

# HASHGACHAH PRATIS

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



Parshas Ve'etchanan - Eikev 5785 ■ Issue 169

## HEART TO HEART

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

### Rav Yaakov Emden Changes His Tune

A newborn baby knows only his mother and knows that she provides for all his needs. When he grows, his awareness strengthens and he might notice that his mother depends on his father to bring them all their needs. Once he learns to rely on his father, he discovers that there are times when Abba cannot help him, but he can help himself, or get help from other people. Thus he goes from one level to the next until he reveals the truth: Everyone is dependent on Abba in *Shamayim*, Who created us and Who provides for us and sustains us.

And at times it happens that not one of all those he knows can help him, in situations when no person or plan is even an option. As it says (*Yirmeyahu* 2:27): "And when it is bad for them they will say, Arise and save us," as Rabbeinu Bachyai explains in Chapter 7.

Let us look at the *passuk* Rabbenu Bachyai quotes. Yirmeyahu Hanavi is describing a difficult spiritual state. There are idol worshippers among Am Yisrael. They are convinced that their idols are like mother and father to them, *R'!* The *navi* complains in the Name of Hashem, "For they have turned their backs to Me rather than face [Me]." They hold on to this pathetic disconnect until tragedy strikes. In times of trouble the idols are revealed to be worthless, and then they remember Hashem, and they cry out to Him, "Arise and save us!"

We do not need to reach such a difficult spiritual state in order to learn from their behavior. Even if, *b'chasdei Hashem*, the inclination for idol worship was nullified, the idea was not completely eradicated. There are still people who attribute strength to their amazing ability to plan, their updated devices, their money and their life-experience. The feeling that one can do things, while valuable, is also liable to control a person and cause him to forget Who gave him all these resources. Only when Hashem causes him to lie in bed for a number of days *l'a*, does he recall that in essence, nothing is in his hands.

The Baal Menoras Hame'or teaches that the proper way is for a person to daven when times are peaceful. Our Sages say (*Sanhedrin* 44b), "A person should always daven before troubles befall him," for this *tefillah* shows that he believes that all the bounty and the good are from Hashem. We find this approach regarding Yiftach Hagiladi. The locals hated him and chased him away, but when the people of Amon oppressed them, they

turned to Yiftach for help; and he was not pleased with their request: "Did you not hate me, and why have you come to me when it is hard for you?" Only when you need my help am I good enough for you, while on a day-to-day basis you have no interest in me?! We can understand from this that turning to Hashem only in times of difficulty is not proper.

Let us consider another perspective on davening in times of troubles.

Rav Yaakov Emden relates that when he was young, he would wonder about the words sung in the *tefillah* of *Nishmas kol chai*, where in one breath, without even a comma in the middle, we say: "In all times of trouble and danger we have no King to support and save us other than You."

Is this proper and right, to say that only in times of trouble and pain we have no King other than Hashem? What about in times of serenity and fulfillment? And what about during the good days when, with Hashem's kindness, everything goes smoothly? Rav Yaakov Emden adjusted the punctuation, changing the meaning of the words: "He redeems and saves, He responds and has mercy in all times of trouble and pain, we have no King to support and save us other than You!"

Years passed, and Reb Yaakov confessed, "I have reached the age of fifty and I no longer change the punctuation." Rav Yaakov reverted to the original reading, and his reasoning was: The non-Jews who serve idols – when their lives are good they praise their idols, but when it becomes difficult they get angry and desert them.

But we, Am Yisrael, who are close to our King Who redeems us, are different. Even if troubles and tragedies befall us, *R'!*, even if we experienced fear and persecution, we remain loyal to our Father in *Shamayim*, and even in times of difficulty and pain, we have no king to depend on other than You!

The Creator of all worlds is not like a human being. Rabbenu Yonah says that when two people argue, and suddenly one of them needs the other's help, the second person gets angry: *Now you remember me?! But Hashem yisbarach* is not like that. When a Yid turns to Him in times of trouble He answers him. As we ask in *Shemoneh Esrei*: May the service of Your nation Yisrael always be desirable to You.

May we be *zocheh* to daven in serenity and joy, and may all our *tefillas* be acceptable to our Father in *Shamayim*; amen.

