who relies on and trusts in Hashem's Name is safeguarded from all evil and harm, for *hashgachah* constantly watches over him, as it says, "Behold Hashem's Eye is upon those who fear Him and on those who hope for His kindness...."

When a person leaves all his affairs in the Hands of Hashem and casts off their burden, it turns out that his *nefesh* will be constantly attached to Hashem *yisbarach*, and Hashem will then be close to him and will oversee all that he does, and all his needs will be taken care of by Hashem.

(Based on *Toras Haminchah* by Rav Yaakov Skoli, a *talmid* of the Rashba, ch. 14)



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A Thought on Bitachon

From the shiurim on Kav Hashgachah

In Chodesh Elul we strengthen ourselves and exert ourselves more in *avodas Hashem*, and it is very important that all this should be with *simchah*.

One may wonder: How could one be happy in Elul while being so preoccupied with *avodas Hashem*?

The answer lies in understanding the essence of the *avodah* that is demanded of us in this month. The *mashgiach* Reb Nosson Wachtfogel *zt"l* would say that the main task we have in Elul is not to focus on this sin or that stumbling block ... rather, the main thing is to occupy ourselves with coming close to Hashem *yisbarach*.

The Rambam, in discussing the reasoning behind the mitzvah of *shofar* (*Hilchos Teshuvah* 3:4), wrote that the main thing is to arouse ourselves from slumber, to remember our Creator, and not to forget the truth, not to forget the futility of this transient world.

In truth, this is what we say in the *perek* of *Tehillim* that we recite throughout the month of Elul, *L'Dovid Hashem Ori*: "...I said to You, 'Seek my face'; I request Your Face, Hashem'." But this is not the main thing. Our main focus should be coming close to Hashem, as

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

Elul – Closeness to Hashem and *Emunah*

the Mabit explained the meaning of *teshuvah* (in *sefer Beis Elokim*, Unit *Teshuvah*, ch. 1): "We investigated the definition of *teshuvah* and found that in its truest and most complete sense, it is coming close to Hashem through distancing oneself from sin."

Likewise, in *sefer Leket Sichos Mussar*, by the *gaon* Rav Eizik Sher *zt"l* (part 2, p. 112), we are taught that the *kabbalos* you take upon yourself during the days of *teshuvah* are not the main thing. The main principle is: "A righteous man shall live by his *emunah*." We are lacking tangible *emunah* in day-to-day life through finding joy in the fact that we have a Father in *Shamayim* Who wants our good and Who seeks to enable us to exist with eternal joy. This awareness brings one to love for and *dveikus* in Hashem, and to *yiras Shamayim* and *bitachon* in Hashem. We should have no fear of another human being, Rav Sher writes, nor should we trust in another human being, who does not hold the key to our salvation.

May Hashem help us during these days of *rachamim v'ratzon*, mercy and desire, to be *zocheh* to His closeness, with joy, *emunah*, and inner peace; *amen*.