## FROM THE EDITOR

### Not Like a Goy Would Think

Which type of organ would have the most influence on a person's life – one that is gentle and sensitive, or one that is hard and strong? If you would ask a young child this question, he probably would answer that a gentle, sensitive organ is much less influential than a strong one. He would say that the stronger an organ is, the more important it is and the more it influences a person's health. If you ask an adult this question, he will almost certainly think of the heart. Of course, a person's heart is relatively small and it is definitely sensitive, but human life is totally dependent on it. No one would consider allowing his heart to take a break from its functions, even for a few seconds.

The *Zohar* to *parshas Pinchas* tells that a *goy* once asked Rabi Elazar the following: The people of Yisrael claim to be the nation that Hashem favors the most, so why is it that they are the nation that suffers more than any other? You can't even compare their suffering to that of other nations! It must be that Hashem favors the other nations more than He favors Yisrael, and because of that they must suffer more than all others.

The *goy's* way of thinking is that a king imposes hardships on those he loves the least, and he grants those closer to him an easy life. But Rabi Elazar replied that the heart is the most critically important of all the body's organs. It delivers life-giving blood to all the other body parts, and so it is the most influential organ, despite the fact that it is soft and sensitive.

Consider the punishment Hashem decreed on the serpent in Gan Eden: "you shall eat dust all the days of your life." The most terrible curse is to become detached from Hakadosh Baruch Hu, to feel that one is not dependent on His assistance and that there is no need to daven for it. The serpent was cursed by the decree that all its needs would be readily available wherever it might turn. It will never need to search for its sustenance, and so it is severed from Hashem's Presence.

The entire world is dependent on Am Yisrael, but Am Yisrael is the nation that feels the most dependent on Hashem. It is precisely because Hashem cares the most about Bnei Yisrael that He constantly punishes them when it is warranted and pushes them to improve themselves. He wants to hear them pray and plead for His assistance, and He listens to their prayers. He helps, protects, and provides their needs with perfect, precise *hashgachah*.

This is true of Am Yisrael as a whole, and it is true of every individual Jew. Everyone has his own challenges and crises, both physical and spiritual. It can happen that a person breaks from the pressure and begins to think that his problems prove that Hashem is distant from him. Rabi Elazar taught us, however, that quite the opposite is true. The most sensitive, seemingly weakest organ is also the most influential one, and a Jew's challenges and hardships are a clear sign of Hashem's love and care for him.

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# THE HAND OF HASHEM

Amazing stories of hashgachah pratis, as told on the hotline

## Silence While Drinking Coffee

That morning I was feeling very pressured. In another few days Yom Tov would come, and in the afternoon, when I would come home from *kollel* and my wife would ask whether I had money for shopping, I would have to answer her. I decided to try to get a loan so that I would have enough to give her.

I hadn't meant to bother anyone while learning. I entered the coffee room and met another *avreich* who was preparing coffee for himself. "Do you have any money to lend me?" I asked him. He apologized and said that he did not. While he was talking, another *avreich* entered the coffee corner and hurriedly prepared himself a hot drink. "Be careful!" I called out.

"Your coffee's going to spill," my friend warned him, but this *avreich* was preoccupied and did not slow down.

"It'll be fine," he claimed, and a moment later, as expected, the coffee spilled. On me.

It didn't just spill on me. It stained my new tzitzis, a nice pair of wool tzitzis I had put on for the first time that very day! My financial situation was quite bleak, and these tzitzis had cost me a lot of money to buy, and now they were already marred by an ugly coffee stain.

The *avreich* who spilled the coffee was very embarrassed. He'd learned his lesson, and I felt bad for him. I saw how much it bothered him, and now he did not know what to do with himself. I looked at the tzitzis in order to gauge the amount of damage done, and he told me, "I know I ruined them. How much do you want me to pay?"

I wanted to tell him off properly for his behavior and perhaps also to inform him that payment would not atone for the embarrassment and pain, but Hashem gave me strength. I bit my tongue and nothing at all came out of me. "It's okay," I told him. "I'll work it out."

I did my best to wash out the stain and succeeded in lightening it somewhat. I went back to learning and wondered what to do next. My whole point in coming to the coffee corner was to get a loan, and if I hadn't been successful, perhaps I should turn to one of the *avreichim* who were learning.

That second, one of the wealthy *avreichim* approached me. He does not usually give out money, but this time, "for some reason," he took 500 shekels out of his pocket, gave them to me, and said, "This is for your Yom Tov expenses."

I knew that the *zechus* of my holding back is what stood by me; the *zechus* of this self-control brought about my *yeshuah*.

## The Best Segulah

"I need a *segulah* to find a lost item," my friend told me. He seemed very tense. We were sitting in a van, and he discovered that he was missing a *parshah* of his *tefillin*. He is a *sofer Stam*, and this was a great loss for him.

## Water, Without Joy

"Listen," I told my friend over the phone, while pacing my small apartment. A minute later he did not have anything to listen to, because the phone slipped out of my hand and into a pail of water.

It was totally unexpected. My wife was preparing to wash the floor for Shabbos, and I was taking care of other routine things. I am so used to walking the house while I talk, and my right hand serves me well in holding the phone to my ear. How strange that the phone not only fell, but had a fatal fall that ended its life.

I had to buy a new cell phone, hoping that Hashem would reimburse us for the loss. But the routine did not return to our home. In retrospect, I felt as though I had fallen into a dark tunnel where unexpected things kept happening. Suddenly, I got an urgent call to come home because the floor was flooded with water. I came home to calm my wife and to search for the source of the problem, but I could not grasp what was going on. The plumber we called urgently informed us that a pipe had burst.

Then there was a leak from the neighbors, and on an average day, drops of water dripped onto my hat. My wife complained that the faucet was dripping, and I lifted my eyes to the Heavens. From where would my help come?

I asked Hashem to help me reveal the meaning behind what had been happening to me in recent weeks. Why were we suffering so much totally unnatural harm through water? And then, *Hashem* inspired me to check the *mezuzos*.

To our amazement, we discovered a problem in the *mezuzah* exactly on a word related to water. It was the word *yoreh* (rain), where the letter *vav* had partially faded, so the word seemed to say *yarah*.

We replaced that *mezuzah*, and *baruch Hashem*, since then our water has been flowing properly.

## If You Gladden Mine

I discovered him a few weeks after I came to live in my current apartment – a neighbor who is an older Yid who lives alone in a room, broken and sad. His life events are filled with pain and sadness. He was orphaned of his parents at a young age and was never able to get back to himself. He has no relatives, and good *Yidden* tried to help him here and there. From time to time someone remembered him and took pity on him, without any sort of commitment, and that's how the days and nights passed for him – mostly nights.

I asked myself, *How is he living?* My conclusion was very sad. I have no idea, and neither do others. One day I asked him if he wanted warm homemade food. He nodded, and that day he received a hot lunch.

That was the beginning, and I started sending him a cooked lunch every day. My whole family took part in this *chessed*.

The *chessed*, which started out as a sort of voluntary outburst of good will, turned into a commitment. A while later, the regular portion I brought him was no longer enough. He preferred a certain type of food, and he demanded that I pay attention and not mix things together. Moreover, he wanted me to add a fresh salad, cut into small-enough pieces, and a fruit salad as well for good measure.

In the beginning I did not notice that it was becoming difficult. He asked me to cut? I'll cut. Wants salad? Salad it will be. Thus, aside from the hot meal cooked by my wife, I also cut up a fruit salad and a vegetable salad. This took some time, and I felt it was becoming too much for me. I thought nothing would happen if he cut up a salad for himself. I decided I would continue doing the *chessed* by giving him whole fruits and vegetables to cut up by himself. That moment I did not realize that not only did this decision not save me time, but it brought in its wake much *ogmas nefesh*. At first I did not associate this with the unpleasant development in my home, but Hashem wanted me to make the connection, and He took pity on me. A few weeks after this unfortunate decision, I met a friend who knew my neighbor and tried to help him as well. "Good for you," he told me. "You have no idea what a *chessed* you are doing by sending your neighbor food each day." I nodded. I had not meant for him to know about this private act of *chessed* toward my neighbor, which Hashem presented me. The neighbor must have really enjoyed it if he told my friend about the meals. In general, I was not *zocheh* to get too many good words from him, and this roundabout expression of gratitude very much encouraged me.

## On the giving end

I have an apartment for rent, and unfortunately, it has been empty for several months. I was afraid of not finding tenants soon and decided to donate toward the dissemination of *emunah* and *bitachon* in an entire city, with the belief that this would stand by me and enable me to find suitable tenants. Amazingly, just a few days later the miracle occurred! We found a good tenant, exactly as I'd hoped, and we immediately signed on the contract. I feel that I was *zocheh* to a *yeshuah* in the *zechus* of the fact that I helped to strengthen Yidden in *emunah* and *bitachon*.

## On the receiving end

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the *Hashgachah Pratis* phone line and to all those involved. I started listening in recently, and I must share with you the fact that I experienced a tremendous transformation in my life. My whole way of thinking changed. I started to live with an elevated feeling that I am constantly being protected by Hashem. When something good happens to me, I naturally thank Hashem; but the true change is expressed through what happens when something not so good occurs, and then, instead of feeling pressured and angry, I understand that this too is *min haShamayim*. This is a tremendous change – literally entering another spiritual sphere. Therefore, I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart, and may Hashem repay you in full.



"You should know that it's very important for the food to be aesthetically pleasing," he added. "Send him the vegetables cut up and packed nicely – do the mitzvah completely!" He spoke warmly, like someone who knew this Yid quite well, and he believed the way the food was served was important. He also gave me the impression that he knew what the neighbor was demanding. He himself exerted himself in order to help this neighbor, and seeing how he exerted himself, I decided to take his words seriously. The following day I returned to my previous custom of cutting up the salad properly.

Before I relate what happened next, I will share what occurred to us from the time I stopped cutting up the vegetables. This neighbor is not the only person I feed. I have a baby, a treasure given to me by Hashem. In the afternoon I need to feed him, but in recent weeks this has grown so complicated. The baby got fed up with formula, and when it was time for him to eat, he pushed away the bottle. When he'd finally agree to sip a few drops, he'd immediately spit them up. We did not understand what was happening to him and why he was so upset. In the recent past he had eaten his meal nicely, and recently the whole thing had become so difficult. The baby would cry and cry, and I would have to deal with him, both of us pacing the house, unable to do anything else.

On the day that I cut up vegetables, the baby was crying as well. He was crying because he was hungry and wanted to eat. I prepared a bottle of formula, and he started drinking thirstily! He swallowed and digested the contents of the bottle. He did not spit up or throw up; he simply ate!

It was glaring: I worked hard cutting up fruits and vegetables for another Yid, and the baby went back to eating like any other healthy baby.

## Exactly What Is Right

I own a printshop in Yerushalayim. Each day flyers, notices, pamphlets and more come off our machines. Last Thursday, the management of the *mosdos* of a certain community called and asked me to print pamphlets for them.

"Gladly," I told them. "If you send the material by noon, it'll be ready for today, and if you send it afterward, the pamphlets will still be printed today, but, as you know, when we print pamphlets there are empty margins, and in order to give them a nice look, we need to cut off these margins. This is done using another machine, and it takes time. If the material comes after noon, I will not have time to do this part today, only tomorrow."

"No way!" they reacted, and sought out another printer.

The next day, Friday morning, a friend from Beit Shemesh who also owns a printshop called me. "Could you print pamphlets for a shul today?" he asked.

"For the X Institutions from Yerushalayim?" I guessed.

"No, no, they actually asked me to do some work for them, but I'm busy now, so I can't do work for another shul. Do you want to print the pamphlets for them?"

He gave me the phone number of one of the *gabbai'im*. I spoke to them and explained that in such a short time I could not cut off the margins.

"It's okay this way too," they responded. "The main thing is that the pamphlets should be ready."

I was amazed at how Hakadosh Baruch Hu runs His world. How He moves clients from one printshop to another, and how he sends each person the work that suits him. Even if someone decides that I am not suitable for him, I don't need to worry. Hashem sends me the exact work that suits me.

## One Mitzvah Leads to Another

On Shabbos I was in my father's house in Kiryat Sanz, Netanya, and on Motzaei Shabbos I went out in the direction of the bus stop in order to get on the bus to Yerushalayim and go home. I went out too late. It takes about ten minutes to walk from my father's house to the bus stop, and I saw that the bus would be coming in another two minutes. I knew that if I didn't make this bus I would need to wait a long time until the next one came along.

As soon as I went out, I saw a Yid inside a parked car near my father's home. I asked him, "Can you give me a ride to the bus stop? The bus is supposed to come in two minutes."

"Gladly," the Yid answered with a smile, and immediately drove me to the bus stop. We arrived before the bus got there.

The minute he opened the door of the car, a Yid holding a handbag walked over and asked him, "Are you from around here? Perhaps you know the person whose handbag this is?" The handbag had a family name written on it.

The man who had driven me looked at the handbag and said, "This is my sister's last name. She was with me for Shabbos just last week!"

It was amazing. He helped me get to the bus stop, and in the *zechus* of his *chessed*, he was *zocheh* to return the handbag to his sister.

I told him, "The best *segulah* is to strengthen your *emunah* that Hakadosh Baruch Hu will get it back to you." He strengthened himself in *emunah* and told himself it was all for the good, and *baruch Hashem*, within a few moments he found it.

## The Notice We Didn't See

A Yid from Ashdod relates: Each day, my wife travels about an hour to get to work in another city. As time went on this became more and more difficult. It is a long, tiring trip, and the children wait for her to get home. We found ourselves hoping for a *yeshuah*, that she would find work close to home.

"You might think that in Ashdod they don't need workers like me," my wife repeated again and again. "Clearly, there is a need for my line of work here. We just need to find the office that needs me."

"We just need to find" means to search, which implies running after every shred of information. From the moment we decided to look for work locally, we were preoccupied looking through every pamphlet, newspaper, and local advertorial we could find. We were always the first to bring these things up to our home and check – perhaps there was some good news here? Maybe there was someone who specifically needed us?

This became part of our daily routine. Every Motzaei Shabbos several advertorials are distributed in all the mailboxes, another two come midweek, and there are also those that show up in our mailboxes on Thursday, and each time, obsessed, we would run to look through them and to see if any appropriate jobs were advertised there. Obviously, we would also look through the daily paper carefully. From time to time we would see offices looking for someone to work in my wife's field, and she would immediately send in her resume.

All in all, we sent resumes to twenty different workplaces! Of those, four got back to us, and they all said, each in his own way, that it was not relevant.

One day, very late at night, we knew that one of the local advertorials had already arrived and we hadn't yet looked through it. I was already very tired, and I said, "I think that to go down now just in order to get the paper is unnecessary *hishtadlus*. It's too much. If Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants to give you work in Ashdod, it will come without the major effort demanded of us now to get the paper and read through it.

That was it. We went to sleep without looking through the paper. We dared to do this!

The next morning my wife got a phone call from her friend. This friend had seen the previous day's paper and saw an ad regarding a job that seemed perfectly suitable for my wife. We sent in a resume, and immediately after we sent the fax they called us. They wanted her to come for an interview, and ultimately she was hired there. Today she works in a job that suits her in our city, with no need for long, tiring travel time.

We saw how, *min haShamayim*, Hashem arranged this work for her, and it was specifically when we let go of our *hishtadlus*, specifically when we stopped the ceaseless runaround and cast our burden completely on Hashem.

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## Hashgochah Pratis in Sifrei Kodesh

### Hashgachahh Pratis in the Sefarim Hakedoshim

#### Pursue Tefillah All the Time

Now that the *Beis Hamikdash* has been destroyed, we have nothing with which to replace the *korbanos* other than *tefillah* and *teshuvah*. Therefore, a person should constantly pursue *tefillah*, and not only in times of troubles, but rather every day.... As *Chazal* teach us...and a person should constantly plead, asking that a multitude of angels should uphold and strengthen him. He should try to gain many friends, for every friend adds to his merits. As the Arabic teaching states, "Do not discount even a single enemy, and do not think that a thousand friends are sufficient."

(Sefer Hachochim by the Meiri)

#### Tefillah Prevents Troubles from Coming

In *Marganita Tava*, an appendix to *sefer Ahavas Chesed*, the Chofetz Chaim wrote that a person should behave with the same submission and humility in peaceful times as he would feel during a crisis or dangerous times. This is what *Chazal* taught based on the *pasuk*, "Did you arrange your prayer...." Actually, this is the most effective *segulah* to spare a person from harm. Most of the time, the reason Hashem causes suffering is that He wants people to pray to Him. *Chazal* taught that the reason our Patriarchs were barren was that Hashem longed for their *tefillas* (*Yevamos* 64). Accordingly, if someone will daven and plead to be spared all sorts of *yissurim*, there will be no need for him to experience them at all. The Chofetz Chaim wrote, "Be very careful" to maintain this submission and humility, meaning that if he does not take heed of this warning, he might be in serious danger, *chas v'shalom*. On the other hand, when someone feels the need to daven to be spared all *yissurim*, he will likely be spared.

(Based on Shearim Mitefillah, Unit Bitzur, #7)

#### Tefillah Mitigates Din from Its Source

#### Davening Before Troubles Come

Iyov's friends asked him, Did you arrange your prayer while you were still free of distress? (*Iyov* 39:19). Based on this Rabi Eliezer said: A person should always pray before troubles befall him, for if Avraham had not davened [for his descendants] when he was between Beis El and Ai, none of Am Yisrael would have survived the battle [for Ai].

Reish Lakish said: If someone exerts himself in prayer on earth, he will have no enemies in Heaven Above. He explains the *pasuk* cited above as indicating that if Iyov would have cried out to Hashem in advance, he would have been spared all his suffering.

Rabi Yochanan said: A person should always pray that the angels on High will always help him and that he will not have enemies from Above. He interpreted the *pasuk* as saying that if Iyov had cried out to Hashem, pleading that no prosecutors should act against him, and if he had requested that the angels on High would come to his aid, he would have avoided his suffering.

(Maseches Sanhedrin 44b)

When someone fears some impending punishment, he should immediately daven and beg to be saved from it. That is the very reason Heaven brought this fear upon him. Our Sages teach that a person should always daven before troubles befall him. How is he to know that troubles are in his

forecast, however? Hashem notifies him by making him feel fearful of something unknown. There are some punishments that cannot be undone once they take place; the only way is to abort them [through *tefillah*] and prevent them from materializing. *Chazal* call a person's inner soul his *mazal*, and that inner soul can become aware of things that exist in Heaven that have not yet become the reality in this world. Through davening, one can mitigate an evil decree and even transform it into a blessing.

(Based on Tzidkas Hatzaddik #169)

#### It Is Easier to Nullify in Advance

Before every endeavor, one should daven that it should be successful and bring no harm to him. Since it is before anything has happened, it is much easier to prevent any evil from taking place. That is why the custom is that, before the wedding of someone's son or daughter, the parents daven that the *middas hadin* and *ayin hara* will not have any adverse effect on them. And this is the proper practice.

(Based on Azharas Hakodesh, letter 7, of which the Baal Shevet Mussar wrote: "The words of this work are few, but they have enormous importance.")



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#### A Thought on Bitachon

From the shiurim on Kav Hashgachah

During these days of mourning for the *Beis Hamikdash*, we need to rectify the sin of baseless hatred, which caused the *churban*, and this is done by strengthening our *ahavas Yisrael*.

Each one of us can take upon himself to greet each person with a smile, to speak to others pleasantly and with joy. When we meet a friend, we should tell them with *me'or panim*, "How are you, my dear friend?"

I was once present when a new *rosh yeshivah*, who was experiencing certain difficulties, entered the room of the *mashgiach* Rav Nosson Wachtfogel zt"l. The *mashgiach* greeted him with such friendliness, and with a voice filled with empathy and a pleasant tone: "How are you?"

Excerpts from the popular shiur by  
Harav Yehuda Mandel shlita from Lakewood

#### Building the Beis Hamikdash with Ahavas Yisrael

In the *navi Shmuel* (*Shmuel II* 6:20), after it relates that Dovid Hamelech danced before the *Aron*, it describes how Dovid went into his home: "And Dovid returned to bless his home." This is how we return home — we come with a happy heart and bless everyone.

When Dovid Hamelech spoke with Naval Hakarmeli (before he knew he was a *rasha* and before he suspected him), he told him, "Please give whatever your hand finds to your servant and to your son, to Dovid!" (*Shmuel I* 25:8) Dovid Hamelech called himself the "son" of the person to whom he was speaking!

We find that Avraham Avinu acted similarly when he said, "For we are men [who are] brothers!" And Yaakov Avinu spoke in terms of endearment and said to the